



The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

FORMERLY THE ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1852

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2024

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

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The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Trustees and Corporate Information

Patron: Lord Petre, K.C.V.O., J.P., M.A.

Vice-Presidents: W.M. Abbott, M.A., F.I.A.
D.G. Buckley, B.Sc., M.C.If.A., F.S.A.
A. Corder-Birch, D.L., F.S.A.
Dr. P.M. Leach, B.A., M.B.B.S.
A.B. Phillips, B.E.M., B.A.
H.M. Stuchfield, M.B.E., J.P., D.L., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.
Dr. C.C. Thornton, B.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.

Trustees: P.J. Wise, M.A.(Cantab.), Cert.Mus.Stud., A.M.A., M.C.If.A., F.S.A.*
H. Brooks, B.A., M.C.If.A., F.S.A. *Secretary*
W.M. Abbott, M.A., F.I.A. *Treasurer*
M. Atkinson, B.A., M.C.If.A.
A. Corder-Birch, D.L., F.S.A.
A. Crosby, B.A., M.Soc.Sc., F.S.A. *Chairman E.I.A.G.*
Dr. M.E. Curteis, B.A., M.A., Ph.D., A.M.A., F.R.N.S.
T. O'Connor, B.Sc., M.Sc.
L.E.A. Pooley, M.A., M.C.If.A.
P. Sainsbury, S.E.N.
H.M. Stuchfield, M.B.E., J.P., D.L., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.†
N.P. Wickenden, M.A., A.M.A., F.S.A.
N.R. Wiffen, M.A.
A.N. Wightman, B.Sc., M.A., M.C.If.A.

Curator: P.J. Wise, M.A.(Cantab.), Cert.Mus.Stud., A.M.A., M.C.If.A., F.S.A.

Independent
Examiner: P. Evans, F.M.A.A.T.

Registered
Charity No.: 213218

Registered Office: Hollytrees Museum, High Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1UG

Bankers: Barclays Bank PLC, Brentwood

Blog: www.esah160.blogspot.co.uk

X (formerly Twitter): <https://x.com/ESAH160>

Website: www.esah1852.org.uk

**President*

†Membership Secretary

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Trustees' Report

Structure Governance and management

The organisation is an unincorporated association, originally founded as the Essex Archaeological Society in 1852, changing its name to the Essex Society for Archaeology and History in 1985. It is governed by a constitution as revised and adopted at the 2015 A.G.M. It registered as a charity in 1962. Its objects as stated in the constitution are:

1. to promote and encourage the study of archaeology and history in the historic county of Essex;
2. in furtherance of the above, to publish the results of such studies in the Society's journal, and to disseminate information on Essex archaeology and history through the appropriate media;
3. to organise conferences, lectures and visits for the benefit of members and interested members of the public, and to educate the wider community and other bodies on matters of common interest and concern; and
4. to provide library facilities for Society members and other members of the public.

The management of the Society is vested in a Council of Management who are the trustees of the Society. There are six trustees who are directly elected at the A.G.M., as are the President, Secretary and Treasurer, who are ex-officio members of Council. There are a number of members who serve the Society in various capacities and, as proposed by Council, further ex-officio members are elected onto Council at the A.G.M. The list of trustees is set out on page 1.

Council is aided in undertaking its responsibilities by various committees which report directly to Council, namely Publications and Research Committee, Library and Archives Committee and the Programme Committee. In addition it has special interest sections, named the Essex Industrial Archaeology Group and the Essex Place Names Project, both of which are financially supported. The society is continuing the activities previously associated with the Essex Archaeological and Historical Congress. In 2021 it has taken on the assets and liabilities of the *Essex Journal*. The trustees retain the direct responsibility for, and active supervision of, expenditure.

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report have complied with their duty to have regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.

Council meets four times a year, with meetings being hybrid, in person and with Zoom. Similarly, the work of the Committees was carried out via email and by zoom meetings. As ever Council is extremely grateful to all those who have given their time and energy to serve on these committees, as well as to those who have represented the Society on other bodies.

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Trustees' Report

President's review

This is the first annual report that I have the pleasure of presenting to the Society's membership. I must begin by thanking my predecessor Nick Wickenden for his contribution over the last three years. Nick became President during the Covid pandemic when the Society, as in other areas of life, had to operate in a very restricted manner with its activities all being online. He proved to be very capable in the role and successfully led the transition back to in-person meetings. The Society has greatly benefited from his enthusiasm, commitment and pleasant manner.

