

The Egypt Exploration Society

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY SIXTH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY (THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE FUND IN 1882) HELD ONLINE ON SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 4.00 PM.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dr Campbell Price, opened the meeting at 4.00 pm and welcomed members to the online event. Dr Price began by acknowledging the online format of the meeting; a format approved by members in the 2022 AGM, which allowed members outside of the London area easier access to attend the meeting. The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm.

The Director noted that 43 members were in attendance at the meeting and thus a quorum had been reached (the minimum being 30 according to Article 15.2a) – altogether 64 attended the meeting from 12 different countries. 7 proxy forms had been returned.

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 a challenging but also extremely active year. Dr Price specifically thanked the Director and his team for not just maintaining the core work of the Society but also for raising the profile and impact of the Society. The Chair also welcomed Julia Thorne to the Society in her role as Publications Manager. The Chair ended by acknowledging his pleasure at meeting so many supporters during the year at both the London and Cairo Offices including members and HE Gareth Bayley, British Ambassador to Egypt, and HE Sherif Kamel, the Egyptian Ambassador to the UK. 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 platform used allowed those attending to share their webcam and audio, should they wish, but he urged everyone to follow the Society's guidance on attending online events so as not to disrupt the meeting. 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 7 proxy forms were returned to the EES London Office before the deadline of 4.30 pm on 23rd November 2023. 7 proxy votes were counted, and 0 proxy forms were received spoiled. 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 Director confirmed that nobody in attendance had submitted a proxy form in advance.

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 after the Treasurer's and Director's reports. 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. Richard Ayre and Arthur Farrow seconded the resolution which was duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
43 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	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 2022-23 which reflected the first full year since the global pandemic.

Over the year, the Society reported a positive movement in funds of £66,000 (2022: £48,000 surplus). This result is particularly impressive considering the value of the Society's investments decreased by £18,000 (2022: gain £15,000). The Treasurer also noted that the Society had not had to withdraw from its investments since 2019 thanks to efforts by the staff to generate sustainable levels of income. The Society continues to keep its investments in Cazenove's ethical Charity Sustainable Multi-Asset Fund. Much of the surplus was generated in restricted funds (£46,000; 2022: £34,000), this was owing to successful fundraising efforts and the funds are expected to be spent in 2023-24. A surplus was also recorded in unrestricted funds (£38,000; 2022: deficit of £1000) because £180,000 was received in legacies over the year.

The Treasurer reported that free reserves currently stand at £178,000 (2022: £198,000) which is slightly above the Trustee's target range of £150,000-£175,000. The Board designated £200,000 of reserves into a Development Fund during the year which will be invested in the redevelopment of the Society, including its premises as well as a new website and membership management system implemented in 2023-24.

As with the previous year, the Board commissioned an Independent Examination. This was performed in 2023 by Sayer Vincent. No concerns were raised, and the process was carried out remotely. The Treasurer expects that a full Audit will be required in 2023-24 owing to increased income from legacies alongside the Capital Campaign.

The Treasurer announced that the Society was currently expecting a surplus in the current year, again owing to legacy income. It was felt by the Board of Trustees that this income should not be used to solve issues of a business deficit and so the Treasurer acknowledged the need for the Society to increase subscription fees. This had not been done last year, in recognition of the cost-of-living crisis currently affecting supporters, but it was clear that a small increase would be needed to ensure that the Society remained sustainable. The Board were determined to keep the increase below the rate of inflation and so will increase rates by just 5% (roughly £3 on UK Full Membership cost).

The Treasurer ended by thanking the staff again for their ongoing hard work to make the Society sustainable during this challenging time making specific reference to the amount of time and effort that had been put into implementing new systems in 2023 and generating sustainable levels of income for the Society during very challenging times.

Questions

Taneash Sidpura: 'Admittedly this is from March, but cashflow appears to be a risk? Cash in hand is low compared to very high debtors. This could be related to the time of the year of course.'

The Treasurer accepted that the level of debtors appeared high but reported that this was because of legacies which – according to accounting rules – had to be accounted for in the reporting year but were not yet received. Cash flow has been a concern over the reporting and current year, but staff have carried out more regular Gift Aid claims and improved the regularity of income and expenditure and monitored it closely.

The Chair thanked the Treasurer for her presentation.

3. Director's Report

The Chair invited Dr Carl Graves, as Director of the Society, to present the Director's report for 2022-23.

Dr Graves began by welcoming all those attending and asked for a moment of reflection to remember those who 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 Martin Davies in June 2023, a long-standing support of the Society, Trustee, and Vice-President since 2010. The Director noted how important it is that members leaving gifts to the Society in their Wills should also give the EES permission to recognise them publicly to acknowledge their generous gifts.

