

The Egypt Exploration Society

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY FIFTH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY (THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE FUND IN 1882) HELD ONLINE ON SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 4.30 PM.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dr Campbell Price, opened the meeting at 4.30 pm and welcomed members to the online event. Dr Price began by acknowledging the online format of the meeting owing to planned industrial action by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and thanked members for their patience with the technology used. The meeting commenced at 4.35 pm.

The Director noted that 73 members were in attendance at the meeting and thus a quorum had been reached (the minimum being 30 according to Article 15.2a) – altogether 111 attended the meeting from 13 different countries. 35 proxy forms had been returned.

Apologies had been received from two Trustees (Dr Omniya Abdel Barr and James Potts) in advance of the meeting.

0. Annual General Meeting

The Chair began the meeting by thanking his fellow Trustees, the staff, and volunteers of the Society for their hard work and support over this “jubilee year for Egyptology” in which the EES had been involved in international events commemorating the bicentenary of the decipherment of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, as well as the centenaries of the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb and Egypt’s semi-independence from British rule. The Chair commented that the Society’s own 140th anniversary on 1st April 2022 was celebrated at the very start of the series of events which followed. Dr Price noted the pressure felt by staff and Trustees during such a busy year and thanked them for their efforts and the members for their support. Before commencing with the formal business of the meeting, he wished to make those attending aware of how they could vote during the meeting.

(a) Voting

Dr Price noted that the online platform allowed the Society to proceed with the meeting according to its constitutions. The Chair thanked all those that had mailed proxy forms in advance of the meeting and noted that these forms would prove crucial if a consensus was not reached in the meeting.

The Chair reported that 35 proxy forms were returned to the EES office before the deadline of 4.30 pm on 24th November 2022. 30 proxy votes were counted, and 5 proxy forms were received spoiled and therefore invalid according to Article 20.1 and were discounted from the count. The Chair asked that anyone in attendance who had also submitted a proxy form should not vote in the electronic polls or should write to the panellists to check whether their form had been counted.

The online platform allowed for the usual show of hands required according to Article 19.1. This would be done using the online ‘poll’ facility which would be launched for each of the nine resolutions and would offer the options of ‘for’, ‘against’, and ‘abstain’.

The Chair announced that he would be exercising the proxy votes in his discretion in favour of the nine resolutions. Charlotte Jordan had been appointed proxy by one member and announced that she would also vote in favour of the nine resolutions. To reassure members, the Chair noted that in any instance where a consensus was not reached from the show of hands or there was 10% or less between the options selected, then the votes and proxies would be scrutinised, and the results published on the Society’s website within a week of the meeting.

As would be normal practice, during the meeting the Chair would propose each of the resolutions in the order set out in the agenda. Accordingly, as each resolution is proposed, the Chair would seek a seconder and then ask for a virtual show of hands.

(b) Asking questions

The Chair noted that this AGM was being held on a ‘meeting platform’ which allowed all in attendance to use their webcams and audio if desired. Questions could therefore be asked verbally by using the ‘raise hand’ function available. Questions could also be put into the chat and the panel would endeavour to answer all questions raised. The Chair asked that the questions were kept concise and clear and, if typed in the chat, requested that members include their name with their questions so that they could be identified for the purposes of the minutes.

1. To receive the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

Minutes were available on the Society's website in advance of the meeting and web-links shared with members attending via their reminder email.

The Chair proposed that the minutes were received. Susan Biddle seconded the resolution which was duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
62 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
30	0	0

2. Treasurer's Report

The Chair invited the Treasurer, Sue Preston, to give her report.

The Treasurer started by reminding the meeting that figures presented in the Annual Report and Accounts reflected the reporting year 2021-22 which included the impact of the global health crisis up to January 2022 when the Society reopened its London premises.

Over the year, the Society reported a positive movement in funds of £48,000 (2021: £109,000 surplus). The value of the Society's investments increased by £15,000 (2021: gain £59,000) which reflects the continued recovery following the pandemic. The Society also received £16,000 in investment income (2021: £9,000) following the transfer to Cazenove's ethical Responsible Charity Multi Asset Fund. Much of the surplus was generated in restricted funds (£34,000; 2021: £51,000), which enables the Society to carry on its charitable work but will not cover some of the running costs and overhead expenditure. A small deficit in unrestricted funds (£1,000; 2021: £1000) was helped by a generous legacy of £70,000 received in March 2022. Without this, the deficit would have been much larger.

