



**Vale of Evesham Civic Society Agenda for Annual General Meeting  
at Ecgwins Club, 117 High Street, Evesham on Tuesday 9th April 2024 at 7.30pm**

1. Apologies:
2. Approval of Minutes of the 51st Annual General Meeting on 11 April 2023.
3. Matters arising from previous meeting.
4. Chair's Annual Report
5. Hon Treasurer's Report
6. Election of Officers
  1. Chairman
  2. Vice Chairman
  3. Hon Treasurer
  4. Hon Secretary
7. Election of Executive Committee
8. Appointment of Auditors
9. Membership rates for 2025/26 – Suggested changes
  1. Member £12
  2. Joint members £18
  3. Business member £30.
10. Discussion on what you think the priorities should be for the committee to be working on.
11. Any other Business

Nominations for officers and members of the executive committee, supported by a seconder, should be sent to the Secretary, Laburnum Cottage, 1 Orchard Walk, Evesham, WR11 1HA or by email to [vecs1972@gmail.com](mailto:vecs1972@gmail.com) not later than 5 April 2024.

Subscriptions for the year 2024/2025 are now due. The necessary forms and reply slips are included with this document pack and will be available at the meeting.

Ashleigh Jayes, Almonry Manager, will provide an illustrated talk and progress report on the restoration of the Almonry building, updating of the museum and how it is going to be paid for.



## **Vale of Evesham Civic Society (VECS)** **Annual General Meeting (AGM), 11 April 2023: Minutes**

**Present:** Pat & Ian Stanton, Adrian Peake (Hon Treasurer), Gill Pawson (Chairman/Secretary), Brian Chilver (Vice Chairman), Ken Pawson, Anne Albright, Dougal Chestnutt, Galen Bartholomew, Olga Allen, Tom Ashley, Linda Hart, Jackie Hale, Margaret Hodgetts, Carolyn & Bill Petts, Barbara & John Goodwin, Paula Bowden, Jackie McGowan, Jim Powell, Maryanne Stuart, Janet & David Osbourne, Sue Campbell.

**Apologies:** Robert Hale, Julie and Tim Haines, Caroline Abbey, Colin Tether, Sue Ablett, Franco Scimea.

Before the start of the formal AGM meeting, Gill Pawson introduced the team from Trichology, 4B Port Street. The committee had agreed to award a **VECS Letter of Commendation** for their work on the consistently good appearance of their shop front, in particular the shop window displays. A presentation was made of the letter in a frame, for display in the shop; a photo will be taken outside when the weather improves, for inclusion on our website for a press release. It was agreed that more shops needed to follow this example.

**The Minutes of the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on 12 April 2022** were approved, with no matters arising.

**The 2022-2023 Annual Report** was given by Gill Pawson, who presented highlights from her report, which had been circulated in advance with the agenda papers to all members. In particular, thanks were given to Sue Campbell for organising the programme of events and talks for many years. A short explanation of the Evesham Town Centre Prospectus and Place Board was given; more information will be reported to members in newsletters and on the website during the current year. The full report is attached for the record.

**The 2022-2023 Hon Treasurer's Report** was given by Adrian Peake. Full figures had been circulated with the agenda, so he highlighted the unusual expenditure and income for the last year. One-off expenses were incurred for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events and for the updating and printing of the Evesham Town Trail booklet. He also explained that VECS now has to pay for the hire of rooms at Ecgwins Club; £10 per hour for the committee room and £2.50 a head for attendees at talks. This has meant that the charge for attending talks has had to be increased. An explanation was also given on the income and expenditure incurred in the Bengeworth Fountain area improvement works, which had been 5 years in the making. The committee had approved the income and expenditure, following its auditing by Peter Gay. The full report is attached for the record.

**Election of Executive Committee.** The existing committee members had agreed to stand for another year, namely Gill Pawson, Brian Chilver, Adrian Peake, Ian and Pat Stanton, Sue Campbell, Julie and Tim Haines. A member stood for election, Paula Bowden. She addressed the members, explaining that she had lived in Evesham since 1987 and that having recently retired from the role as project manager in a government department, she has time to give to help running the Society. She has been active during the last year, helping on clearing poster litter, and carrying out surveys of bus shelters and noticeboards. Existing and proposed new members were all elected unanimously.

**Election of Officers.** The following agreed to continue as officers:

Chairman – Gill Pawson, Vice Chairman – Brian Chilver, Hon Treasurer – Adrian Peake.

The role of Hon Secretary has been fulfilled by Gill Pawson since Colin Tether moved to London, but Paula Bowden had volunteered to take on the role. All were elected unanimously.