During 2024 the Society has maintained a full range of activities including a programme of members' visits, publications and the annual symposium as well as making grants and responding to requests for assistance from individuals concerned about the county's heritage. As will be seen elsewhere in this Annual Report and Accounts, the Society has a healthy membership (although more, especially younger, members are always welcome) a Council of Management at full strength and sound finances.

The Society commenced its programme of members' visits on 11th May with a walking tour of Harwich, which took in the house belonging to the master of the Mayflower Christopher Jones, the Guildhall, the Electric Palace cinema of 1911 (one of the oldest purpose-built cinemas to survive) and the seventeenth-century Treadwheel Crane. The annual celebration of the great Essex historian Rev. Philip Morant was held on 10th July with a visit to Aldham to view the present parish church with its relocated memorial to Morant and the site of the former church where Morant is still buried. Members then retired to Church House Farm for afternoon tea followed by an enthralling and faultlessly presented lecture on Morant given by Dr. Christopher Thompson. We are very grateful to Adam Scott for his hospitality. In a complete change members visited the Bata Heritage Centre in East Tilbury on 19th August for a guided tour of the Bata factory in East Tilbury, the home of the British Bata Shoe Co. Ltd for nearly seventy years. On 18th September the venue for the visit was Greensted Church, which is claimed to be the oldest wooden church in the world and is a building of which Essex should be justly proud. The last visit of the year was another guided walk, this time around the industrial heritage of Halstead led by Malcolm Root. I am very grateful to the Hon. Programme Secretary (Jane Pearson) and the Hon. Excursions Secretary (Howard Brooks) for arranging these visits.

The annual E.S.A.H. Symposium was held at Roman Circus House in Colchester and this year had an industrial theme. The four contributors were Peter Jones who spoke about the history and engineering of the watermills of Colchester, Tim Murphy and Mark Baister on the remarkable story of Beaumont Quay, Andrew Phillips, who presented a distillation of his truly remarkable study of the internationally renowned engineering firm Paxman's, and Paul Wenden, a former Woods apprentice and company director, with an unrivalled knowledge of this Colchester fan manufacturer.

The venue for the Society's A.G.M. was West Hanningfield Church where we heard from David Gibson about the project to restore the tower and its unique ring of four bells by the notable Essex bell founder Miles Graye III (1628-86). In 2022 the Society made a grant to enable the production of a professional video about the project.

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Trustees' Report

President's review continued

The Society has made several grants during the year. In January we were able to contribute almost £1,000 towards the acquisition by the Essex Record Office of a 'Survey of the lands of Robert Rich, 3rd Baron Rich' (1559-1619). This remarkable document was formerly in the library of W.A. Foyle of Beeleigh Abbey and provides invaluable information about the greatest Essex landowning family of the later sixteenth century. We also made a further grant to David Grocott towards the costs of his Ph.D. research at the University of Essex into the historical legacy of John Ball of Peasants' Revolt fame. Lastly, the Society made a substantial contribution of £2,500 to enable Colchester Museums to acquire the Mistley Torc. This exceptionally rare find dates to the Middle Bronze Age (c.1300-1100 B.C.) and is approximately half of a gold neck ornament which must have once belonged to a high status individual.

In 2024 the Society published volume 13 (4th Series) of its *Transactions*, two issues of the *Essex Journal* (vol.59 nos.1 and 2) and its electronic newsletter. I would like to place on record my thanks to the respective editors: Paul Gilman (assisted by Chris Thornton), Steve Pollington and Victoria Rathmill.

During the year the Society wrote in support of the efforts to preserve an early-eighteenth-century vernacular building, Wallwood Farmhouse, in Leytonstone from the threat of demolition. This type of building is a rare survival in East London and its fate remains uncertain at the present time. The Society has asked to be kept informed of any developments. We were also contacted by Boreham Parochial Church Council regarding their project to repair the north aisle roof of St. Andrew's Church, and, in particular, a proposed application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. St. Andrew's is a very historic church with important local connections, for example with the former Beaulieu Palace. The Society confirmed our support for this project, 'Saving a Church for all Seasons' and stated that we would be willing to provide specialist historical advice and expertise and, if necessary, would consider an application for financial support from the Boreham P.C.C.

