

The Friends of the Moot Hall Organ
Draft Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 9th July 2024

Present: Patron Sir Bob Russell Trustees Nigel Chapman, Michael Vernon, Adam Masters. Committee Mary Chapman, Derek Lorkin, Mike Hogg, and Jennifer Perry Members Colin Hetherington

Apologies for Absence: Patrons: Ashley Grote and Allan Blundell and 6 members (list attached)

Minutes of AGM 11th July 2023 These had been circulated and were agreed.

Chair's Report: This had been circulated and is attached to these minutes. The chair added that the previous week, he had met with Harrison & Harrison, the organ builders, who visited for the first time for around 16 months. The Moot Hall is chock-a-block with scaffolding. He was delighted to report that they found the organ in good condition, with a minimum of work required. The humidifiers have been regularly serviced in the intervening period. H&H are also going to advise the Council on protection that will be required to protect the organ when the repairs to the roof and ceiling are undertaken. There is no likelihood of recitals resuming for some considerable time. (See below)

Trustees Report The chair reported that the trustees had kept in contact by email as there was obviously little to discuss in the current situation. He paid tribute to Alison Smith who had recently resigned as trustee and treasurer. He reported that he was now acting treasurer and had submitted Gift Aid claims to HMRC for 2021-2 and for 2022-3, and, in due course, 2023-4. There had been difficulty in obtaining the repayment as HMRC had not got details of the new bank account; he trusted this had now been sorted out. He anticipated the repayments should amount to £3000+, which would leave c£10k in the account and, he would investigate investing some of that as soon as the Gift Aid sums are received. The chair also confirmed that he will amend the bank mandate to include the two current trustees.

Treasurer's Report: The accounts were presented to the meeting by the Chair, agreed and are attached to these minutes. He reiterated the need for a new treasurer as soon as possible.

Confirmation of Patrons for 2024-5: Allan Blundell MBE, Ashley Grote, Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, Mayor of Colchester (ex officio), Lord Petre, and Sir Bob Russell were confirmed as Patrons and Pam Cox replaced Will Quince as the newly elected MP for Colchester.

Appointment of Committee for 2024-2025: In addition to the Trustees (Nigel Chapman, Mike Vernon and Adam Masters), Mary Chapman, Mike Hogg, Derek Lorkin, Jennifer Perry, and Ian Ray were proposed by Sir Bob Russell and agreed nem con

Appointment of Officers for 2024-2025: It was proposed by Sir Bob Russell that Nigel Chapman continue as Chair, Mary Chapman as Secretary and Membership Secretary and the chair as Acting Treasurer. This was agreed nem con. Sir Bob also requested that Minutes record the thanks of the Meeting to Nigel and Mary Chapman for continuing to support the Friends during this difficult period this was agreed.

Report on the Moot Hall and the organ: the chair reiterated the position with the Moot Hall and said he has had good communications with officers at the City Council and trusted this would continue. He could not envisage any call on The Friends financially, but we should endeavour to arrange suitable recitals to welcome the organ back after the reopening of the Moot Hall. Mike Hogg recalled the excellent silent film show with organ accompaniment that The Friends arranged a few years ago, which the chair said he would certainly aim to repeat!

Future Activities: The chair said that he was talking with someone who he hoped would take over administering the Website site for us and set up a Facebook page. He recorded his grateful thanks to Alex Blustin who had been doing the website for a number of years for a small honorarium.