The Treasurer reported that free reserves currently stand at £198,000 (2021: £236,000) which is slightly above the Trustee's target range of £150,000-£175,000. This figure was much higher following the surplus of 2020-21 and the Board therefore designated £100,000 of reserves into a Development Fund which would allow the Society to commence its redevelopment, beginning with a full system review in 2023.

As with the previous year, the Board commissioned an Independent Examination. This was performed in 2022 by the company that previously undertook the Society's audit, Sayer Vincent. No concerns were raised, and the process was carried out remotely. The Treasurer extended her thanks to Neville Leslie for his work on the annual examination.

The Treasurer announced that the Society was currently expecting a small deficit in the current year but had been notified of a legacy which, if received, would provide small surplus. She also acknowledged the cost-of-living crisis currently affecting supporters. The Society had, because of this, also started to face rising running costs. However, in order to support its members, the Board had decided not to increase subscription rates in 2023-24 as had been previously planned. Instead, the Treasurer encouraged those that could afford to, to add a donation of £7.50 to their annual membership fee next year in order to subsidise the costs being incurred by the Society in its provision of services to supporters. The Treasurer ended by thanking the staff again for their ongoing hard work to make the Society sustainable during this challenging time.

Questions

Barbara Youngman: Thanked the Treasurer for her clear presentation of the financial situation and asked whether the current condition of the Doughty Mews property was affecting the economic state of the Society, and whether there was an update on the impact of the two neighbour's trees.

The Treasurer noted that the Director will talk more about the premises in his presentation. She also reported that a fund had been established to cover ongoing costs in dealing with the trees, but that the Board were hopeful that this could be claimed back on the neighbour's insurance.

Susan Biddle: Will the owners of the trees be responsible for their removal and paying for it?

The Treasurer confirmed this but noted that the Society would incur costs in the ground investigations and structural engineers as well as legal costs in recouping funds owed to it.

Karim El-Eita: What is the Development Fund being spent on?

Immediate costs for redevelopment will focus on developing the Society's IT systems to bring additional value to members online.

Arthur Farrow: Can we leave a legacy to the Society?

Absolutely, Dr Graves will post an advice pack directly. Further details are on the EES website:

<https://www.ees.ac.uk/legacy>

The Chair thanked the Treasurer for her careful handling of the Society's finances during the previous challenging years.

3. Director's Report

The Chair invited Dr Carl Graves, as Director of the Society, to present the Director's report for 2021-22.

Dr Graves began by welcoming all those attending and asked for a moment of reflection to remember those that had passed away during the year, and to offer thanks to those that had (and have) left legacies to support the work of the Society. In particular, Dr Graves noted the sad loss of Neil Cooke, Geoffrey Martin, and Peter Parsons, all long-standing members of the Society and contributors to its research projects.

Dr Graves gave a PowerPoint presentation on the work of the EES over the past year. He began by reviewing the aims of the Society's 2019-22 Business Plan which, though hindered by the global health crisis, had achieved its four aims to:

- Become financially sustainable,
- Maintain its support for high-impact research projects,
- Expand its provision for the next generation of scholars,
- And to build strong and meaningful relationships with a global community of supporters.

The Director thanked his team for their efforts during the course of the Plan, their patience and perseverance during challenging times, and their adaptability to the changing situation. He also thanked the Board of Trustees for their tireless work in the background which is often unseen by supporters but ensured the continued success of the Society.

(a) Research

Thanks to generous donations received in 2020, the Society launched their EES Heritage at Risk Grants in 2021. Dr Fatma Keshk was appointed in May 2021 as Grant Administrator, a position created in memory of the late Ian Mathieson with funding from the Scottish Egyptian Archaeology Trust. Fatma liaised with local heritage initiatives across Egypt, supported their application writing, and offered advice where needed. The EES Research Committee gave their expert guidance, while Dr Penny Wilson and Dr Omniya Abdel Barr mentored Fatma's role. Altogether, six grants were awarded covering tangible and intangible aspects of local heritage all valued by their communities and in threat of damage or loss. Projects ranged from recording local crafts to conducting oral histories of suburban tram lines, mapping exchange networks in fish markets to photographing and measuring Mamluk mausolea. A report on the work appeared in *Egyptian Archaeology* magazine and a special photography exhibition, *Heritage Everywhere*, hosted by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina at Bayt al-Sinnari welcomed the projects as well as representatives of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, British Embassy, and British Council.

The Society also maintained support for its traditional research projects. The Seventh Delta Survey Conference and Workshop was held online on 30th September and 1st October 2022 and was attended by more than 150 people around the world. For the first time, simultaneous Arabic-English translation was made available, and discussion panels were held focusing on landscape and survey techniques, site management planning, priority sites and rescue work, human bioarchaeology, archaeobotany, and heritage work.

