

**Annual General Meeting 24 October 2019 at 2.30pm
HELD AT THE GUILDHALL**

Minutes of the 3rd Annual General Meeting of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation known as the Devon and Exeter Institution and the 30th Annual General Meeting of the Charitable Association (being also the 206th annual meeting of the Institution since its formation).

1. Present:

Members: Janice Bhanji, Sadrudin Bhanji, RA Bolton, Sandra Bond, Maggie Bonfield, Margaret Boynes, Christopher Chanter, Shane Cormie, Richard Crangle, Gail Dixon-Smith, Alison Edwards, Henry French, David Golding, Robert Guyver, Yvonne Hicken, Edward Hobson, Simon James, Trevor Jones, Derek Knight, Margaret Knight, Elizabeth Knox, William Laws, Charmion Mann, Anne Mayes, Ruth McLeish, Valorie Mitchell, Julia Neville, Jean Northam, JM Penson, FE Potter, David Pugsley, Paul Ramsay, John Reeves, Anthony Rhodes, Brenda Rhodes, Geoff Roberts, Lindsay Roderick, Keith Scott, Jo Sinclair, Jack Stoneman, Patricia Swinburne, Richard Templeton, Joyce Troughton, Rob Turner, Clive Warburton, Vivienne Watson, Ian Watt, Jennifer Wilkins, Peter Wingfield- Digby, J Yonge, Judy Yung, Kai Kin Yung
Staff: Carol Anderson, Emma Dunn, Beth Howell, Ceri McWilliams, Emma Laws, Mary Noon

2. Apologies:

Hilary Browne, Clive Bennetts, Peter Fender, Christopher Southgate, John Salvatore, Peter & Jenny Brotherton, Simon Timms, Robert Sampson, Peter Dickinson, Lesley Lake, Susan Price, John & Sheila Stirling, Carolyn and David Keep, Clare Greener, Paula and Jeremy Lawford, Anthony Martin, Robert Perrin, Anne Eyre, Peter Hood, Clare & David Radstone, Susan Thompson, Ian McGregor, Helen Sims, Peter Cleasby, April Majoram, David Quy, Christopher Gardner-Thorpe, John Jones, Kate & John Manley-Tucker, Robert Higham, Tony Leithbridge, Margaret Peat, Pat Purchase, Helen Sims, Cynthia Wise

3. Introductory remarks: Margaret Knight, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Margaret welcomed members and introduced trustees. The meeting was declared quorate.

She noted that it had been another busy year for the DEI. Financial management and membership subscriptions are healthy, and membership continues to grow. The DEI now makes a substantial contribution to the salary of the librarian, rather than on relying solely on external funding. The office functions smoothly with a bookkeeper and administrative assistant, in addition to trustee involvement.

We have continued to consolidate our position as an independent subscription library. This year we hosted the annual conference of the Independent Libraries Association, on the theme of *Adaption, Change, Reinvention: Continuity and Change in Independent Libraries*.

A strategic review has taken place, resulting in plans for our development over the next ten years and a substantial external funding bid.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM held on 26th October 2017.

Derek Knight noted that Joan Sinclair had been present at the 2018 AGM but had been omitted from the list of attendees.

On the proposal of Derek Knight, seconded by Christopher Chanter, the minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and the minutes were signed by the Chair

4. Matters Arising.

Julian Parlett thanked the trustees for their work on behalf of the Institution.

5. Hon Secretary: Derek Knight - Annual Report and Review

The Honorary Secretary presented his report. He noted that over the last twelve months the trustees have consolidated and developed the administration of the Institution, and trustees are actively involved in developing and monitoring the work of the Institution through our Forward Plan and Risk Register.

The Hon Secretary said that there had been several changes in trusteeship over the last 18 months: Paul Vincent resigned as a trustee in Sept 2018 and Jeremy Lawford did not seek re-election at the AGM last year although he retained his role, along with Clare Radstone, as Membership Secretary. Shane Cormie was appointed by the Board to one of the vacant trustee positions in July 2019 and he has brought his experience of marketing to Board meetings and discussions.

The last 12 months have been a period of productive development at the Institution. Trustees, staff and volunteers have focussed on delivering the charitable objects of the Institution.