Dr Graves gave a PowerPoint presentation on the work of the EES over the past year. He began by reiterating the aims of the current Business Plan, begun in 2022, and which will remain the focus of the Society's work until 2025:

- 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 over the past year, staff had already moved onto these objectives and substantial progress had been made. He thanked his tireless staff team for their efforts and energy which had enabled the Society to expand its services, both online and in-person, and increase its impact over the previous few years.

(a) Research

The Society's research activities had continued following the pandemic and returned to its regular programme of Centenary Award grants. Two were awarded in the year:

The Roman Baths at Hermopolis Magna by Hesham Abdel Qader: a project supported by an EES Heritage at Risk Grant in 2022 and completed with the help of this further Centenary Award.

125 Years at Abydos by Amany Abd el Hameed: an online and in-person conference to explore the role of Egyptians in archaeological work at Abydos during the past 125 years.

The new EES Affiliate Programme was expanded over the year welcoming new projects. These projects will be offered funding in 2023-24 and further applications are being encouraged.

The Delta Survey continued under Dr Penelope Wilson and the Delta Survey Conference and Workshop was held at Ain Shams University between 18th and 20th March 2023.

(b) Publications

With the departure of Dr Jan Geisbusch as EES Publications Manager in 2021, the publications programme was reviewed and a new accessible range of volumes planned. The first, a reprint of *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* by Amelia B Edwards was printed in 2022 with a new introduction written by Dr Carl Graves and Dr Anna Garnett. Including unseen archival images and a new cover designed by Egyptian comic artist Deena Mohamed, the book has been popular and further volumes will be explored. The success of this production and ongoing review of the distribution systems for publications has enabled the Society to invest in this in 2023-24.

(c) Collections

In 2023, the Society welcomed Zipporah Blake as Collections Assistant between April and October 2022 under the UK Government Kickstart Scheme. Zipporah assisted Dr Stephanie Boonstra in managing the various collections at the London Office as well as establishing a new Lending Library for members there and drafting a new template for the cataloguing of the Society's antique and rare book collection (Special Collections).

Thanks to a generous donation from EES Member Peter Phillips, Elizabeth Owen and Yu Zhuang spent 10 weeks scanning over 3000 object cards from the Sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqara sub-archive (SAQ-SAN) in early 2023. These records have now been made freely available online along with a video about the project created by Charlotte Jordan.

The success of our 2022 Annual Appeal means that essential funds have been received to support the much-needed conservation of key pieces in the collections. The largest watercolour by Howard Carter (EES.ART.212) was conserved straight away before it toured Norwich and Newcastle in the UK as part of the *Visualising Ancient Egypt* exhibition. Further essential conservation work will be carried out on other items in 2023-24.

The ongoing partnership with UCL Conservation MA students has seen several cartonnage masks and footcases conserved over the year. Since beginning this partnership, 13 students have benefited from working on the Society's cartonnage collections.

(d) Education and training

The main focus for the Society in 2022-23 was in education and training. Thanks to the generous support of the British Council, in June 2022, Dr Stephanie Boonstra organised the first Egyptological Archives Skills School in Cairo. Ten early career scholars, working in collections, were given skills in archive management and engagement as well as site visits to archive-holding institutions around the city such as the Ifao, ARCE, Egyptian Museum, and Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. An assessment at the end of the School focused on engaging audiences in the Egyptian Museum with artefacts on display that had been excavated by the EES using archives held by the Society. These interpretive panels will form the core of new projects in 2023-24.

The four most successful scholars from the School were invited to visit London in September 2022 to work in the EES archives in order to create educational resources for teachers based on artefacts on display in the Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Antiquities. These resources will be made available online with a unique personal approach from each of the scholars.

Our Egyptian Archaeology Skills School continued this year with ten scholars visiting the London Office to receive an introduction to archaeological practice. This programme continued to attract international scholars and has become an essential tool in developing students prior to fieldwork experience.

(e) Outreach and Engagement

The Society's online event programme has continued to attract attendees from around the world which has added to our membership numbers since the pandemic. In September 2022, Charlotte Jordan expanded this to include the 6th EES Congress (formerly the British Egyptology Congress) with Swansea University. Though it was hoped that some of this would be hybrid, train strikes in the UK meant that many were forced to attend online.

In October 2022, the Director took a group of EES Members on a tour of sites in Egypt with Ancient World Tours. This was the first tour of this nature in several years and allowed attendees to follow in the footsteps of Howard Carter, tracing his archaeological career at the EEF in the 1890s. The tour was very popular and further tours have since been planned.