The Society announced two rounds of Centenary Awards in 2021 following a hiatus in grants over 2020. Five projects were supported including work at Saqqara, a place long associated with the work of the Society.

(b) Publications

Dr Graves reported that Charlotte Jordan had made some changes to *Egyptian Archaeology* magazine since beginning her role as Editor. This included the addition of activities for younger readers and the inclusion of book reviews for younger audiences. Volume 107 of the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* was released within the year which included two papers which had been supported by the Mentoring for Egyptian and Sudanese Authors scheme implemented by Dr Stephanie Boonstra and Dr Claudia Näser the previous year. Dr Graves offered his thanks to the Patron Giving Circle for directly supporting this scheme.

The Director noted that the Society continued to review its publications processes, including distribution, in order to secure the best value for its members and financial sustainability for the Society.

(c) **Collections**

Dr Graves noted that work in the Society's collections had been slow to restart following the global pandemic as members were cautious to revisit in-person. However, volunteer projects had recommenced including the digitisation of historical magazines, correspondence from Tell el-Amarna, and object records from the Saqqara Sacred Animal Necropolis. The Director also noted that one volunteer, Guilherme Borges Pires, had contributed a Collection Highlight to the website to further promote his project.

(d) **Education and training**

Thanks to the online Skills Booster session focusing on museum display and interpretation offered the previous year, the Society had expanded its offering of education and training online this year. This included a session on academic publishing, as well as more intensive workshops covering archive creation and curation. A series of training sessions were offered by Dr Hannah Pethen focusing on GIS for Egyptologists. 16 attendees reported increasing their skills and knowledge in the subject by a huge 150%.

In-person training was possible toward the end of the year when Dr Graves and Charlotte Jordan visited Egypt to run a series of educational workshops in Cairo and Alexandria. These workshops covered application guidance, archive management, and engagement. The latter was run in partnership with the Archaeological Society of Alexandria and the Raqada Foundation for Arts and Heritage.

(e) **Outreach and Engagement**

Dr Graves noted the ongoing caution with attending in-person events and so the vast majority of Society events were held online. Despite a busy event programme, the number of attendees at events had dropped (23,000 tickets in 2020-21 compared to 7,000 in 2021-22). However, a new payment structure for online courses meant that attendees supported both the ongoing costs and charitable work of the Society. By offering recordings following the live events further audiences were able to catch up, with viewing figures occasionally reaching over 1000.

(f) **Business Plan, 2022-25**

Dr Graves revealed the new Business Plan that the Society would be focusing on until 2025. The targets for this plan are:

- To make the EES' high-quality facilities and programmes a world-class destination for engaging diverse audiences with Egyptian cultural heritage.
- To be the centre of a UK-wide research network for projects focusing on the heritage of Egypt.
- To pioneer a sustainable method for sharing research in-print and/or online.

The Director noted that these were less ambitious than the previous Plan, but this was because of the need to redevelop the Society's London premises. Dr Graves revealed the plans created by Studio Becoming that will soon be submitted to Camden Council for planning permission. This had only been possible because of the Council granting permission for the owners to remove the two London Plane trees in the garden of 8 Doughty Street. The damage caused to the property so far would need to be rectified, allowing the Society an opportunity to make the rest of its premises more accessible. The new plans include secure access to a new Learning Hub for engaging with the Society's collections. The ground floor would also include an accessible toilet and the rehoused research library. The first floor would provide safe storage for the Society's collections of papyrus and cartonnage which would be relocated from their current location in Oxford. Finally, a new second floor would include storage space for the archive as well as a meeting room and roof terrace with an educational garden. All floors would be connected by a platform lift and atrium stairwell bringing light into the centre of the building. The building is designed to be carbon neutral and generate its own energy which would provide further financial and environmental sustainability. The retained two-bedroom flat would be redeveloped to provide a higher rental income.

(g) **Membership**

The Director ended by reporting that membership figures had begun to drop slightly following the pandemic but noted that there was still time for the current figure (1799) to increase.

Dr Graves finished by thanking his team, the Board, and volunteers again before extending his thanks to members and donors for their generous support and ensuring that the Society could continue to face these external challenges for the benefit of future generations.

Questions

Susan Biddle: Thanked the Director and his team for their hard work. What arrangements will be made for rehousing the library and archive during any rebuilding work?

The Director reported that the Board and its Collections sub-Committee were already exploring options for secure off-site storage that would continue to make the collections accessible, with a 24/48-hour recall notice, to

members and researchers. The safety of the collections was paramount in the discussions about the redevelopment.