In May, the front exterior and the kitchen area were redecorated and further re-decoration of other areas is planned for next spring. In response to members' suggestions, the lighting and seating throughout the Institution is gradually being improved. Together, these improvements have given the building a much-needed facelift

A weekly Saturday programme of talks and activities are proving attractive to families and individuals of all ages. Our traditional Friday evening lunchtime lectures are attracting a wider range of audience from members and we have introduced some early evening talks which are also proving popular. The free lunchtime lectures are an opportunity for members of the public to get to know the Institution and all these activities have been instrumental in attracting new members to the Institution

We have welcomed several new staff in the last year who have enabled us to expand our activities and education programme. Beth Howell and Stephanie Beddoes are our two Saturday activity coordinators who have reinvigorated our weekend programme of events: Ceri McWilliams joined us in February to provide support, organisation and a welcome to our members in the DEI office. More recently Carol Anderson has joined as the Digitisation Project Coordinator and Emma Laws joined as Librarian, replacing Anne Howard who left the Institution in July. Clare Maudling also left in July but is returning for a short stint in December to support the Global Lives project. Our staff team is completed of course by Emma Dunn, our Partnerships & Project Manager and Mary Noon, our housekeeper.

Derek Knight thanked all our staff on behalf of the membership for the dedicated work that they do to keep the Institution a special place.

The Hon Secretary thanked the growing band of volunteers. One of the great strengths of the Institution is the depth and skills of its volunteer body and it is also one of the attractions of becoming a member. We simply could not provide the facilities and activities that we do without their support whether it is working in the library, as tour guides, in the office, on the preservation team or indeed as a trustee.

6. Hon Treasurer : John Reeves

6.1 Report and presentation of the accounts for 2018-19

The Treasurer stated that during the preceding year financial management at the Institution had been consolidated. Subscription income has been stable. There was no proposal, he stated, to increase subscription rates.

All the Institution's bank accounts have now been moved to the Co-Operative Bank, and those with the National Westminster Bank have been closed. Payments, including staff salaries, are now made via internet banking, which greatly simplifies things. The Librarian, Housekeeper and Programme Manager now have debit cards.

Throughout the reporting year operational income has been ahead of expenditure. A £6,000 contribution towards library salaries was made. In the 2019/20 financial year this will increase to £12,000. This makes salaries less dependent on grant income. Staffing costs have increased with the employment of additional staff.

Throughout the reporting year operational income has been ahead of expenditure. By building subscriptions and donation income the Institution has increased the proportion of unrestricted funds which reduces financial risks.

Reserves are held with CCLA in worldwide equity backed funds. The value of these can go down as well as up, but in the long term the performance has been good, and they increased in value by 15% last year. £25,000 has also been returned to reserves from cash holdings. The level of reserves is in line with our reserves policy

Last year Griffin Chartered Accountants were appointed independent examiners. They have done a good job, and at a lower cost than our previous auditors.

Introducing the financial statements, the Treasurer noted that unrestricted funds income was £94,000, made up of £69,000 in subscriptions and donation and £25,000 from trading activities such as room hire and food service. Operational expenditure was £86,000, and the £7,000 surplus has been transferred to reserves. Restricted income from grants was £47,000. Total income was £1,770,000, slightly up on the previous year's figure of £1,758,000. The valuation of heritage assets remains unchanged at £1,396,000.

Resolution 1: On the proposal of Tony Rhodes, seconded by Julian Parlett, the following motion was carried. *That they Independent Examiner's Report and Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 30th June 2019 be accepted.*

Resolution 2: On the proposal of Keith Scott, seconded by Clive Warburton, the following motion was carried. *That the Devon & Exeter Institution appoint Griffin Chartered Accountants as Independent Examiners of the accounts for the 2019-20 financial year.*

6.2 Report of the Membership Secretary

John Reeves presented the membership report. He began by thanking Claire Radstone and Jeremy Lawford for their work as joint membership secretaries. Subscription income was on budget at £63,000. The total membership at the end of June stood at 757, made up of 490 individual, 218 joint and 28 junior members. Membership has increased by 5% over the year, and a similar increase is anticipated over the next year.

7. Report from the Librarian and Programme Manager: Emma Laws and Emma Dunn

Emma Dunn said that autumn is the beginning of the New Year for any organisation associated with the academic world and as such, it is a time for reflection and an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our team. The Institution has had another busy year including some 'firsts' for the Institution. Having tentatively tried out Saturday opening last year, we have now appointed two Saturday Activities Coordinators funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund(NLHF). Stephanie Beddoes and Bethanie Howell, who originally came to us as

project volunteers, have delivered a programme which contains something for everyone. There have been Saturday Snippets for our members; specialist subject groups; thematic displays; activities for our Junior Members and their families and activities for people from the autistic community, to name but a few.

Our educational outreach programme has taken us to schools, heritage sites and community centres across Exeter. We have lent our pop-up displays to three different locations, [including one in Dorset] and recently a summary of our Global Lives project was presented at the Royal Geographical Society annual conference in London. These activities have been underpinned by skilled volunteers from our membership and our enthusiastic and clever student interns and I would like to thank this talented team for their contribution this year.

