

Minutes of the Board of Trustees

Held in the Reading Room at 10:00 on 8th May 2019

Trustees present: Margaret Knight (MK), Derek Knight (DK), Robert Guyver (RG), Richard Templeton (RT), Christopher Chanter (CC), Geoff Roberts (GR), Sandra Bond (SB), Lindsay Roderick (LR)
Staff present: Anne Howard (AH)

In attendance: Ian Watt

1. **Apologies:** Henry French (HF), Katharine Chant (KC)

2. **Conflicts of Interest:** None recorded

3. **Minutes of the last meeting of 13th February 2019**

These were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. **Matters arising**

AH said that she has now been approached by two members who wish to give Saturday Snippet presentations, and this will be built into the programme.

MK said that she has received an updated quotation from Townsweb concerning the potential digitisation project and will make it available to trustees. KC said that that if the funding bid to the Pilgrims Trust is successful the project will start in September 2019.

5. **Chair's report: MK**

MK reported that three new members of staff have now been appointed. Ceri McWilliams, the new Administrative Assistant, will take up her post on 18th March. Her first day in the office will be Wednesday 20th March. The Saturday Activities Coordinator post will be a job share between Stephanie Beddoes and Bethany Howell. They will commence employment on Saturday 6th April.

With regard to the meeting of the Chairs Committee meeting of 13th February MK reported that it is hoped to arrange a strategic planning day for trustees, led by an external facilitator, in May of this year. The aim is to formulate a five-year plan for the DEI.

It was proposed and agreed that the DEI will contribute £200 to the Exeter Literary Festival.

MK stated that the Risk Register is being reviewed.

6. **Hon Treasurer's Report: MK**

In the absence of JR MK presented a written report from the Hon Treasurer.

At 7th March the balance of the Current Account stood at £23,298. Subscription income is well on track. The general financial position is strong, with income higher than expenditure. However, there are some high expenditure items due in the next few months.

The transfer of the operational account to the Cooperative Bank is now complete and the National Westminster Bank account was closed on 1st March. Direct Debit payments via GoCardless have been delayed, but will be received into the bank

account shortly.

Application has been made for debit cards for AH and Mary Noon. There will be daily spending limits.

The Charity Commission has confirmed that the charitable association has now been linked with the CIO

The Annual Business Survey has been received from the Office of National Statistics. Completion is a legal requirement, and JR will do this.

[SB arrived at 1020]

AH said that the income from second hand book sales and the Adopt a Book scheme are not shown as lines on the budget and it is important that these income streams be applied to care of the collection. MK replied that there is a need to rationalise the budget headings.

DK noted that while the Repairs and Maintenance budget is currently showing a low spend, there is an additional £3500 commitment on external re-decoration and central heating repairs due in the next few months

Membership

As of 8th March, paying membership stands at 762. There is a steady upward climb in membership, with recruitment exceeding deaths and resignations. Jeremy Lawford and Clare Radstone are now jointly administering membership matters.

7. Hon Secretary's report: DK

DK reported on the meeting of the Housekeeping and Building Committee held on 12th March. The committee felt that the chairs in the Reading Room needed to be re-upholstered or replaced which was agreed by the Board. The Committee also considered the pricing of room hire and Courtenay Room pricing and these recommendations will be presented to the April Board meeting.

With regard to future activities GR said that a summer outing to the quarry at Beer is being explored. It is proposed to hold this in the first week of June. DK said that a musical fundraising evening is being planned in association with the Dean of Exeter. In September there will be another fundraising event featuring Todd Gray and Mark Stoye.

Following the Dementia Information sessions AH, KC and SB will walk through the building to assess how dementia friendly it is, and what improvements can be made

A proposal has been received and circulated from Dr Ian Varndell of the Devonshire Association. The Devonshire Association is proposing a stall at the 2020 Devon County Show, and wishes to explore the possibility of it being a joint stall with the Institution. In principle this was agreed to be a good idea, though there would be a need to have a proper display to engage people, and not just publicity material. CC mentioned that he could obtain a marquee at a reasonable cost. It was agreed that he would be involved with planning should this proceed and DK will contact Ian Varndell accordingly

DK

DK mentioned some upcoming bookings. The Wildlife Trust will be using the DEI for the regional launch of a national campaign. This will be a high profile event, with attendees including the Member of parliament for Exeter. There is also a potential booking by a theatre company.

8. Partnership and Programme Manager's report: ED

ED had tabled a written report which the Board noted.

It was noted that all the focus groups have now met. KC said that the partnership being forged with the Cathedral was positive and important.

9. Librarian's report: AH

AH had circulated a written report to which she spoke. The conference of the Independent Libraries Association will take place at the DEI between Friday 7th and Sunday 9th June 2019. The programme is being finalised.

AH and Emma Dunn have met with Dr Julia Neville. She is proposing a research project on the West Quarter of Exeter between 1919 and 1930. She will use the DEI's facilities for this, and hopes other DEI members will wish to be involved. The Board was supportive of this but expressed some concern that it should not be branded as a DEI project, especially if funding bids were to be made. KC said that she felt the DEI should have a policy on research projects and research groups. RT said that he felt it important that the Trustees be made aware of the progress of this and similar projects.

The Metrological Office has digitised some of our weather records, which are unique. The DEI will have unrestricted access to the digitised images.

Clare Maudling's contract comes to an end on 28th June. Five new library volunteers have recently been recruited.

10. Health & Safety: AH: Nothing to report.

11. Library, Research & Publications Committee: MK

This Committee met on 4th March. The new Stock Policy was agreed. The major changes concerned deaccessioning and illustrations. The continued review of the Stock Policy will be included in the Forward Plan.

12 Any other business

RG proposed a joint event with the Exeter branch of the Historical Association, possibly a debate concerning 19th century missionaries. RG will discuss this further with DK.

The meeting closed at 1120.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17th April 2019 at 10:00