

Chard and District Museum Annual General Meeting 09th July 2025. 18:15 – 20:15 Minutes



18:30 Guest Speaker Rachel Bellamy, South West Museum Development was unable to give her presentation due to technical difficulties

AGM began at 19:25

1. Welcome – Chair, Howard Bailey
2. Attendance
7 Trustees, 4 members and 1 guest attended.
3. Minutes of 04th July 2024 AGM (ATTACHMENT 01)

The minutes of the 2024 AGM were agreed unanimously. Proposed: Vince Lean; seconded Craig Hussey

4. Chair's Report (ATTACHMENT 02) Howard Bailey

Howard delivered the Chair's report. It has been another busy year for the Museum and although walk-in visitor numbers are still down on pre-Covid levels, tours and school visits have led to increased visitor numbers.

Vince is leading Phase 3 of 50 years and Beyond: Building the Vision and the National Lottery bid for this. The Collections Team, led by Elaine, are developing new displays and exhibitions.

In the last year the Museum organised or attended 38 community events, and the schools programme has grown from 16 visits in the 2021-2022 academic year to 68 visits in the last academic year. This has been a heavy workload, and we need to look at our volunteer recruitment programme and decide on our priorities if we are to successfully deliver plans.

The Trustees ask the meeting to elect David Tucker as a Trustee. David has joined the Board and is to lead a review of the Business plan and Strategic Business Objectives in August.

Finally, Howard thanked every Museum colleague and volunteer for their work and support in achieving so much in the past year.

5. Museum Secretary Update – Sara Dowell

Sara explained that she took on the role of Museum Secretary two months ago and is still very much learning the job. She has been concentrating on preparing minutes for the Trustees' and Management Group meetings, working with fellow Trustees on the Museum's Policies and Procedures, sending out invoices, updating the Museum's information on the Charity Commission website and getting to know the website.

6. Finance Group Report (ATTACHMENT 03) – Vince Lean

a. Annual Accounts 2023-2024

The Annual Accounts 2023-2024 were the first to be audited by independent accountants, Westcotts of Axminster, and were for a 15 month period as the Museum changed its financial year from 1st January - 31st December to 1st April - 31st March in each year. The Accounts were submitted to the Charity Commission on time.

b. Finance Summary 2024-2025)

Vince explained that it costs £15,000 a year to keep the Museum open – that is £40.00 every day, all year round.

c. Finance Account Balance 08 July 2025

The Lloyds Bank current account balance is currently £13,523.76. Reserves stand at £36,917.

Vince advised the Meeting that, as previously indicated, he is standing down as Treasurer.

7. 50 Years and Beyond: Building the Vision – Vince Lean

Vince introduced his update on Building the Vision with his strap-line of “Do it better”. Vince is leading the Museum’s application for a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of approximately £180,000 to fund outreach specialists – for example, a Collections specialist to help us understand our collections to help us understand what we should be keeping/accepting and how to keep them, and an Outreach specialist to help manage our school and community programmes more efficiently. If the bid is successful, Vince hopes that the Museum can start the project in January 2026 and it will run for 2 ½ years, ending in mid-2028.

8. Sub-Group Reports

a. Collection and Exhibitions Group – Elaine Pym (ATTACHMENT 05)

Elaine explained how the Collections Team have reviewed the Museum’s accessions process to focus on items that have a connection with Chard and District and which are not duplicates.

There have been displays at Chard and Ilminster Libraries – “Women of Chard – Extraordinary Lives”. Exhibitions in the Museum this year are on the theme of Industry, currently Denning, with Numatic to be set up shortly. The theme for next year is “People of Chard”.

The Cottage Garden is looking lovely, thanks go to Julie and Rob Bristow.

The Investigation table and the in-house quiz have been very popular with children.

There have been external talks on Hidden High Street Histories, Chard Canal, Margaret Bondfield, the Blue Plaque Walk, James Gillingham and others – thanks to Sue, Howard and Craig.

Elaine and Sheila have been working on “History in a Box” to go out to schools and community groups.

The Carpentry Workshop (including audible!) has moved to the old Plumbing Shed thanks to Nigel and Kevin. The end section of the Skittle Alley will be used for archives and conserving artefacts. The Mayor’s Room has been cleared out and will be used for storage.

In the downstairs office, Roy has sorted out the documents and Brian is working on the maps to be put onto MODES – thanks to both.

MODES – Karen and Sheila have been doing an amazing job of uploading posters, documents, maps, photographs and artefacts. An audit has been carried out of the Barn and Skittle Alley. Karen and Sheila have given training to others on MODES and completed a 'Spectrum Location Movement Control Procedure' course which relates to Accreditation and our movement control processes.

b. Margaret Bondfield Steering Group – (ATTACHMENT 06)

The Margaret Bondfield Steering Group is continuing to promote Margaret and is working towards funding for a statue of around £80,000+.

c. Social Media – Craig Hussey

Craig is promoting the Museum using social media – Howard made the point that we do need to provide Craig with information for this. Craig now runs the Museum Facebook page which links to other groups and has started an Instagram account. Early figures show that we are reaching a broad age group, and posts are always positive. Craig's work is a good advert for the Museum.

d. Marketing and Website – Howard Bailey

Howard advises that hits on the Museum's website have nearly tripled. It would be helpful to know what impact this is having on visits to the Museum. We should be asking visitors where they heard about us.

We have tried offering discount vouchers to groups, but none have come in yet. The summer holidays may produce results, e.g., if grandparents bring their grandchildren?

Howard stressed the importance of getting promotional material early to be able to get marketing onto the website and other platforms like Visit Somerset. A suggestion that the website might need updating with additional content. General feedback is that there is a good website, it is widely visited but we need to widen the number of visitors.

9. Election of Trustees

- a. Sara Dowell and Elaine Pym – SD proposed by Elaine Pym; seconded by Craig Hussey. EP proposed by Sara Dowell; seconded by Claire Richter
- b. David Tucker – proposed by Brian Gidley; seconded by Craig Hussey.

All were elected unanimously.

10. Any Other Business

- a. Events Programme 2025 – 2026
 - i. Chard Heritage, Music and Arts Festival – starts 27th July 2025. This will be launched at the weekend.
 - ii. Cine Chard – Starts 14:30 on Friday 15th August (2 performances) at 3.30pm and 7.00pm. Featuring the Museum's new hot dog stand!
 - iii. Victory over Japan Day Memory event and Fete, with old-fashioned sports activities for children in the Orchard, to take place at the Museum on 16th August, 2-5pm.
- b. Questions from the floor

None.

Howard closed the meeting with the following updates:

Our sympathies to Martin Greswell, whose wife Margaret passed away over the weekend. Gerrie Bews is stranded in the US because she has badly broken her arm and shoulder and cannot travel due to insurance restrictions.

Nigel Rice has retired as a Volunteer – our thanks for all the work he has done for the Museum over many years. Howard and Vince will arrange to deliver a commemorative plaque and voucher for a pipe to him as a token of appreciation.

Luke Talmage has retired as a Trustee, but will continue to be involved in Building the Vision.

11. Date of the next AGM

- a. Wednesday 08th July 2026 at 18:15. Godworthy House