



27th AGM of Eden Valley Museum Trust

Registered Charity 10655466

Tuesday 3rd October 2023, 7pm, in Rickards Hall

Minutes

Present

Alan Smart OBE(Chair), Alan Layland (Deputy Chair), Joan Varley (Hon. Sec.). Executive Members: Angela Baker, Jean French, Richard Johnson, Margot McArthur, Jim Morgan (SDC Rep.). House Manager: Martin Frost, and a further 14 members.

Alan Smart welcomed members to the meeting and drew their attention to the images being displayed on the screen showing various museum activities from throughout the last 12 months.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Hilary Brand, Peter Brand, Claire Donithorn, Lorraine Ganney, Jane Wroe, Christine Byrne

2. **Minutes of the previous AGM**

Proposed by Alan Layland, seconded by Julie Johnson. All agreed and the motion was carried and the minutes were signed as a correct record of events.

3. **Matters arising from the minutes**

None

4. **Chairman's Report**

AS presented his report to the meeting and expressed thanks to MF for his understanding in relation to changes to his contract; to JV for her work on the Object of the Month during 2023; to JF, RJ and JJ for the very successful children's activities. He drew attention to the significant financial support the museum receives from ETC and GSBT which was fundamental to the ability of the museum to operate, and thanked the various other organisations who regularly support EVMT, including the Warren Meadows Trust, AirBorn and others. Having taken part in a guided town walk this year, he was very impressed with the support for and interest in these walks, enjoyed it very much, and thanked those involved.

A recent private event held at the museum was organised by a team at SDC on behalf of Cllr Alan Layland, current Chair of SDC. AL has kindly nominated EVMT as one of his two charities during his year of tenure. This event welcomed dignitaries and local council leaders from across the county to an evening of speeches, refreshments and tours of the museum led by two young volunteers, Polly Duckworth and Elin Hancock. Feedback was very positive and good contacts were made, with a total of c.£1,000 raised for the museum. AS expressed thanks to Alan and his wife Lyn.

AS ended by expressing heartfelt thanks to all the members and volunteers for their continued support of the museum, without whom there would be no museum.



5. **Curatorial and House Management Reports**

a) Curatorial Report

As Hilary Brand (Curatorial Chair) was absent, AS read the report which listed the members of the Curatorial Team; current and future exhibitions and displays; events and activities; behind the scenes work; and enquiries, the latter of which has resulted in a total income of £178 in new memberships and donations. AS added his thanks to Helen Jackman who has recently taken a step back from conservation and cataloguing, having served in that role since the early days of the museum, and expressed his gratitude that she will continue in an advisory role.

The Relief Road model has been moved to the Upper Hall. There are plans to repeat the successful History Quiz in the new year; repeat attendance at the Car Show; AS will be giving a talk to Edenbridge Evening WI in February; and another Dickens Reading is taking place on 16th December.

In relation to mention in the report of the Twinning Exhibition, Jenny Chettle informed the meeting that the Twinning Group will be kept going, with a new formal group being set up, confirmed by Mavis Walters.

In relation to guided walks. John Isherwood said the size of the group previously mentioned by AS, 20+ was really unmanageable, attention needs to be given to safe numbers.

A query was raised about the Floods Display which had been taken down to make space for the new children's dressing up area. JF informed the meeting that there are plans for the floods display to return next year.

b) House Manager's Report

MF presented his report which covered Visitor Numbers and Outreach - in both cases numbers are on track to improve on last year's figures; Membership, which has been rationalised down to 140 members, but this rationalisation has led to a Gift Aid claim of c.£2,500; a new corporate membership package currently being promoted via the Chamber of Commerce; Building and Display upkeep, including the planned work to address woodworm in parts of the museum during December and January; and plans to seek funding to address tired areas of the museum and lighting. MF ended with a brief overview of the current financial situation in lieu of the Treasurer who had stood down for personal reasons.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

EVMT are currently seeking a new Treasurer.

7. **To receive and approve Annual Report and Accounts**

AS apologised for the absence of the full accounts; thanked MF for stepping up to produce the financial update. Work is in progress to send figures to our accountant and the Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 will be sent, in due course, to members along with information and voting form relating to Item 9.



8. Appointment of Independent Examiner

The meeting was asked to vote on the re-appointment of I.J. Currie FCA, Currie Accountancy Ltd., Edenbridge as the museum's independent examiner. Proposer: Julie Johnson, Seconded by Jane Higgs. All agreed and the motion was carried.

9. Change of status to CIO

AS referred to the documents sent out and made available on the website relating to the proposed change of status to a CIO – Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The change is an administrative procedure with everything, including the name of the museum remaining the same and the new Constitution follows the recommended format by the Charity Commission for organisations of our type. We have received additional advice and learned lessons about the process from Tenterden Museum. AS invited comments and questions from the floor.

Jane Higgs commented that she'd read the covering document and the draft constitution. She was aware of two other museums that are currently going through this process and suggested it was a positive thing to do as it would lead to enhanced safeguards.

Margot McArthur asked what the additional benefits would be, AS responded that it would give additional protection to members and Trustees; JV added that it was a requirement of the Arts Council Accreditation for independent museums such as ourselves to change our status to a CIO.

JH queried the situation of Lease Trustees; AS/JV responded that as we don't own the building, they are separate to this process.

10. Election of Officers and Executive Committee

Chair: Alan Smart OBE
Deputy Chair: Alan Layland
Hon. Sec.: Joan Varley
Curatorial Chair: Hilary Brand
SDC Rep.: Jim Morgan
ETC Rep: Stuart McGregor
Member: Angela Baker
Member: Jean French
Member: Richard Johnson
Member: Margot McArthur

The meeting agreed to a block vote. Proposed by Kay Wilson, seconded by Ray Taylor. All agreed and the motion was carried.

11. Request for Volunteers and Exec. Members, process of application

Jean French is the initial contact for all new volunteers. Richard Johnson is the contact for Stewards. The museum is seeking a new Treasurer and any members interested in taking on a new role at the museum can also contact the House Manager (curator@evmt.org.uk) or the Chair (chairman@evmt.org.uk) directly.

John Isherwood queried the number of stewards having calculated that only 11% of members were stewards which meant that the HM had to regularly stand in as a



steward. Richard Johnson agreed there was a finite list of stewards and more would be welcome. Saturdays are a particular problem. Some of the existing stewards are understandably nervous about being on their own in the museum. AS called upon members at the meeting to think about becoming Stewards and the new Executive Committee will look into avenues for recruiting more.

12. **Chair's final comments**

AS thanked everyone for coming. The museum is in a good place as far as visitors are concerned and we are getting to where we want to be financially.

13. **Any other business**

AS informed the meeting that the annual EVH Newsletter is coming soon.

RJ thanked all the Stewards.

AL proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair, Hon. Sec., and HM for running the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed

Date

Chair, Eden Valley Museum Trust

Pending approval and signature at 2024 Annual General Meeting

Members attending:

Julie Johnson

Pauline Broussard

Jane Higgs

Ray Taylor

Jenny Chettle

Janet Slack

John Isherwood

Lyn Layland

Lesley Martin

John Martin

Alan Ford

Rosemary Eade

David Kibble

Mavis Walters