



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

### **Minutes of the Board of Trustees held 5pm 11th August 2021- Upper Reading Room**

**Trustees Present:** Henry French (HF), Geoff Roberts (GR), Sandra Bond (SBo), Shane Cormie (SC), John Reeves (JR) (chair), Richard Templeton (RT), Ruth O'Neale (RON), Christopher Chanter (CC) (from 5.35pm), Judith Morgane (JM), Colin Higgins (CH), Moragh Brooksbank (MB) (from 5.20pm), Charlotte Easton (CE)

**Apologies:** Emma Dunn, Imogene Dudley

**Minutes:** Ruth O'Neale

**Staff present:** Emma Laws (EL),

1. **Apologies for absence (JR)**

Emma Dunn and Imogene Dudley sent apologies.

2. **Conflicts of Interest (JR)**

None declared.

3. **Minutes of the board held 30th June for approval\* (JR)**

These were accepted as accurate and approved.

4. **Matters arising (JR)**

These were all covered during the updates below.

5. **Directors Updates (EL)\***

**Programme**

A summary and spreadsheet from ED were shared ahead of the meeting. It was noted that many more events have been arranged in the last couple of years (even during lockdown). EL emphasised the call for papers and asked all trustees to help disseminate this, directors are especially keen to get papers from early career stage researchers/academics. The ongoing project/programme and collections alignment was noted, ie for the upcoming heritage open days 10-19th Sept which have an "edible England" theme there will be a relevant new display in the outer library.

**ACTION: all trustees to help promote/disseminate the call for papers.**

**Project**

JR talked trustees through the steering group update, the most recent meeting had focused on the response from Heritage England. ED is putting in the listed building application now. Options relating to the front entrance and welcome are being considered and advice is being sought from the architect. ED has talked to MB regarding this and this is ongoing, aiming to find a balance of accessibility and environmental concerns. The Manifesto for learning and engagement was discussed and JR urged all trustees read that particular update.

**Research & Collections**

Library service has been very busy, fully booked on some days but noted still slightly short of the required number of volunteers. Not all users of the library service are making appointments but most are. Outer library collection management project tantalisingly close to completion. New "rescue a

book” campaign being worked on, will be on the website quite soon. “Adopt a book” being revamped. Noted the book trolley made nearly £100 and the magazine auction £320. Received an important gift of an important book which the DEI had had previously “Travels in South Pacific”. Have also been able to rehome “Travels in South Africa” which was donated by Truscott, as this has been returned to the DEI after being missing  
[Part Two Minute relating to grant funding discussed].

**Operational matters**, today someone visited to assist with dismantling a display case, working with BH and CM and later the institution received a call saying one of the people had tested positive for Covid. Both BH and CM now need to isolate, the only option was to close DEI (insufficient staff to run it this week). The current plan is to re-open Tuesday 17th. Support is required from trustees to help EL from 17th onwards. It was agreed:

17th: GR will do this all day.

18th: SC morning, GR PM.

19th- SB can do all day.

20th SC can do Friday PM. JM can also help Friday.

RON/GR opening and closing on 21st as no staff available.

**ACTION: EL to liaise with relevant trustees.**

**ACTION: RON will dig out guidance on change in regulations regarding isolation/testing after 16th August and will share this with EL/CM.**

#### 6. **Building maintenance update\* (JR)**

JR talked through the prioritised works and his discussion paper. Bigger items might need fundraising, noted that in previous years regular maintenance items have been overlooked. Provision of 5K allocated this year for works. JR proposed the setting up of a new building maintenance group and trustees agreed this and CH/CE/JR confirmed they will contribute to the group.

**ACTION: JR/CH/CE to form new building maintenance group.**

**ACTION: RON to check with ED if new “fabric of the building policy” still required.**

#### 7. **Membership Update and reports\* (GR)**

Thanks to the membership secretaries for the latest reports. The latest membership numbers are encouraging, renewal rate now 88%, reflects the work of the membership secretaries as, phoning and writing to members has been effective.