**Appointment of Auditors:** Peter Gay had agreed to undertake the role of examiner for another year. This was approved.

**Membership rates for 2023/24** were agreed as follows;

1. Single Membership £10
2. Joint/Family membership £15
3. Business membership £25.

### **Any Other Business**

Linda Hart asked that VECS press for a greater presence in Evesham of staff from Wychavon District Council, to assist members of the community with questions and queries relating to the Council responsibilities. At the moment there is only a WDC representative in the Library on a Friday afternoon. It was agreed that the committee would contact WDC Councillors after the local elections in May. **Action: AGM-01**

Brian Chilver asked for volunteers to add their names to the rota for the two days of the Medieval Market on 20/21 May.

Jim Powell spoke about the state of the town, in particular the traffic levels. He also raised concerns about the lack of involvement in town affairs by the local community and the need to promote public meetings and events widely.

Paula Bowden spoke, to offer thanks to the committee members for their work during the year. The thanks were endorsed by all members present.

Gill Pawson reminded members of the two forthcoming spring trips: Madresfield Court, which is now fully booked with a waiting list, and in June a garden party at 14 Owletts End, to celebrate Civic Day.

The evening finished with a talk by Gill Pawson, on the Market Garden Hovels of the Vale of Evesham.

## 2023/24 Annual Report

Welcome!

Our Civic Society has two main aims:

1. **Social Activities** - To provide an opportunity for members to get together socially on a regular basis through a planned programme of talks and visits, and to produce informative newsletters for its membership showcasing what is happening within the Society and within our town
2. **Active involvement in our town's heritage** - To influence and work with local government and other organisations to ensure that our historic town is looked after and enhanced, and that high standards of planning and development are maintained.

### Membership

The number of members of the Society has remained fairly constant at approximately 130 for the last few years, despite the pandemic and the continued loss of elderly members. But we have failed to grow the membership during this period. We continue to strive to attract new members but are in need of more help and new ideas. Please come and talk to us after this evening's formal business if you're interested in helping.

We hope to encourage more businesses to join as members, not only to benefit from their membership fee of £25 per annum but to demonstrate the importance to the business community of our aims to improve the town.

The Society has continued to operate with a reduced number of committee members, 8 in all, as we have so far been unsuccessful in recruiting new committee members since the last AGM when Paula joined the committee and took up the vacant role of Secretary. The VECS Constitution allows for 10 members of Executive Committee plus four Officers – Chair, Vice-Chair, Hon Sec and Treasurer (ie total of 14) – the demand on the existing committee members of fulfilling the executive roles and carrying out all of the other activities, as set out in this report, is time-consuming.

I do not apologise for repeating the introduction that I used in last year's report, as it is still very relevant.

We URGENTLY need members to step forward and be prepared to **actively serve** on the committee, so I appeal to you, the membership, to get more involved, and to recruit more members. Please feel free to take away some VECS leaflets with you and forward our newsletters by email to local friends and family.

We have been busy on both of our aims.

## **1. Social Activities**

### Talks/trips/events

Since the last AGM in April 2023, we ran a programme of visits and talks for members and guests. These are organised by Gill with help from Pat and Ian.

We started with a trip to Madresfield Court, which included a very informative guided tour. We held a garden party at 14 Owletts End, which is on the programme again for the 2024/25 year and we had a guided tour of some of the Alleys of Tewkesbury. Our trip to Avoncroft was cancelled, due to lack of support.

Our excellent autumn talks included the work of the Avon Navigation Trust, the Evesham Abbey Trust and the Gloucester and Warwickshire Steam Railway Trust.

VECS members put up the exhibition and maintained a presence at the Medieval Market in May and the Battle of Evesham Festival in August, helping to raise the profile of VECS. We also provided a decorated Christmas Tree in All Saints Church.

As a new social initiative, we invited members to join us at the Red Lion in Market Square over the lunch period, in December and again in January for mince pies etc (thank you Pat and Gill) and jacket potatoes (from Ye Olde Potato Shoppe next door), which were consumed alongside liquid refreshment from the pub. At the December social, Ashleigh Jayes gave us a short talk on the much-needed Almonry restoration and in January, Mick Hurst explained his evolving and progressing plans for a Battlefield Visitor Centre off Greenhill. Feedback gathered at the time suggests that additional lunch-time social events would be popular with members.

In February, our evening talks re-started with 'weather' by Ian Pickering the Vale Magazine's weatherman. It included plenty of colourful and informative images on the subject.