The Council has met regularly during 2024 and, although it is invidious to identify individuals in this context, I feel that it is appropriate to recognise here the significant contribution to the Society made over the last year by the Hon. Secretary (Howard Brooks), the Hon. Membership Secretary (Martin Stuchfield) and the Hon. Treasurer (Bill Abbott).

Lastly, as the year drew to the close the Government's intentions in relation to devolution and local government reorganisation in England became clear. It now seems certain that Essex County Council will shortly cease to exist and as a result there will be a diminution in the recognition of Essex as a geographical entity. The Society will be monitoring the situation closely and will ensure that as local government reorganisation progresses the important of the heritage of Essex as a whole is not overlooked.

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Trustees' Report

Membership

Membership of the Society continues to be excellent value for money and your Council is still holding its subscription rates unchanged. Not only does it give one the programme of events and visits, but of course the annual *Transactions*, the *Essex Journal*, and Newsletter. In addition, every now and then, members receive free of charge a publication in our Occasional Papers series.

At the end of 2024 the Society had 321 (2023: 324) fully paid individual members, of whom 64 (2023: 63) are family members and 27 (2023: 28) are associates. It also has 67 (2023: 67) paying institutional members. In addition to these 388 (2023: 391) paying members we reciprocate publications with 24 (2023: 27) other institutions and distribute our publications to 11 (2023: 11) other institutions.

The Society's extensive Library continues to be held in the Albert Sloman Library at the University of Essex, to which we extend our gratitude. I would remind members that there is no longer a need to show a membership card, which has been discontinued, but an advance phone call is always a good idea.

Finance

The principal financing activity of the Society relates to the cost of producing and distributing the *Transactions* and its Index as well as Occasional Papers, the biannual *Essex Journal* and newsletters. We try wherever possible to get sponsorship grants for individual articles and in the main these are for archaeological papers. Grants for volume 13 of the *Transactions* amounted to £6,970 (volume 12: £4,315) with a net cost, including distribution, of £2,858 (Volume 12: £5,542). The *Medieval Merchant* occasional paper had received a grant of £1,000 recorded in a previous period, so that the net cost to the Society was £5,753. Unusually a second occasional paper, *Dovehouse Field*, was issued in the year, but with grant income fully covering the cost of printing, the Society was left with bearing the distribution costs of £1,866.

In 2024 the Society's Funds decreased, excluding any change in investment values, by £4,993. 2023 had a small surplus of £1,123. Unrealised capital appreciation amounted to £3,378 (2023: £3,083).

The Society has investible funds, some of which are earmarked as endowment funds where we can only utilise the income on such funds and some are restricted to cover future publications etc. The Society has taken the view that a significant percentage of these funds can be invested in equities (using unit trust funds specifically confined to charities) as it can absorb the volatility in such a strategy. The notes to the accounts provide significant detail.

The Society greatly benefits from the input of many volunteers and the unrestricted general reserves of the Society are being maintained at a level which would ensure the capability of producing and distributing volumes of the *Transactions*, Occasional Papers and the *Essex Journal* for at least the next five years.

Philip Wise, President
12th April 2025

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Statement of Financial Activities

for the year ended 31st December 2024

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Incoming resources | | |
| Members subscriptions (note 2) | 13,766 | 13,149 |
| Publications: grants and sales (note 3) | 12,722 | 4,909 |
| Other income (note 4) | 638 | 1,934 |
| Income from investments | 6,863 | 5,769 |
| Total incoming resources | 33,989 | 25,761 |
| Resources used | | |
| Production costs: <i>Transactions</i> (note 3) | 24,199 | 9,857 |
| Production costs: Newsletters | 7,757 | 4,730 |
| Administration costs (note 5) | 2,652 | 5,457 |
| Other expenditure (note 6) | 4,374 | 4,594 |
| Total resources used | 38,982 | 24,638 |
| Net (outgoing)/incoming resources | (4,993) | 1,123 |
| Gains on unrealised investments | 3,378 | 3,083 |
| (Decrease)/increase in funds | (1,615) | 4,206 |

