

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
FRIENDS OF ROMSEY ABBEY
SUNDAY 19 JUNE 2022
In the Church Rooms

Present: were 38 members.

Opening prayer.

Welcome: The President, Rev. Thomas Wharton, welcomed the members and said what a pleasure it was to be back, eating strawberries and cream, after a difficult two years. He thanked the Friends and hoped that we can continue to work closely with the PCC to enhance the Abbey and work towards some visible projects.

Apologies: Anne Hewett, Colin and Rosemary Davis, Mike Prince, Geraldine Trayhorne, John and Janet Hammond, Geoff and Sandy Gibbs.

Minutes of the AGM on 18th November 2021 were agreed as a true record. Proposed by Andrea Wooldridge and seconded by Stephen Wood.

Acting Chairman's Report 2021/22

Despite the impact of the Covid pandemic on our activities, the committee continued to meet by Zoom during the year. Matters focused on the return to normality for activities and events, actual and potential projects to fund, and various aspects of administration of the charity.

We were pleased therefore to be able to return to holding our 2021 AGM in person in the Church Rooms, with a good attendance. Colin and Rosemary Davis were both elected to the committee as new Trustees, strengthening the team yet again.

Further work has continued on resolving anomalies with the membership list.

Communication with members has been understandably difficult, and we have probably not been producing the number of newsletters or email updates which we should – though for many periods of the year, there was inevitably little to report.

We were unable to find a new Chairman during the course of the year, however it would appear that the situation will now be resolved at this 2022 AGM, for which I am very grateful.

I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their support during these frustrating times, and also for their patience and forbearance during the period I have been holding such a range of responsibilities. It has meant they have heard far too much of my voice in meetings!

Dick Hewett
Acting Chairman

Acceptance proposed by Adrienne Mordan, seconded by Roger Rowe.

Treasurer's Report

Comments: Income for 2022 includes money transferred from 2021, for events that did not take place last year, hence the negative in 2021. Any money that is given in addition to the subscriptions are classed as donations. We still have two bank accounts as some standing orders continue to be paid into HSBC who charge us £60 for our charity account. The amount spent on grants remains low, as is reported elsewhere.

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st March 2022

	2022	2021
Receipts		
Income from Subscriptions	3,720	3,525
Donations and legacies	1,897	2,440
Fundraising activities	80	0
Income from activities	6,851	-1,360
Interest	32	90
Gift Aid	0	850
Total receipts	12,500	5,544
Payments		
Grant	4,058	10,112
Expenditure on Activities	5,127	0
Printing, website and displays	111	38
Donation	0	480
Bank Charges	15	0
Total payments	9,311	10,630
Net (payments)/receipts for the year	3,189	-5,086
Cash funds as at 1st April 2020	85,632	90,717
Cash funds as at 31st March 2021	88,900	85,632

All amounts relate to unrestricted funds

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 31st March 2022

	2022	2021
Cash Funds		
Bank current and deposit accounts	13,141	9,904
CCLA COIF Deposit Fund balance	75,760	75,728
Assets		
Payments made for future events	6,985	1,908
Stock of goods for resale	0	0
Liabilities		
Amounts received in respect of future events	13,371	6,711
Accrued expenses	0	0

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 19 June 2022

Dick Hewett, Treasurer and Acting Chairman

Acceptance proposed by Bill Slegg and seconded by Stephen Wood



Projects Report

The *Friends* make grants to cover or partially cover the costs of projects which aim to bring benefits to users of the Abbey, its environs and the Church Rooms. Projects may be proposed by the Vicar, Churchwardens, Standing Committee, PCC, Subcommittees and Working Groups of the PCC or individuals. Decisions on which projects to support and grants to be made are taken by the committee of trustees. Funds for these grants arise from membership subscriptions, gift aid, profits from events, generous donations and legacies. Supported projects tend to fall into three categories: outreach, enhancing the visitor experience and parish facilities.

Outreach

We continue our annual commitment to contribute towards the cost of employing the Children and Families Worker; covering incidental costs of running the Ethelflaeda Festival; and similarly, the Festival of Light. New this year; we covered the start-up cost for the Listening Ear Café.

