



Minutes of the 28th AGM of Eden Valley Museum Trust, Thursday 30th May 2024, 7pm, in Rickards Hall.

Registered Charity 10655466

The Acting Chair, Alan Layland welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for any objections to Item 10 being moved up the Agenda to be dealt with after Item 1. All agreed.

1. Apologies

Jenny Smith, Dot Francis, Angela Baker, Ken & Mrs Cooper, Mary Harding, Brenda Hillman, Cheryl Bell, Pauline Broussard, Jean Holland, Barbara Grinsell, Jill Davison, Dr Brian Philp, Ken Gunn, Richard Johnston, Rosemary Harrison, Wendy Taylor, Jenny Chettle, Andrew Saunders, Bernard Oldfield, Sue Oldfield, Simon Lapper, Evelyn Digby-Jones, Rose Francis, Jane Wroe, Gwen Chappel, Margot McCarthur, Claire Donithorn, Michael Donithorn.

Item 10. Vote to Elect Officers and Members of the Executive Committee for 2024-2025

JV informed the meeting that 15 votes had been received online or via the post. 14 of which had voted in favour of all 7 nominees. 1 voted for 5 nominees and abstained on 2. AL called for a block vote in the room and all attending voted in favour of the 7 nominees and the vote was carried.

The Executive Committee 2024-2025 comprises: Chair & Trustee Alan Smart OBE, Hon. Secretary & Trustee Jean French, Hon. Treasurer & Trustee Joan Varley, Trustee Alan Layland, Trustee Richard Johnson, Trustee Richard Seymour, Membership Secretary Julie Johnson, Curatorial Chair Hilary Brand, ETC Rep. Stuart McGregor, SDC Rep. Jim Morgan, Museum Mentor Heather Stracey.

Alan Smart OBE took the Chair and thanked Alan Layland and all other members who had served on the Executive Committee 2023-2024. There are still two spaces on the Executive Committee for any members who might be interested in stepping up.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

Proposer: Jim Morgan, Seconder: Alan Layland. All agreed. The minutes were approved and signed by AS.

3. Matters arising

No matters arising.

4. Chair Report

AS said that a lot is covered elsewhere in various reports but would highlight a few things from the preceding year.

Starting with the most difficult matter – finance. The museum had been a victim of fraud which came to light in November of last year. A very difficult situation and was the collective failure of the committee which takes responsibility. What we have done & the way forward has been mostly covered in the Treasurer's report. On discovery JV, Sandra Shaw (our book-keeper) and Paul Byrne investigated further. The museum's disciplinary procedure was followed and the person concerned has left the museum. The matter now rests

with the police which limits the information we can provide. Discretion is needed now. The Charities Commission was contacted, and given the scale of the fraud, no report was required at that time. All sponsors were informed and told that the matter rested with the police. Our financial practices are now aligned with the Charity Commission guidelines. Huge thanks to people who helped namely JV, Sandy & Paul Byrne.

Moving on. The museum was closed for a longer period than previous years to enable woodworm treatment. It is an old building so no surprise that ETC found it and was able to get it dealt with in the closed season. We took everything out into Rickards Hall and after treatment, back in, a huge challenge. Thanks to all those who helped – too many to mention. We have 2 new splendid exhibitions – the hospital in the courtyard bedroom and the Players which replaced the very interesting Francis Barker exhibition.

We also took the opportunity to look at our retail outlet which Clare Seymour has taken on; the shop now receives very positive comments. Julie Johnson has taken on membership. He paid tribute to Peter Brand for the touchscreen project which was facilitated by Alan Smith. AS experienced a school visit and thanked JF and others for activities and outreach. JV thanked for Hon. Sec role & acting treasurer, Barbara Mitchell for being quiz mistress and Lyn Layland for research. He thanked Helen Jackman and Claire Donithorn, both of whom have been longstanding members of the curatorial team, and both are happy to remain in an advisory role. Finally, he thanked stewards and others who enable us to open the museum and for Richard Johnson in corralling them and organising the rota. Also, the Historic walks, thanks to John Isherwood, Kay Wilson and John Martin for leading them.

Jim Morgan mentioned thanks should go to Elin Hancock and Polly Duckworth who acted as guides around the museum for Alan Layland's event – we are his designated charity.