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Balance Sheet

as at 31st December 2024

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Library books | 100,000 | 100,000 |
| Investments (note 7) | 134,648 | 131,270 |
| Fixed assets | 234,648 | 231,270 |
| | | |
| Deposit and current accounts (note 8) | 39,339 | 40,681 |
| Other (note 9) | 49 | 4,425 |
| Current assets | 39,388 | 45,106 |
| | | |
| Current liabilities (advance subscriptions) | (725) | (1,450) |
| | | |
| Total assets | 273,311 | 274,926 |
| | | |
| Unrestricted funds – general | 108,668 | 109,636 |
| Restricted funds (note 10) | 64,643 | 65,290 |
| Historic book collection | 100,000 | 100,000 |
| Fixed assets | 273,311 | 274,926 |

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Notes to the accounts

for the year ended 31st December 2024

1 General

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Restricted funds reflect constraints imposed by the donors of the funds. The historic book collection is classified as designated. The collection is maintained in the Albert Sloman Library at the University of Essex, it is not available for sale and the value shown is a conservative estimate of its market value if it were to be available for sale.

Computers and new books purchased are written off on purchase.

2 Members subscriptions

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| E.S.A.H. | 10,874 | 10,099 |
| <i>Essex Journal</i> | 1,397 | 1,615 |
| Gift Aid | 1,495 | 1,435 |
| | <u>13,766</u> | <u>13,149</u> |

3 Publications: grants and sales 2024 Analysis

| | Trans Vol. 13 | Dovehouse Field | Medieval Merchant | Total |
|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Income | | | | |
| Grant income | 6,790 | 5,932 | — | 12,722 |
| Publications: grants and sales | — | — | — | — |
| | <u>6,790</u> | <u>5,932</u> | <u>—</u> | <u>12,722</u> |
| Expenditure | | | | |
| Printing | 6,351 | 5,932 | 4,481 | 16,764 |
| Other, including distribution | 3,297 | 1,866 | 2,272 | 7,435 |
| | <u>9,648</u> | <u>7,798</u> | <u>6,753</u> | <u>24,199</u> |
| Net (expenditure) | <u>(2,858)</u> | <u>(1,866)</u> | <u>(6,753)</u> | <u>(11,477)</u> |

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Notes to the accounts

for the year ended 31st December 2024

3 Publications: grants and sales (continued)

2023 Analysis

| | Trans Vol. 12 £ | Mills Booklet £ | Timber- Framed Buildings of Colchester £ | Total £ |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|----------------|
| Income | | | | |
| Grant income | 4,315 | — | — | 4,315 |
| Publications: grants and sales | — | 183 | 411 | 594 |
| | <u>4,315</u> | <u>183</u> | <u>411</u> | <u>4,909</u> |
| Expenditure | | | | |
| Printing | 7,619 | — | — | 7,619 |
| Other, including distribution | 2,238 | — | — | 2,238 |
| | <u>9,857</u> | <u>—</u> | <u>—</u> | <u>9,857</u> |
| Net income/(expenditure) | <u>(5,542)</u> | <u>183</u> | <u>411</u> | <u>(4,948)</u> |

4 Other income

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|---|------------|--------------|
| Cash Flow from visits and other events | 205 | 121 |
| Donations | 132 | 1,500 |
| Licensing fees and royalties | 72 | 77 |
| Sale of library stock (including Trail) | 280 | 236 |
| Sundries | (51) | — |
| | <u>638</u> | <u>1,934</u> |

Licensing royalties and proceeds from the sale of library stock have been attributed to the P.R.F.

5 Administration costs

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Dispatching mailings | 210 | 1,527 |
| Editors' honoraria | 1,350 | 1,550 |
| Insurance | 75 | 75 |
| Printing flyers, etc. | 193 | 942 |
| Room hire (including Zoom) | 390 | 741 |
| Website | 434 | 484 |
| Other | — | 138 |
| | <u>2,652</u> | <u>5,457</u> |

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Notes to the accounts

for the year ended 31st December 2024

6 Other expenditure

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Donations (note 6a) | 3,734 | 3,150 |
| E.I.A.G. | 284 | 1,114 |
| Purchase of books | 112 | 82 |
| Subscriptions paid | 221 | 248 |
| Sundries | 23 | — |
| | <u>4,374</u> | <u>4,594</u> |

6a Donations

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Braintree Hoard Coins | — | 2,000 |
| Dendrochronology Report – St. Mary’s, Broomfield | — | 100 |
| Medieval Deeds for E.R.O. | 984 | — |
| Mistley Torc purchase | 2,500 | — |
| Paxman Archive Trust | — | 800 |
| Support for David Grocott’s Ph.D. thesis | 250 | 250 |
| | <u>3,734</u> | <u>3,150</u> |