(f) Membership

The Director reported that the growth in membership seen over the pandemic had slowed but that improving retention was something staff were keenly aware of. Dr Graves announced that a new website and membership management system had therefore been implemented by Charlotte Jordan in the current year (2023-24) and that members would soon receive communications about how to log in and use that new system. He thanked Charlotte for her hard work over the year to bring this together and invited members to test the 'Donate' button on Giving Tuesday.

(g) Building the Future Campaign

Dr Graves ended his, shorter than usual, presentation but wished to inform members of the exciting plans for the future of the Egypt Exploration Society. These plans, the 'Building the Future' campaign, would secure the transformation of the London premises as well as the development of new programmes to engage diverse audiences while making the Society and its activities accessible and sustainable for the future.

The plans include the complete transformation of the London Office which will provide new spaces for engaging visitors as well as a safe and environmentally controlled home for the Society's collections. This included the relocation of the Society's collections of papyri and cartonnage from Oxford.

The plans had received support from the British and Egyptian Ambassadors as well as several high profile figures such as Dan Snow, Mary Beard, and Bettany Hughes. While the Board estimate that these plans could cost up to £3.5million, it was envisaged that much of this will be sought from grant giving bodies – though investment from our members would demonstrate our own commitment to the future of the Society and its work.

Dr Graves noted how members could support the campaign and invited those attending to visit the website for further information.

Naturally, this campaign will take up a lot of effort over the next few years. Dr Edward Scrivens had been brought in as EES Development Manager to oversee the process, and members were invited to contact him if they had any questions.

(h) Thanks

The Director ended by thanking his staff team once again, as well as the Board of Trustees who are often under-acknowledged in the time that they spend on ensuring that the EES succeeds. Dr Graves thanked the Society's hard working volunteers and ended by offering his gratitude to the members, without whom nothing would be possible.

Questions

Chris Seymour: How much of the £3.5million for the 'Building the Future' campaign do you expect to come from grants? The Director hoped that up to two-thirds of the total would come from grant giving bodies and applications were in process for those grants. Other funds could be designated by the Board from legacies received. However he also reiterated the need for Members to support the Campaign to demonstrate the commitment we hold for the future of the Society.

Michael Reilly: Have you considered making recordings of former courses available to subscribers as this may encourage more people to support while also fulfilling the Society's educational objectives? The Director noted that this had been discussed by staff with regard to the new website launched this month. As members can log in, this would be a space to provide tailored online content to improve the value for members using the online platform.

Susan Biddle: What is the scheduled start date for the redevelopment of the premises? It is hoped that the campaign can be completed within three years, though this is dependent on the schedule of grant-funders and whether the target can be reached in that period. The Director noted that there are significant structural threats to the Society's collections in London which were the only pressing issues for carrying out the work.

4. To receive the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 2022-23

The Chair proposed the meeting received the Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23. Katharina Zinn and Hilary McGowan seconded the resolution which was duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
46 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	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 Sue Preston, Hilary McGowan, and Susan Biddle, and duly carried.

Online show of hands

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

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	0	0

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

The Chair noted that Dr Katharina Zinn would retire from the Board having served 8 years (one term and a further one-year extension according to Article 37A) and is therefore not eligible for re-election. The Chair expressed his and the Board's gratitude to Dr Zinn for her guidance and support during her time on the Board, particularly for her leadership of the Collections Committee formed in 2021 – a role now passed onto Dr Abeer Eladany. Dr Omniya Abdel Barr, Dr John Baguley, Taco van Heusden, and himself (Dr Campbell Price, Chair) would retire by rotation and stand for re-election. To fill the remaining two vacancies, the Board recommended the appointment of two new Trustees, Dr Yvette Dzumaga and Hilary McGowan. In recommending them for election, the Board has taken into account their knowledge and skills, 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.

6.1 The resolution for the re-election of **Dr Omniya Abdel Barr** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Arthur Farrow and Katharina Zinn and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
43 (96%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	0	0

6.2 The resolution for the re-election of **Dr John Baguley MBA** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Richard Ayre and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
43 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	0	0

6.3 The resolution for the election of **Dr Yvette Dzumaga** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by John Baguley and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
44 (96%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	0	0

6.4 The resolution for the re-election of **Taco van Heusden** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Chris Seymour and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
46 (98%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	0	0

6.5 The resolution for the election of **Hilary McGowan FMA FRSA** was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Elizabeth Glithero-West and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
43 (98%)	0 (5%)	1 (2%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	0	0

6.6 The Chair passed the meeting to THE Vice-Chair, Richard Ayre, for the final resolution. The resolution for the re-election of **Dr Campbell Price** was proposed by the Vice-Chair, seconded by Elizabeth Glithero-West and duly carried.

Online show of hands

For	Against	Abstain
45 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Proxy forms

For	Against	Abstain
7	0	0

7. 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 5.00 pm.