Anne Howard retired from the Institution in June having completed the first phase of a major reorganisation of stock, which we now all benefit from. Thanks are due to her for all her efforts. Since that time, our Library volunteers have stepped in and maintained a full library service for members and research support for the wider programme. The team have done an immense job and continued to make progress in both service and presentation of the library over the summer.

Emma Laws began by thanking the staff and volunteers who have warmly welcomed me to the Devon and Exeter Institution over the past week and a half. She said that she had been a member since returning to Devon last year and was thrilled to be appointed Librarian, having first discovered the Institution in 2007 when as Events Organiser for the CILIP Rare Books and Special Collections Group she organised a visit to Exeter's rare books collections, including the University's Old Library, the Cathedral Library and the DEI, being particularly keen to visit the DEI following a brief foray into the history of the library at Powderham Castle while studying for my first Masters degree. I knew of the historic connection between the Courtenays and the Devon and Exeter Institution and was struck not only by the history that embraced me when I walked through the front door but also by the stillness and quiet.

The Librarian said that she had worked in historic libraries for over 25 years, beginning her career as a chartered librarian at the Royal Library, Windsor Castle and having spent the last 20 years as a curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, managing collections of historic books, manuscripts, illustrations, photographs and other archival materials in the Museum's library, the National Art Library. She said her specialism is illustration and she gave a talk at the Institution last year on the stories and illustrations of Winnie-the-Pooh – a year on, my exhibition, 'Winnie-the-Pooh: Exploring a Classic', is still travelling around the world, currently in South Korea. She said that when not working at the DEI, she continued to work freelance for the V&A and for the Libraries of the National Trust and cataloguing the medical books in the Cathedral Library. Noting that she continued to work on the committees of several national organisations that support historic libraries and the people that work in them, she looked forward to working at the DEI, particularly those who volunteer in the Library, and to find inspiring new ways of engaging with the wonderful collection.

Emma Dunn continued that both she and Emma Laws believed that the Institution is very much a living library and not a historic site where a library once was. To enable us to fulfil our founders' vision and to protect the integrity of the libraries as a place to read, study and contemplate, we have been working more closely with other organisations this year. Working in partnership enables us to do things that our own space and resources alone could not support. We have made use of the professional teams and conservation studios at RAMM and the South West Heritage Trust and worked closely with the education team at Exeter Cathedral. We have participated in the first Exeter Day at St Nicholas Priory and worked with the newly formed Heritage Together Group, led by DEI trustee Henry French, to deliver coordinated activities across multiple sites for Heritage Open Days.

Our partnership with the University of Exeter continues to flourish and we are proud to be making an impact at the beginning of the careers of many of its students.

This year, our conservation intern Sophie Harding has secured a place Pembroke Library Cambridge; Bronte Lyster and Conal Priest have done graduate internships at RAMM and the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, respectively. Ben Maccready is preparing for a PhD and many members enjoyed hearing his research on our portraiture collection at the recent Saturday Snippet. Encouraging young people to engage with historic libraries, museums and archives is what creates the next generation of professionals

Emma Laws spoke of the Independent Libraries Association (ILA). In June this year the DEI hosted the Association's annual conference, combining the conference with a special 30th anniversary celebration. The conference offered delegates a full programme of lectures over three days in the Outer Library and workshops in the upstairs Reading Room, including a rare opportunity to discover the art of bookbinding with local expert, Rebecca Newman. The subject of this year's conference was 'Adaptation, Change, Reinvention: Continuity and Change in Independent Libraries' and conference hosts Emma Dunn, Anne Howard and our conservation architect Simon Cartledge opened the proceedings with a presentation on the DEI's exciting three-year development project which has seen crucial renovations to the structure of the building, projects to conserve and care for the Institution's historic book collections and the launch of a vibrant learning and engagement programme, including a revitalised partnership with Exeter University. Other speakers included Lisa Di Tommaso who talked about embracing change at the Morrab Library in Penwith, Cornwall's only independent library, founded in 1818, and Ann Barwood, Canon Librarian at Exeter Cathedral, who shared her experiences of recent changes in building and culture at the Cathedral Library. The DEI also welcomed delegates from further afield, including Jim Lowden from the Mechanics Institute in Australia who encouraged us all to distinguish the history, collections, people and places that make our independent libraries unique. The final session included presentations from libraries embarking on digital projects, including a virtual reconstruction of the library at Godmersham Park in Kent, home to Jane Austen's brother, Edward.