7 Investments

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| COIF Charities Fixed Income Fund (income units) | 19,875 | 19,285 |
| COIF Charities Investment Fund (income units) | 38,491 | 37,641 |
| M&G Charifund | 76,282 | 74,344 |
| | <u>134,648</u> | <u>131,270</u> |

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Notes to the accounts

for the year ended 31st December 2024

8 Deposit and current accounts

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Barclay Bank balances – current | 10,217 | 10,760 |
| Barclay Bank balances – savings | 24,180 | 26,717 |
| COIF deposits | 4,942 | 3,204 |
| | <u>39,339</u> | <u>40,681</u> |

9 Other current assets

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|-----------|--------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Advance payments | 49 | 770 |
| Grants due for <i>Transactions</i> | — | 2,895 |
| PayPal | — | 160 |
| Refund due for <i>Essex Journal</i> printing | — | 600 |
| | <u>49</u> | <u>4,425</u> |

10 Restricted funds

| | 2024 | 2023 |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Essex Mills Fund | 2,592 | 2,181 |
| <i>Essex Journal</i> index | 2,556 | 2,556 |
| <i>Medieval Merchant</i> | — | 1,000 |
| Pleshey project | 39 | 39 |
| Publications and Research Fund (“P.R.F.”) | 59,456 | 59,514 |
| | <u>64,643</u> | <u>65,290</u> |

Essex Mills Fund

Seeded by the residual amount from the monies received on taking over the Essex Mills Trust enhanced by sales of related publications and available for mills related projects.

Essex Journal index

Pre-funding for an Index for the *Essex Journal* acquired on assumption of the responsibility for that publication.

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Notes to the accounts

for the year ended 31st December 2024

10 Restricted funds (continued)

Pleshey Project

The Society is in receipt of grants to fund writing up Bassett's excavation work at Pleshey in the 1970s. Eventually this work will be published as an Occasional Paper.

Publication and Research Fund ("P.R.F.")

The P.R.F. exists to support the publications and research of the Society. Specific subscriptions to this fund have been received on the basis that they would form an endowment fund generating income which would support the purpose of the fund. This inalienable element of the fund amounts to £32,465. Subsequent attributions to the fund have not been so constrained.

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Trustees' Responsibilities Statement

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a receipts and payments account and a statement of assets and liabilities for each financial year that properly present the charity's receipts and payments during the year and its assets and liabilities at the end of the year. In preparing these statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Make judgements that are reasonable and prudent; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which enable them to ensure that the receipts and payments account and statement of assets and liabilities comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of the Independent Examiner

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below:

During my examination, no matter has come to my attention which

- a) gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act 2011 and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act, have not been met; or
- b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Peter Evans (Fellow Member of the Association of Accounting Technicians)
5th April 2025

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the church dedicated to SS. Mary and Edward, Church Road, West Hanningfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 8XD on Saturday, 22nd June 2024 at 10.30a.m.

In the Chair: Nick Wickenden (President)

Trustees: Bill Abbott (Vice-President and Hon. Treasurer),
Howard Brooks (Hon. Secretary) and
Adrian Corder-Birch (Vice-President)

Associate members of Council: Jane Pearson (Librarian and Programme Secretary),
Philip Wise (Curator) and
Lucy Jack (Minutes Secretary)

also Neil Wiffen and nine other members
of the Society

1. **Opening remarks**

The President welcomed members and thanked the representatives of West Hanningfield church for hosting and providing refreshments.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from David Andrews, George Courtauld, Tony Crosby (Trustee), Ken Crowe (Trustee), Mark Curteis (Trustee), Karen Dennis, Stephen Dennis, Herbert Eiden, Paul Gilman, Jenifer Jones, Peter Jones, Michael Leach (Vice-President), Thomas Newens, Teresa O'Connor (Trustee), Andrew Phillips (Vice-President), Steve Pollington, Victoria Rathmill, Ginny Sainsbury, Paul Sainsbury (Trustee), Peter Sharp, Martin Stuchfield (Vice-President and Trustee), Chris Thornton (Vice-President), Louisa Tippett, Charles Trollope, Elphin Watkin and Geraldine Willden.

3. **To approve the minutes of the A.G.M. held on 17th June 2023**

The minutes of the 2023 A.G.M., as published in the Annual Report and Accounts, were approved as a correct record.