5. Curatorial and House Management Reports

Both reports had been made available online via the AGM 2024 webpage and would be emailed to members with these minutes.

House Management: JV drew attention to the need for an additional IT volunteer now that we had lost Peter Brand.

Curatorial: JF highlighted the need for more volunteers on the Curatorial Committee; the forthcoming D-Day display; and Children's Activities throughout the summer using resources we already have, then invited questions. Rachel Cooper raised the issue of extending the publicity of these events to more schools and this will be addressed.

6. Acting Treasurer's Report

The report had been made available online via the AGM 2024 webpage and would be emailed to members with these minutes. JV gave an update on the balances in both the current and savings account at end of day 29 May'24: CAF Cash £3,092.77 and £7.92 in the savings/reserve account. There are some outstanding bills to pay which will be addressed over the coming months. JV stated her aim is to continue to balance the books each month and to end this financial year in sufficient profit to start re-building our reserve.

She thanked her curatorial colleagues for their continued efforts which have brought funds into the museum through the shop, outreach, activities, enquiries, and events; also, Sandra Shaw and Paul Byrne for their strenuous efforts in retrieving significant VAT and Gift Aid refunds which had helped balance the books at

end of March '24; and Isobel Currie for making sense of it all within our self-imposed deadline to have both sets of accounts ready for this meeting.

A big thank to all members, as the museum finances receive a big boost in April and May when annual membership fees start to come in; we are fortunate to be slowly but regularly gaining new members. The membership fee remains at £14 for individuals and £24 for couples/families, no increase in fees, but if anyone hasn't updated their standing orders to reflect these amounts, it would be great if they could check on that. An added thank you to those members who kindly pay an additional, sometimes significant amount as a donation on top of their membership fees, which is very much appreciated.

7. Vote to receive and approve Annual Report and Accounts

Draft copies of the final annual accounts for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 have been received and made available online. AS asked members to vote if they agreed to the Executive Committee signing off both sets of accounts at their first Exec Meeting on 12th June.

Proposer: Ray Taylor, Seconder: Alan Layland, all agreed.

8. Vote on the Appointment of Isobel Currie as Independent Examiner

Proposer: Jim Morgan, Seconder: Julie Johnson, all agreed.

9. Vote to change status of Eden Valley Museum Trust to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

JV informed the meeting that 9 members had responded online or via the post. 8 voted for the change, 1 voted against. The Chair called for a vote in the room.

Proposer: Alan Layland, Seconder: Richard Seymour, all agreed.

10. Vote to Elect Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

Dealt with after Item 1.

11. Chair's final comments

AS expressed thanks to all members, stewards, trustees – we need you all, please stay with us. Our finances are now in a much better shape – no fraud, rejigging of management responsibilities, no need for house manager, so money is being saved. As the year progresses, finances should improve.

12. Any other business

i. Bob Orridge drew attention to an occasion early in the history of the museum when Church House had been in danger of burning to the ground.

ii. Joan Varley drew attention to the Time Capsule in the roof space of the museum. Jane Higgs suggested that the 25th anniversary of the museum in 2025 might be the occasion to publicise this and perhaps add to it.

iii. Rachel Cooper suggested a box of old photographs that visitors could rummage through might be a good addition. The Curatorial Team will discuss.

iv. Whilst it was appreciated there was an ongoing need for confidentiality and lack of speculation, John Isherwood expressed concern on behalf of the members about the financial fraud.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Signed

Date

Chair, Eden Valley Museum Trust

Pending approval and signature at 2025 Annual General Meeting

Attendees: Julie Johnson, Richard Johnson, Alan Smart OBE, Jean French, Joan Varley, Min Hancock, Stuart McGregor, Kay Wilson, John Isherwood, Clare Seymour, Richard Seymour, Lyn Layland, Alan Layland, David Kibble, Jane Higgs, Janet Slack, Lindsey Eaton, Brenda Saunders, Jim Morgan, Fiona Lewis, Keith Orriss, Lesley Martin, John Martin, Margaret Pocock, David Pocock, Rosemary Eade, Helen Jackman, Maggie Stitchman, Ben Brownless, Alan Ford, Hilary Brand, Teresa Agate, Bob Orridge, Christine Byrne, Ray Taylor, Anthea Hopkins, Rachel Cooper.

Eden Valley Museum Trust, Church House, 72 High Street, Edenbridge TN8 5AR