Corporate membership of national organisations such as the Independent Libraries Association provides important opportunities for networking, training and development as well as platforms for sharing ideas and experiences with professionals facing similar challenges. Emma Laws said that she will represent the DEI at forthcoming committee meetings. She is also web editor and digital champion for the CILIP Library History Group and Mentoring Officer for the Historic Libraries Forum, another UK-wide organisation that offers support, training and opportunities for networking to professionals working in a wide range of historic libraries.

Emma Dunn spoke of the series of consultations with our members, specialists, partners and the wider public which have taken place, considering the ongoing needs of the Institution building, the collection and the programme, with the aspiration to seek further grant funding for development. There are some areas of the building and services which are clearly in need of upgrading: our heating system, the Wi-Fi and electrics and the 20th Century extension housing the lavatories are all considered to require urgent attention. Having received reports from conservation specialists it has been noted that the temperature and humidity in the libraries fluctuate to such an extent that we have been advised to delay embarking on further conservation work until the environment is stabilised. We have done much to preserve and conserve the physical condition of the books over the past three years, however those consulted identified an opportunity to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the academic potential of the collection as a whole and we aspire to conduct a collection review and develop a long term research strategy.

The consultation considered the pressures of space and our expanding programme of activities. The front rooms overlooking Cathedral Green have been identified as possible

places for reading, study and group activities and only one is currently available for general use. Access to the first floor is not possible for people unable to use the stairs and so we are investigating the possibility of a lift with the help of Historic England and the Council conservation officer. Those consulted felt that there was also an opportunity for a very special project to revive the little garden yard at the back of the building. All of these have been considered in detail and we are in the process of delivering funding bids to support this project.

Emma Laws reported that the DEI had been successful in its bid to the Pilgrim Trust to secure £20,000 to initiate a digitisation project entitled, 'Our Region Revealed – Unlocking the Treasure of the Devon and Exeter Institution Illustration Collection'. The Friends of Devon Archives has offered a further £1000. The DEI is very grateful to Todd Gray, Stuart Blaylock, John Allan and Mark Stoye for their letters of support.

The Institution holds over 9000 prints, drawings, watercolours, brass rubbings and photographs, a remarkable and rich resource for studies in Westcountry history and topography and potentially for broader studies in British watercolour or ecclesiastical art and architectural design. Volunteers have improved the storage of the materials in collaboration with staff at the Devon Heritage Centre. In September the DEI welcomed Carol Anderson as Digital Project Coordinator. Carol has already made considerable progress in selecting and processing items to be digitised by Townsweb, a digitisation company specialising in providing remote access to heritage collections. We are looking forward to the next phase of the project which will see the cataloguing of the digitised materials according to a Spectrum-compliant cataloguing policy and, eventually, remote access to the catalogue from a link on the DEI's website.

The DEI continues to enjoy corporate membership of the London Library and the partnership has strengthened this year. Margaret and Derek Knight visited in September and Emma Laws met with several of the librarians at an independent libraries conference organised by the London Library and hosted by the East India Club. Members of the DEI are reminded that they can enjoy some of the benefits of membership of the London Library, including access to Catalyst, the London Library's online catalogue and eLibrary which offers access to a growing range of databases and online reference works, including British History Online, British Humanities Index, British Newspaper Archive, Illustrated London News, Times Digital Archive, Who's Who and Who Was Who, as well as JSTOR which provides access to over 2500 online journals. (These resources are only available in the Library.) The DEI can also order books from the London Library via Inter-Library Loan. Please ask the Librarian for more information about these services.

Emma Dunn noted that the work of the library and the programme would not be possible without support from the operational team, both in the office and in the Courtenay Room. Ceri McWilliams has already proved to be an indispensable administrator and in addition to her work on member and booking services, is contributing to the marketing and publicity of our activities. Mary Noon has contributed to some of our outreach work and has a good knowledge of the ecosystems in our little garden, which are of great value to our project work. We would like to thank Mary and her volunteer Sally for their support of the library and programme. With the new team in place and at the beginning of a new academic year, we all look forward to the Next Chapter for the Institution.

8. Election of Trustees

There were five trustee vacancies. The following four nominations had been received:

- Sandra Bond [standing for re-election for a second term]
- Christopher Chanter [standing for re-election for a second term]
- Margaret Knight [standing for re-election for a second term]
- Shane Cormie [standing for election]

As the number of vacancies exceeded the number of nominations these were, on the proposal of Derek Knight, seconded by Ian Watt, declared elected.

9. Any Other Business

Keith Scott suggested that that a talk on investing might be of interest to members.

The meeting closed at 1526.

Signed by the Chair:

Date: