

**Beaminster Museum Trust**  
**Minutes of 38<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held**  
**on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026 in the Museum**

The Chairman welcomed everybody and reminded them that in accordance with the Constitution, as Friends of the Beaminster Museum. they are the electorate of both the Trustees and the Management Committee and their support was essential for the functioning of the Museum Charity. He also invited attendees to remain after the meeting for tea and coffee.

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from 16 friends as well as Richard Smith, Colin Bowditch, Murray Rose, Karen Heaney, Janice Pryke.

**Present:** Matthew Kirkman, Alec Crawford, Linda Le Breton, Amanda Fairchild as well as 23 Friends making the meeting quorate.

**Minutes of the last meeting:** The Minutes of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 having been duly proposed and seconded, were approved. There were no matters arising not otherwise covered in the Agenda.

## **1 Chairman of the Trustees Report.**

Trustees are responsible to the Charities Commission for ensuring that the Charity, Beaminster Museum Trust, operates according to the Rules of Governance set out by the Commission.

From an operating point of view the two main responsibilities of the Trustees are:

**Finance:** to approve all major expenditure and investment and to ensure that the Museum Trust's finances are run in a professional way.

You will hear shortly from the Treasurer concerning the Trust accounts for the year ended 4th November 2025 which show a surplus of income over expenditure of £2,846.

**Buildings:** to ensure that the buildings are maintained to an acceptable standard and in accordance with established requirements such as health and safety and listed building requirements.

The problems reported at the last AGM with rot under the floor of the kitchen and adjacent to the staircase to the Chesterman Room have been solved with most of the cost of repairs being met by insurance.

The problems with the stained glass windows in the front wall of the building mentioned in last year's report, which have been there since 1835 when the building was originally built, need considerable attention costing an estimated £25,000. I mentioned this in my report last year but no progress has been made primarily because of the need to raise the necessary funds.

The Trustees are also responsible for maintaining the Trust's Policy and Governance Documents which must be updated as and when required by organizational or other changes and completely reviewed every 3 years. The latest review was completed in December 2023 and a copy of these documents are available in a folder in the Reception desk. Included in the Policy and Governance documents is the Forward

Plan for the next 5 years. This is under constant review by the Management Committee.

## **2 Management Committee Chairman and Curators Report**

### **Kitchen and Toilet etc.**

All repairs completed at minimal cost to the Museum, thanks to the insurance paying almost the full amount. We now have better plumbing, a fridge and a better floor, with added underfloor ventilation.

CCTV has now been installed in the Rose Gallery.

### **Utilities**

This remains a major cost, as a business we pay more than double the domestic electricity rate, with our night rate at 19p per Kwh. We have now finally fitted a smart meter, and will explore with better data what we might save with changing out the current storage heaters for smart heaters, though that would simply maintain a minimum temperature longer.

### **Support grant**

We continue to work with Vicky deWitt on what we need to do to gain council support, but basically we need to keep working to get visitor numbers up.

### **Building maintenance**

Jonathan has kindly worked on a planned maintenance schedule for continuous maintenance of the building, and this will be discussed at the next Trustees meeting. Some of the work can be carried out by ourselves but others will need outside contractors for which funding will be required.

### **Reception refresh and windows.**

This is now a separate agenda item, but thank you to all who have supported the windows appeal so far. We now have a sum of money that can be used for emergency repairs to a small section of the windows if needed and we are unsuccessful in the short term of raising the full funding. More to follow on the plan for that.

We have approached a third party – Smith & Jones Museum and Heritage centre Designers ) to prepare a long-term proposal for the Museum, including a redesign of the entrance and reception, that can be used for both for planning permission and to apply for large scale funding.

### **Exhibitions and permanent displays.**

Many thanks to Brian for the Public Transport display and for the Romans display were I think successful. We now have the new high security / low humidity case which has prompted a re-layout of reception (Geology) and the Rose Gallery.(Pre -History), with some excellent new graphics funded by grants.

Next year we will have newly on display the Broadwindsor gold strip, and a Roman bronze bust as a weight, from Rampisham, kindly donated by a detectorist, and a Roman intaglio from Waddon Hill fort, as well as a bronze axe and spear from Waddon Hill, donated in the 1930's to Dorchester by Richard Hine, whose memorial is behind you, all kindly on loan from DMAG.

We have also been working with DMAG on conservation of some of the Waddon Hil material we have on loan. In conjunction with Bournemouth we plan to write an article on Waddon Hill for Current Archaeology, which will be the first time the Hine material has been published.

Next years display in this room will be on Fire, Flood and Frost in Beaminster, and feature the Beaminster Fire Engine.

## **Outreach**

We are engaged with Mapperton at the moment to strengthen our links, and they are also working to better understand the Roman remains at Mapperton, which include a Roman cistern or bath, which in the 1930's was claimed to have been swum in by Elizabeth the 1st .

The diorama of the American camp at Parnham was sold to Parnham, where it is being revamped for display, and we are working with Parnham to ensure we can co-operate with their plans for a major geology display of an ammonite collection they have acquired and plans for a Jurassic Coast themed dinosaur exhibit.

We have strengthened our links to Bournemouth University and the Dorset Diggers community archaeology group, with involvement in excavations at Waddon Hill in November, some material from which has already been donated to the Museum, with more to follow.

Helen has done a great job with the schools, and we now have stronger links to the primary, secondary school, and Mountjoy schools than we have had for a long time. This is crucial to getting our numbers up for a support grant from the council.

## **Volunteers**

None of the above would have been possible without our dedicated band of volunteers, both those front of house stewarding, fundraising through events and the shop, working on the displays and exhibits, and also those working behind the scenes, from managing the accounts, recruitment etc. The Town hall are putting on an event on Saturday Jan 31 in the Town Hall to raise the awareness of community groups such as ourselves. We are still seeking help, to replace Linda, and Chris, and we will break some of Linda's tasks down so non accountants can help with banking cash or managing the Friends.

### **3 Treasurer's Report**

In the accounting year ended 4th November 2025 the museum held a very successful series of Winter talks raising over £2,000. Other events did well including the book sale, Christmas concert and the coffee morning with thanks to Sarah Drinnan , Gill Sansom, Sheila Furse and all concerned for their hard work in making these events a success. I would also like to thank Gill & Robin Cheesemen for organising the Festival Tea Party and the Treasure Hunt which raised in excess of £500.

Thanks to the efforts of our fundraising team, we received grants towards the purchase of the Bronze Age gold strip, the secure cabinet and some professionally designed information boards to go with it. The team also set up an ongoing campaign to raise money for the renovation of the stained-glass windows. Our loan boxes to schools and other organisations were popular and Parnham Voices continue to hire the Museum for rehearsals.

Apart from the secure cabinet and information panels another major item of expenditure this year was the repair to the rotten floor and complete refit of the kitchen as a result of leak from the water heater. Thanks to the careful management of the project by Jonathan Fairchild our insurance company, Ansvar, paid for the works in full apart from the £100 excess which was covered by donations.

Helen and her team are making the Museum a more child-friendly place to visit and we are spending a bit more on children's activities. As to expenditure on the property, a change of energy supplier led to a drop in utility costs of more than £2,000.

The accounts show a surplus for the year of £2,846 with funds totalling just more than £23,000, which includes a reserve of £10,000 and LB confirmed Colin Schofield had agreed to continue as Examiner.

### **4 Election of Trustees and revised Management Committee**

The following changes are proposed and seconded:

- AC will step down as Chair of the Trustees, with MK proposed as the new Chair of Trustees. MK thanked AC for his service.
- MK will step down as Chair of the Management Committee and it's proposed that RS will take over as Chair of the Management Committee.
- MK is proposed for the role of Curator, rather than as acting Curator. MK would also take over leading the Collections Team from Richard, as this sits more appropriately with the Curator role. The Curator role also naturally represents the Display Team and the Management Committee.

The Museum is looking for more Trustees to join the Committee and also for a Vice Chairman.

### **5 Any other business**

Freda Hennesy questioned parking outside the Museum and suggested the we apply for a Blue Badge space for those volunteers who need to be closer to the building. She also pointed out that access for some mobility vehicles was limited – this is something that is

being looked into. Ann Hudson asked if we could approach the garage for parking usage. Alastair suggested that we commission a brown sign to publicise where the Museum was located – again, this will be looked into. He also pointed out that the notice board outside the Co-op was in disrepair and needs to be replaced. It was agreed we would look at replacing the board and would ask the Co-op if they would be prepared to help fund a replacement board.

Ann Hudson suggested that we look at the days the Museum is open as well as changing the morning session to end at 12:30 noon than 1.15pm. Others were happy with the status quo. We will have more discussion with the active stewards on this. Should we change to 1:00 ? MK said we were thinking about not opening on a Thursday when stewards were very short, but the main issue with stewards was not enough were available and more volunteers were needed. The preference is to keep hours as they are.

**6. Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2027 at 2pm.