



THE DEVON & EXETER INSTITUTION
LIBRARY & READING ROOMS
(Founded 1813)
Registered Charity No. 1172445

Minutes of the Board of Trustees held 5pm 22nd September 2021- Upper Reading Room

PART TWO

Trustees Present: Henry French (HF), Sandra Bond (SBo), Shane Cormie (SC), John Reeves (JR) (chair), Richard Templeton (RT), Ruth O'Neale (RON), Christopher Chanter (CC), Judith Morgane (JM), Colin Higgins (CH), Moragh Brooksbank (MB), Charlotte Easton (CE)

Staff present: Emma Dunn, Emma Laws

In attendance: Liam Dingle of Griffin Accountants (item 2 only)

Minutes: Ruth O'Neale

1. No apologies and no conflicts of interest noted.
2. Liam Dingle of Griffin Accountants attended and presented the accounts to trustees for 2020/21. They recommended after the project's capital works trustees get the building re-valued. There was discussion and clarification on changes in trustee, staffing numbers and the accrual of debtors income. There were some questions from trustees which were answered.

RT proposed the accounts were approved by trustees, RON seconded this. All trustees agreed.

Approved accounts will now be added to the website so these can be reviewed by members before the AGM.

3. Confidential Part one session

(see separate minutes)

4. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes approved.

5. Matters arising

With GR's resignation no longer have a lead trustee for the membership growth group. Agreed to revisit this after the AGM. EL manages the membership secretaries and agreed to lead on this with support from the leadership team until new lead trustee appointed.

Agreed subgroups and leadership of these will be agreed at the Annual Meeting of Trustees on Oct 27th.

6. Directors updates

Director of Project and Programme

ED confirmed the news regarding successful progression to the next phase and NLHF approval of funding for Stage 2 of the project, trustees congratulated ED and the staff for all their work on this. ED explained the process which now follows and how the information will be communicated to members and the public (including at AGM). The project steering group met yesterday and one of the key updates was that the application has been lodged for listed building consent. ED confirmed feedback from NHLF was that the proposed activity plan had made the project a priority project. It was noted that additional fixed term staff (equivalent to 1 FTE) would be hired to support this. ED noted the need for a speedy and effective recruitment for project posts, as the workload will increase and we do not currently have staff capacity to deliver the outcomes of the project. There is a project staffing budget and these posts will be temporary, for the duration of the project. SB noted there had been fewer regular volunteers returning post lockdown, so some recruitment is needed. The City of Literature are funding some memberships so this may enable the Institution to get some new volunteers who are not currently members.

Heritage Open days have been successful, getting more visitors (120), some giving cash donation. Some will also likely become new members.

Risk register, ED shared a verbal update, one potential new risk concerns the forthcoming test pit which will be dug pre works starting as there is always a risk of finding something of archaeological interest which might delay our building works.

Programme; ED talked through some of the evening lectures and asked for trustees to volunteer to introduce these. HF is doing the October one, JR has volunteered for the December one. Volunteers are needed for November, January, February and March lectures. The Members Christmas party was discussed and CC/RON agreed to plan this, likely to be a smaller event for 2021 and need to manage capacity etc.

ACTION: Trustees to confirm to ED if they can introduce any of the evening lectures.

ACTION: CC/RON fix date for the Members Christmas party and liaise with staff to organise this.

Director of Collections and Research.

EL confirmed two main updates, the proposed change to the Collections Development Policy which had been shared with trustees. It was proposed that a non permanent collection be established and this was approved by trustees.

Additionally EL confirmed that following a generous donation by Brian Le Messerier a large number of books will be sold via a bookdealer in Honiton with DEI receiving a percentage of all sales.

7. Business Plan Update

This will be a new standing agenda item to cover all operational income including membership.

The recent membership reports from the membership secretaries were reviewed and discussed and the renewal rates look very encouraging and are now in line with the pre

COVID historic levels each month, membership secretaries were again thanked for their efforts. RON raised a query on behalf of the membership secretaries regarding the identity of a life member and it was agreed former trustee DK may be able to assist with this.

ED confirmed there has been some good interest in venue hire recently with four recent bookings and CM is continuing to promote this with local businesses. JR confirmed he and SC gave library tours and issued recruitment membership leaflets to Chamber of Commerce representatives at a recent meeting at DEI.

8. Fundraising group update

SC confirmed there will be an update on the Larkowl work next month. SB summarised latest thinking on the proposed Arab/Islamic themed event in May. There was discussion about the new membership leaflet CM had produced and trustees agreed this is excellent and asked for this to be put on the website. The project steering group had proposed a members' funding appeal be launched as part of match funding for the project so this may be launched as an appeal at the AGM and once the funding news is communicated. It was suggested that it is recorded on webcollect when people give donations so there is a central record of potential and current donors. SC updated trustees on plans to improve the cash donation box in the foyer and confirmed card payments can also be taken. ID is leading on a potential fundraising initiative associated with green energy. It is expected more details on the ideas discussed will be shared at future meetings as ideas become more concrete plans.

9. Leadership Team update.

Report from the recent meeting had been shared and JR talked trustees through all updates and decisions. Key points highlighted were the decision to remove the "additional member" option which is seldom used, to rollout online Equality and Diversity training for staff and trustees for completion by end December, for the AGM to be in person attendance only and on the plans to extend the outside catering offer in the Courtenay Room as the pilot had been successful.

10. Finance Team update

Report from the recent meeting had been shared and RT talked trustees through the main points. In addition he shared a brief report on the performance of the COIF where the DEI has some investments. It was noted this has had a consistent performance in recent years and was a quite ethical fund. CC and CH asked some questions regarding the investment being in another currency and the potential risks given current political and economic factors. It was agreed a trustee could attend an open day in Dec/Jan and get more information. It was agreed trustees should review this again in February. It was noted moving investment funds can be time consuming, and that the return looked at over 5 years was strong.

ACTION: Add an item to February agenda to review again.

11. HR Team update

RON confirmed no meeting had been held but the main updates had been shared above. RON will confirm dates for the upcoming recruitment with directors and then ask all trustees who can support with shortlisting and interviews.

END

