

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the
Friends Of Tring Church Heritage
Held Thursday 26th September 7pm at Tring Church

Present

Richard Abel (Chair), Malcolm Rogers (Treasurer), Tony Mackinder (Trustee), Stephen Hearn (Trustee), Grahame Senior (Hon. President), Trish Dowden (Secretary), Kate Stratford, Phil Dowden, Richard Grylls

Apologies

Stewart Ivory (Trustee), Huw Bellis, Anthea Fraser, Vivianne Child, Joan Emery, Prue Senior, Annette & Jon Reynolds, Cliff Brown, Ted & Margaret Oram, Beth Scraggs, Barry & Barbara Anscombe

Welcome

Richard Abel opened the meeting and thanked those present for coming out and meeting together in the church. We were one under quorum but this was accepted due to the weather warnings issued this evening which have stopped some people attending. Apologies for absence were taken.

Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 14th September 2023

Minutes were accepted by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising

Apart from the 100 Club draw that is taking place within this meeting, no matters arising that are not picked up in the agenda items.

Election of Trustees & Honorary President

Trustees / Officers up for election this year as follows:

Tony Mackinder up for second term as Trustee – proposed and seconded
Richard Abel up for third and final term but will not be staying for the full 3 years. He will be standing down summer 2025 – proposed and nominated

Following the resignation of Brian Patterson, Tring Town Council has nominated Malcolm Rogers as their Trustee representative.

Membership Secretary role is still vacant. Malcolm, Trish and Richard are looking after membership at present.

Introduction of Officers

Chair of Trustees – Richard Abel (present)

Treasurer – Malcolm Rogers (present)

Secretary – Trish Dowden (present)

Honorary President – Grahame Senior (present)

Membership Secretary – vacant

Trustees – Tony Mackinder (present)

- Malcolm Rogers (present)

- Stephen Hearn (present)

- Stewart Ivory

Independent Examiner – Again we are using the company Dickinsons. Accounts have been finalised.

Presentation of Annual Accounts and Trustees' Annual Report to Charity Commission

Copies of the Financial Statement 2023-2024 (year to 31st March) were distributed at the meeting and a copy is in the Minutes file.

Malcolm presented the Treasurer's Report and took the meeting through the material items. There are noticeable differences from last year.

Income from Charitable Activities is slightly down. Family Fun Day continues to be our main charitable activity income.

Grants paid has also increased to £25,000 which is above the normal levels of what we pay but there was an extra flurry of repairs needed and Covid happened meaning the church were not in a position to raise funds.

No gift aid had been claimed for the past 2 years but you are allowed up to 4 years grace. Malcolm has now claimed around £600 Gift Aid this year.

The Closing Balance of investments was £642,331 which is an increase on last year of over £60,000 but this can be attributed to unrealised gains – no cash distributed out of the funds but the value just goes up.

Grand Total Balances was £691,332.

Malcolm noted that the trend of investments have been good in the last 8 years despite Covid.

The reports have all been verified and signed by the Independent Examiner and will be sent to the Charity Commission.

The Portfolio move to Stringer Mann Partnership (part of St James Place) has been a lengthy process and so far of the 9 external investment providers 3.5 have been transferred to Stringer Mann, (the other .5 is a work in progress), 4 are work in progress and 1 required further action to unblock the process. (see the reports).

Malcolm is to check that CCLA (encashed investment) has been redeployed into Stringer Mann's investment funds.

Stringer Mann have said that FOTCH will have no loss of investments /gains during this process.

Richard gave a huge vote of thanks to Malcolm for the work done on the accounts, reports and the transfers to SJP this past year.

The reports were noted and discussed in the AGM and everyone happy with them.

Membership Report

Membership is around 250 members (166 memberships). It was noted that of those 166 memberships – 119 were life / honorary memberships. We have had an audit of the membership database and believe it is now up to date. We did get a few renewals from our audit but many have either moved away or are no longer interested. The membership is lower than 10 years ago. A few new members joined at the Family Fun Day.

The 100 club is at capacity.

President's Report

Grahame sent out the report (attached with minutes).

Grahame stated that membership is half of what it was at its highest point. The bigger problem is that FOTCH's profile has dropped in the community and lockdown/covid destroyed the availability to get news out or raise events etc. Plus we have lost a lot of members through death /moving away.

Two years ago a relaunch had been planned but this is on hold as FOTCH is working with the church to do a significant appeal for the Walls and Roof of the Church. This will be launched in 2025 and will target £150,000.

Four boards are going into the Local History Museum with the message "Looking after the Heritage Heart of Tring". We need to find a group/ generation of people to get behind this launch appeal.

Grahame paid tribute to Phil for his editorial work, Trish for her secretarial role and Maria and Lottie Lashley for their contribution to the society.

Phil asked the question of whether FOTCH should be more clear about when and where funds were spent and putting this in the next magazine.

Stephen suggested getting local businesses go get behind the appeal.

Richard thanked Grahame for his report and work through the past year.

Activity and Event Plans

Family Fun Day went well and we seem to have a system in place for the smooth running of it (thanks to Maria and her gang). Richard is going to ask RAF Halton cadets to help with the tower in 2025 and this will free up others to help out in the churchyard as we were a bit thin on the ground this year. We need more people in place and also more physically abled people to help with setting up and moving things about.

The next Family Fun Day is May 10th 2025.

Vote of Thanks

- ❖ Richard thanked the Trustees and Officers who did all the hard work this year
- ❖ He thanked everyone for attending despite the weather warning in place.
- ❖ Thank you to Grahame for organising the 100 Club which brings a good percentage of income into the accounts.
- ❖ Richard Abel was thanked by Grahame on behalf of FOTCH members for all his work as Trustee, Treasurer, Chair, FFD Goalie and encouraging people over the years. He has brought new dimensions and vision to the organisation.

Any other Business

- ❖ We need to get Social Media for the appeal / works
- ❖ Could we approach more people by getting people who visit the NHM museum? Malcolm to approach Woodland Trust who own the new car park to see if we could have signs/ leaflets etc
- ❖ Richard Grylls had a slight problem finding the total of 2024 Candlemas figure which he likes to tell his choir and members. Need to ask the attendees to state on payment that it is for Candlemas. Trish and Lucy Brittain (one of the church treasurers) will capture the information and relay it to Richard G.
- ❖ The 100 Club draw took place at the AGM and the prizes were 1st prize £150 Godfrey Orrell, 2nd prize £75 Chris Fryd and 3rd prize £25 Liz Bendall. Congratulations to all. Grahame will send out the monies to the winners.

Date of Next AGM

Next year's AGM will be in September.

The Chair declared the meeting closed and thanked everyone for attending – cheese and wine were served.