4. **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

5. **President's Report for 2023**

A detailed report published in the *Annual Report and Accounts* had previously been circulated to all members. The President noted the formal launch of the Chelmer Valley Landscape Group in October and a successful annual Symposium in November with more than 60 people hearing talks on local archaeology and history. The membership remained at 324, small for the size of the population, but it was hoped that the renewed use of social media, which was one of the aims of the ten-year strategy, would start to attract younger members. Other issues being addressed were recruitment of a new treasurer

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

5. **President's Report for 2023 continued**
and access to digital publications at the Society's library in the University. The visits programme planned by Jane Pearson continued to recover numbers post Covid and E.I.A.G. events also strengthened. Notably, E.I.A.G. had hosted the East of England Region Industrial Archaeology Conference at Chelmsford Museum with guided walks of some important industrial sites. E.S.A.H. had also supported a well-attended conference on castles at the Essex Record Office. Several grants had been awarded to support a variety of heritage projects. The publication programme remained strong with annual *Transactions*, the bi-annual *Essex Journal*, digital newsletters as well as the occasional additional paper included in the unchanged subscription fee. The President reported that his three-year period of office was ended and thanked the three editors as well as the Society's other officers, trustees and all volunteers involved in the work of E.S.A.H.

6. **To approve the 2023 Annual Report and Accounts**
The Annual Report and Accounts for 2023 had been previously circulated to all members and upon the proposal of Neil Wiffen, seconded by Philip Wise, were unanimously approved.

The Treasurer reported that, following the search for an understudy minuted at the last A.G.M., Louisa Tippett (current treasurer of the Essex Victoria County History Trust) had agreed to assist and attend Council meetings.

7. **Election of Independent Examiner**
Peter Evans had indicated that he was willing to continue and was re-elected unanimously.

8. **Election of President, Secretary and Treasurer for 2024-2025**
Nick Wickenden, having completed his three-year term as President, stepped down, but remains on Council as Immediate Past President. Philip Wise, Howard Brooks and Bill Abbott had indicated that they were willing to stand for the positions of President, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer respectively were unanimously re-elected. They would be ex-officio members of Council.

The medal of office was exchanged, and portrait of Philip Morant presented to the new President. Philip Wise thanked Nick Wickenden for his work for the Society. He had taken over at a difficult time during the pandemic but had advanced the Society's objectives and developed new activity. This he had done with enthusiasm and amiability so that the Society was now thriving. Philip Wise proposed a vote of thanks that was seconded by Neil Wiffen, unanimously supported, and Nick Wickenden was applauded. Following this point in the minutes, the term "President" refers to Philip Wise.

9. **Election of Vice-Presidents for 2024-2025**
The current Vice-Presidents, Bill Abbott, Dave Buckley, Adrian Corder-Birch, Michael Leach, Andrew Phillips, Martin Stuchfield and Chris Thornton had all indicated that they were willing to continue. Their re-election was proposed by the President and carried unanimously.

The Essex Society for Archaeology & History

10. Election of an additional Trustees for 2024-2027

The Constitution requires six members to be elected to the Executive Council. Neil Wiffen and Adam Wightman had agreed to be nominated for a three-year term, in accordance with clause D2 of the Constitution. Their election was proposed by Neil Short, seconded by Brenda Watkin and they were duly elected. It was noted that Mark Curteis would need to be re-elected for a further three-year term. His re-election was proposed by the President and carried unanimously.

11. Any other business.

It was confirmed that the Library Committee should ascertain the price of all books for which they commission reviews, and the relevant price should be published in the book review.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 11.45a.m.

The formal business was followed by refreshments and a group photograph outside the church.

David Gibson, Chair of the Restoration Committee, presented the video of the West Hanningfield Church Restoration Project to which E.S.A.H. had donated £1,000. The 8-year project to restore the bells, the bell frame and the tower had cost £121,900 overall, 25% of funds raised by the village Friends of SS. Mary and Edward. Historian Martin Bridge had dated the bell tower to 1383-99. The four 1676 bells had been restored, returned in November 2021 and rung full circle for the first time in over 130 years. The only ringable set of Miles Graye III of Colchester bells. It was hoped that structural instability in the west wall of the church, which meant the frequency of bell ringing had to be reduced, would be resolved in the next year or so. There was interest from bell ringers nationwide.

The 12-minute video is available to view on YouTube – “*West Hanningfield Church Restoration Project*”.