The growth group has met (joint with fundraising group- SB, SC, GR, CE). GR confirmed as chair and the terms of reference were agreed. GR talked trustees through the proposed “Quick wins”; SB supporting a new group on family history, GR has emailed all members about a new Grandparents day.. Members day, current thinking is one of the heritage open days could be a “explore the DEI day” (pencilled in 16th Sept but not confirmed). GR is also exploring other potential events for members to take part in. Membership leaflet update shared by SC, there is a deadline of Aug 18th for first draft and SC will follow up with CM on progress on this. Trustees were asked if they wished to join the new group.

**ACTION: SC will follow up with CM.**

**ACTION: JM confirmed she will join the membership group.**

#### 8. **Additional trustee roles (JR)**

JR discussed this and proposed that rather than have one trustee as an Equality & Diversity lead a working group is established and trustees agreed this.

**ACTION: MB/CH/JR willing to be the group. Noted JM can help as well.**

#### 9. **Risk register\* (ALL)**

This was reviewed and discussed by trustees. JR confirmed a separate risk register for the project exists. It was suggested that given the institution has now had to close due to staff isolation that this is added to the specific covid risk.

**ACTION: RON feedback to ED**

10. **Fundraising update (SC, ED)**

SC gave a Fundraising Group update. Larkowl will start late Sept/Oct. Noted a grant application was submitted to Ecclesiastical and funding would be used for the garden/lift in garden or if granted a bigger sum would be used for the wall of Courtenay room. SB discussed some ideas for fundraisers to be attended by members ie cultural evening focused on Islamic culture. JM suggested events organised by the Cathedral recently in Cathedral in big country houses had been quite successful. Some suggestions about tying fundraising into Christmas giving and the market were proposed and need further discussion/consideration. It was agreed that useful contacts of members and trustees should be explored.

**ACTION: JM will join the fundraising group.**

11. **Leadership Team update\* (JR)**

JR talked trustees through the report of meeting July 21st 2021. It has been confirmed GR/RON will organise the members Christmas party! ED/RON have test run the online E&D training and will now proceed with the purchase for all. Heritage Open days, if trustees can help with member recruitment, let EL/CM know.

**ACTION: once ED has updated the Covid 19 document RON will reshare this with all trustees.**

**ACTION: EL/RON will review the digitisation supplier contract.**

12. **Finance Advisory Group update\* (RT, JR)**

RT talked trustees through the report of meeting July 23rd 2021 and the latest finance reports. Staff budget; extra £15k to cover salaries, mainly for the share of directors salaries between project and operational budget but also to fund two new part time posts in the Next Chapter project (subject to successful grant applications). Building maintenance has had £5K allocated. Independent inspection of accounts, the finance group need to set a date to meet with Griffin. The figures will be available for the 22nd Sept board and Griffin will attend. Noted that accounts will be finalised to be "received" not approved by members at the AGM. Budget headings have been changed for the new financial year and due to how Quickbooks presents the information it is difficult currently to report on previous/current year easily for comparison.

**ACTION; RT to arrange Griffin to attend board on 22/09/21.**

**ACTION: To add item to review performance of investment funds to Sept agenda.**

**ACTION: To add item for members to receive accounts to AGM agenda.**

13. **HR Advisory Group update (SC, GRE, RON)**

RON talked through the report of meeting July 20th 2021. RON suggested that once the online E&D training has been arranged that details of providers for this and the suggested workshop later this year pass to the new E&D group to advise on and for the staff team to manage. RON reminded all about completion of the model declaration and code of conduct. RON reminded all about sharing contact details, for trustees to confirm if these can or cannot be shared. JM is a new keyholder and queried the protocols for the intruder and fire alarm. It was noted there have been issues recently with many erroneous notifications of the intruder alarm but CM has hopefully resolved these now and resetting this has been simplified.

**ACTION: EL confirmed she and CM are currently updating the fire safety policy. RON to share the current fire policy.**

**ACTION: Intruder instructions; RON will cascade instructions for this to all trustee keyholders.**

14. **AOB**

None raised.

Meeting ended at 6:35pm.

15. Date of next meetings 22nd September, Annual planning meeting (post AGM 21st October) 24th November (*but note subsequent to the meeting it was proposed this is changed to October 27th*)