Enhancing the Visitor Experience

Earlier this year the Stewards were in danger of running out of the free leaflets they hand out to visitors. The Friends responded to an emergency appeal to fund the cost of printing another batch.

Parish Facilities

The committee has agreed to fund traditional donation boxes to complement the Good Boxes; the first box is in place near the South Door. The Church Rooms Committee needs to replace the cooker which has become unreliable; the *Friends* have agreed to part-fund the cost of replacement.

Observation

It is clear from the above report that recently there has been no significant progress on any major project which the *Friends* exist to support. Your committee is very disappointed with the situation and has written to the PCC to try to find ways of unblocking these projects and making progress.

We have recently written to the PCC and had a response from them. We will be meeting them to discuss our aims and express concern that we are not spending our money on visible projects. We are also concerned that with the high rate of inflation the value of our money will be eroded so there is extra urgency to reach a satisfactory channel of communication.

Mike Prince
Projects Chair

Acceptance proposed by Andrea Wooldridge and Seconded by Adrienne Mordan

FRA Events Report 21-22

The FRA Events Calendar runs by calendar year. Inevitably, with the continuing constraints of the pandemic, much of the events programme for 2021 was yet again postponed for a further year. The minibus trips planned for 2020 are now taking place (with one exception) in 2022!

We were, however, able to resume coffee mornings, with an outdoor event in the South Garth in July, and a return to the Town Hall in September and November. We were also able to hold our annual dinner at the White Horse in October, after an absence of several years, and this was thoroughly enjoyed by 80 diners.

It was also possible for us to return to Sonning in December for the delayed performance of "Top Hat", again enjoyed by a virtually full coach of members. Much to our subsequent disappointment, the theatre company have decided to repeat the production in December 2022, so we have reluctantly made the decision to leave it until 2023 and a new production before making another trip to Sonning.

Understandably the limited activity in events reduced the surpluses contributed to the funds.

I am confident that the news from 2022's events will be much more positive, as we have already embarked on a full programme of events in the current year, commencing with the Thames boat trip in April 2022. But more about all those in next year's report!

Dick Hewett
Chairman, Events Committee

Acceptance proposed by Celia Rowe and seconded by Adrienne Mordan

FRA Membership Secretary Report 2022

Entering June 2022 our membership stands at 321 paying members, and 11 Honorary members (Parish staff and Church Wardens.)

Numbers fell throughout the Covid-19 epidemic. With the Abbey so often closed for visitors, so many people isolating, and hence so few able to see our membership leaflets in the Abbey, there have been very few new members joining. With our age profile we have lost members - some having died, some moving away from the area to be near family, and others feeling no longer able to contribute to the Friends. We thank them all for their contributions over the years.

In 2020/21 four of our members died and 16 members resigned. In 2021/22, five of our members died and 16 resigned. Here's hoping that with the increase in the Abbey's opening times and our new programme of activities, we will see our numbers start to rise again. 17 Letters have been sent to those who have not paid their subs and all have replied.

Roger Rowe
Membership Secretary

Acceptance proposed by Dick Hewett and seconded by Christine Brazier.

Election of Trustees:

Two Trustees were not seeking re-election. John Thompson Hall was thanked for his time as Projects Chair.

Bill Slegg was taking some time out but hoped to be back with us soon.

Jill Hall was proposed as Chair, nominated by Dick Hewett, seconded by Roger Rowe.
Rosemary Barker was proposed as Secretary, nominated by Dick Hewett, seconded by Jill Hall.

The following Trustees were unanimously elected en bloc by those present:

Jill Hall - Chair

Dick Hewett - Vice-Chair, Chair of Events, and Treasurer

Rosemary Barker - Secretary

Mike Prince - Chair of Projects

Roger Rowe - Membership Secretary

Trustees - Andrea Wooldridge, Patricia Kerridge, Colin and Rosemary Davis, Adrienne Mordan.

AOB

We have more Friends badges for sale.

We also have a card designed by Rex Trayhorne which has information about the Friends and will be for sale at £2.