

EXETER CIVIC SOCIETY

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 11 December 2024

Present: Keith Lewis (Chair), Gert Vonhoff, Andy McKeon (Secretary), Jennifer Woodman, Jane Evans (Treasurer), Hilary Neville, Pamela Wootton

Apologies: John Monks

Welcome: KL welcomed Hilary Neville to the committee

1. Minutes of previous meeting – 8 October 2024.

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising.

Item 3. Discovering Exeter Booklets. AM reported that 35 booklets had been sold. As agreed, one each had been given to Aylwyn Bowen, Ian Maxted and the two people who had tested the walks. Free copies had not yet been given to the Chair of St Leonard's Neighbourhood Association and the Devon Archive. The ISBN had yet to be registered and copies given to the statutory UK libraries. Work was underway on the Sidwell Street area (Julia Neville) and West of the Exe (David Solman). One or both should be finished in 2025. It was agreed that contacting the Heavitree History Society to see if they wished to revise the Heavitree booklet should wait on progress on the other two. The Society was only likely to be able to afford one per year. AM would see if RAMM and the Information Centre on the Quay would take copies for sale.

Item 3 Walks. GV would lead a walk on 15 January. Wendy Rakestrow would lead the cancelled St. Thomas one on 5 March. PW was discussing a campus walk with the University, possibly for April. AM had asked if the people who had tested the St Leonard's booklet would like to lead one or both walks in it. One had indicated it was possible and the other had yet to reply.

Item 4 Community Alliance. This item was held over for the next meeting (KL).

4. Chair's Update

KL had circulated a written report. Points considered further were:

Exeter Energy. It was agreed the Society should object to the proposed disposal of the Grace Road Field. Although a planning application and possibly further consultation on a master plan would be required it was unlikely that objections to the development would be successful once the disposal had been agreed. There was a case for the centre to be sited at the further end of the field as it would be less intrusive and public access to the site nearest Clapperbrook Lane could be safeguarded but it was agreed a simple objection at this stage would be best. Committee members were urged to submit their own objections and Society members would be asked also to submit objections.

Clarendon House. KL had circulated a draft response to pre-application consultation by council officers on the proposal. It would be further considered by the SP&H group the

following day. The committee agreed the letter should be sent subject to any further comments from the SP&H group and revision of the section on proposed crossings to remove the suggestion that one should not be put in place because traffic might be adversely affected. The developers would be holding a public consultation on 16 December and members were urged to attend.

The speaker programme is:

- 18 January 2025 Estelle Buckridge Volunteer Manager for Exeter Heritage Volunteers. In KL's absence GV or AM would need to lead the meeting.
- 15 February John Smith Life in Roman Exeter (KL arranging)
- 15 March Discussion on the Exeter Local Plan
- 12 April (Meeting date rearranged). Social event at the Friends Meeting House to include a possible talk by Chris Dent (KL to book room/garden and liaise with Chris Dent)

Stuart Blaylock had agreed to speak about Bowhill House. KL would contact John Davidson about a possible talk.

The Society had booked a table for the 1 February history event at the Mint. HN, AM, GV and Stephen Mariner would be at the event and able to staff the table. Ian Maxted would also be present.

5. Treasurer's Report

JE had circulated an up to date set of accounts. Questions were raised about the number of members and whether the subscriptions figure in the accounts included donations from life members. JE would review the figures for the next meeting.

6. Planning Report.

KL had circulated the minutes of the 9 October, 29 October and 20 November Planning Group meetings. His report to the committee also included details of the group's comments on the proposed changing rooms and classrooms at Exwick playing fields and the development at the Station Master's House on New North Road. There were additional comments.

7. Strategic Planning and Highways

GV had circulated a report on the group's activities. There were no additional points.

8. AGM Follow-up

AM would ask JE to change the list of Trustees held by the Charity Commission to reflect changes agreed at the AGM. He would also ask her to delve further into the current status of the Matthew the Miller clock and whether the Society's annual £250 donation for maintenance be made. JN had considered the meeting very well organised with a good discussion on future activities.

9. Recruitment

It was agreed that the Society needed to recruit more members and more active members. Points made were:

- KL would offer to speak about the Society to other groups to stimulate interest.
- AM would review the Civic Voice website to gather ideas.
- Any recruitment drive might best be linked to a campaign which could gather publicity such as that on Larkbeare or the Tree Preservation Task Force.
- There might be an event to which local groups and the Community Builders could be invited.
- A recruitment drive would take most of the Society's resources, leaving little space for other activities.

The subject would be discussed further at the next meeting (AM).

10. Royal Clarence

KL and AM had attended a meeting with four members of the Devon Buildings Group (DBG) , Todd Gray and Cllrs Tess Read and Diana Moore to discuss the lack of progress on the Royal Clarence site. AM would circulate the note of the meeting to committee members. With the help of the DBG, KL would draft a letter with the help of those present at the meeting to the developer about progress. There were specific concerns about preservation of the wall paintings and other heritage aspects of the building and the security of heritage items which had been removed from the site. Later action might involve a campaign.

11 NPPF and Civic Voice In JM's absence these items were held over for the next meeting.

9. Any Other Business.

PW reported that Hazel Harvey had asked if the Society would take a large number of press cuttings she had collected. It was noted that copies of local papers were held in the Devon Archive. Ian Maxted would be visiting HH to go through some of HH's books and could advise her then about whether the cuttings needed to be kept.

15. Dates of Next Meetings

Tuesday 18 February 2025, Wednesday 23 April, Tuesday 15 July, all at 2pm Southernhay United Reformed Church. AM to organise.