Susan Biddle: Has the membership been analysed geographically in the context of wider engagement levels recorded over more recent years?

International reach has expanded since moving events online and he agreed that it would be useful to know more about our members and is hopeful that the new systems will allow for this.

Thomas Higel: Will it be possible to offer more online courses at roughly the same time?

The Director agreed that more courses may attract further members and increase income, but it is unclear whether this would dilute attendance across the greater number of courses. Further research was needed to test this.

Richard Harvey: Will the new plans be funded by reserves or have funds been put aside for the work?

The Director reported that Dr Edward Scrivens (Development Manager) will be working hard over the next few years to raise the funds required to redevelop the premises. The Treasurer confirmed that the cost of redeveloping will not come from the funds that the Society currently has and that a separate appeal will be run to secure the future of the Society at Doughty Mews.

4. To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22

The Chair proposed the meeting received the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22. Vanessa Foott seconded the resolution which was duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
67 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
30	0	0

5. To approve the appointment of Sayer Vincent LLP as Independent Examiners until the end of the next AGM and to authorise the Board of Trustees to fix their remuneration

The resolution for the appointment of Sayer Vincent LLP as Independent Examiners until the next AGM and for the Board of Trustees to fix their remuneration was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Richard Ayre, and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
66 (99%)	0 (0%)	1 (1 %)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
30	0	0

6. To approve the amendment of the Articles expressly to permit the Society to hold virtual and/or hybrid meetings

The Chair noted that the Society's current Articles of Association did not forbid it to hold meetings online but, in the interest of transparency and to make the Society's commitment to inclusivity for its international supporters, the Board felt that it was important to make this clear. The Amendments were proposed by the Chair, seconded by Barbara Youngman, and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
67 (99%)	0 (0%)	1 (1 %)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
30	0	0

7. To elect members of the Board of Trustees of the Society

The Chair noted that Anandh Owen and Dr Sami Sadek were retiring having served 6 years and were therefore not eligible for re-election. W Luke Purser and Dr Violaine Chauvet resigned during the year and will not stand for re-election. Dr Penelope Wilson retires by rotation and offers herself for re-election. The Board has decided to extend Dr Katharina Zinn's term of office for a final year under Article 37A in order to assist with the ongoing discussions about the Society's collections and their relocation during the redevelopment of its premises. To fill the remaining vacancies, the Board recommends the appointment of two new Trustees, Roba Ashraf Abdelbadie and Abeer Eladany. Dr Jennifer Cromwell was appointed a Trustee by the Board on 18 February 2022 and under Article 35(2) is required to retire at the AGM; she also offers herself for re-election. In recommending them for election, the Board has taken into account their knowledge and skills and where applicable their contribution to date, as well as the overall balance of skills and experience that the Board requires.

Details of candidates had been circulated with the notice of meeting and more details on the candidates had been available on the website since August.

7.1 The resolution for the election of **Dr Roba Ashraf Abdelbadie** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Sami Sadek and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
64 (94%)	0 (0%)	4 (6%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
28	1	1

7.2 The resolution for the election of **Dr Jennifer Cromwell** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Vanessa Foott and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
65 (91%)	1 (3%)	4 (6%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
25	0	0

7.3 The resolution for the election of **Dr Abeer Eladany** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Tilly Burton and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
59 (90%)	3 (5%)	3 (5%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
25	0	0

7.4 The resolution for the re-election of **Dr Penelope Wilson** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Arthur Farrow and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
59 (90%)	3 (5%)	3 (5%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
25	0	0

8. To elect Prof Doris Behrens-Abuseif as President of the Society

The Chair thanked the outgoing President, Prof Alan Lloyd, for his generosity, support, and guidance during his term. Dr Price noted that Prof Lloyd has been a member of the Society since 1965 and, during that time, had been a researcher, Trustee, Chair, and President. He ended by noting that Prof Lloyd will remain a Vice-President of the Society.

The Chair welcomed Prof Behrens-Abuseif and noted her background as Nasser D Khalili Chair of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London from 2000-2014. She is regarded around the world as the authority on Mamluk Egyptian history.

The resolution for the election of **Doris Behrens-Abuseif** as President of the Society was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Tilly Burton and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
62 (91%)	0 (0%)	6 (9%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
29	1	0

Prof Behrens-Abuseif thanked members for the enormous honour to be President of the Society and noted her enthusiasm to work alongside everyone to continue making a positive difference in the field of Egyptian heritage.

9. Any other business

There were no further questions or business arising from the meeting.

The Chair thanked members for attending the meeting. The Chair closed the meeting at 5.45 pm.