In case you didn't know, for each £4 you give when you come to a talk, we give £2.50 to Ecgwins Club and generally £50 to the speaker, so we are lucky if we make any profit. For example, March's talk about Tewkesbury generated only £3 profit to go into the VECS coffers

### Newsletters

Newsletters or bulletins have been sent out during the year, to inform the membership of our activities and forthcoming events. They have included coverage of the "letters of commendation" sent to a number of businesses in the town who have shown that you can look after our heritage and provide attractive premises to encourage visitors to them. Many thanks to Pat Stanton for issuing the newsletters, sending out emails about the programme of visits, and when and how to renew memberships.

## Promoting the Civic Society

- a. *Meeting the public* - We commissioned and have now taken possession of 3 new pop-up banners to replace the heavy and cumbersome exhibition boards. These will make our presence at such events much easier to organise – and we still require members to volunteer to spend an hour or two manning (and woman-ing) our stand as it's through conversations with passers-by that we get the opportunity to promote our charity and increase membership and support.
- b. *Social Media (Facebook)* - Julie Haines keeps our Facebook page up to date with items of interest to our members and the wider public of Evesham and our posts are shared across other Facebook groups eg Evesham Events, Evesham Noticeboard as appropriate. We would encourage members to regularly review the information, so that they can keep up to date with the Society's activities – or make suggestions on what we should be posting. Gill continues to update the VECS website, until a volunteer can be found to take on this small task.

## **2. Influencing and working with local government and other organisations**

### Planning

Ian Stanton monitors the Wychavon weekly planning applications advising the committee of significant/relevant ones. During the last year, we have objected to proposals for new housing estates in Hampton; one off Highfield Road and another off Stewart Close. No decision has yet been made on either. We have objected to one proposed housing estate at the east end of Badsey, off the Bretforton Road, and commented on the two schemes put forward in the village for the development of the sites allocated in the South Worcestershire Development Plan. Again, no decisions have yet been made. We have supported the change of use of offices above the Library Arcade into apartments.

Our efforts to get some action by Wychavon on the enforcement front have resulted in continued success in the last year. Vape and Tech on High Street have modified their signage to remove the illumination, but Tequila and Line on High Street and Karma on Port Street have not yet done so. These latter two have applied for permission to retain their signage and we have objected; no decisions have yet been made.

We provided written input to Wychavon District Council in response to its consultation on a Planning Design Guide for the district.

### Evesham Town Centre Prospectus

The initiative is being supported by a Place Board, made up of representatives of the town centre's stakeholders - District Council, Evesham Town Council and a range of local businesses and organisations. VECS is represented by Gill. The Board has been awarded funding to spend on small projects that will support the vision for the town centre, set out in

the Prospectus. Many small projects have so far been supported and a mural was put up on the old Argos building to hide the hoarding behind. Bigger projects are now being considered, with grants being offered to owners/tenants of business premises on High Street/Vine Street/Merstow Green, to improve their frontages – you should have seen WDC promoting this in their printed magazines and on their social media pages.

### VECS Projects, initiated by ourselves or on behalf of the Town Council or Evesham Place Board.

Over the last 12 months the committee has focussed on projects that influence or support the responsible bodies – Town, District and County Councils – to better look after their part of our town's public realm. We have completed 7 projects!

The first project was a photographic and documented survey of the location and condition of all of the town's 22 bus shelters. This resulted in the Town Council funding the cleaning of them last autumn with the intention of regular cleaning to follow once every 6 months. On behalf of ETC we then engaged in late 2023/early 2024 with a number of bus shelter manufacturers to get quotes for repairs. The first repairs will take place hopefully in April with more to follow during the financial year.

Next, we surveyed all of the black information noticeboards dotted around the town and made a number of recommendations. These recommendations have mostly been accepted:

- Those outside the parks have now had new Perspex covers fitted, paid for by the Evesham Place Board.
- The future use of the noticeboards has now been agreed with the Town Council, such that each one has a designated purpose and
- Additional keys are being purchased as over the years some keys have been borrowed and not returned meaning access to the noticeboards is difficult!

We now hope to see better usage and content.

Our third project was a comprehensive photographic survey of the problems in the pavements and paved areas in the Conservation Area, which was submitted to the County Council Highways Department during the summer. Following a meeting between Gill and Ian and a member of WCC some of the works were committed to. In February, the tarmac 'cowpats' in the Bridge Street paving were removed and replaced, with more work to follow when the scaffolding has been removed from the NatWest Bank. New bollards are expected soon at the bottom of Bridge Street and at the entrance to Market Square off Vine Street.

Fourth was a survey of all the directional signs and fingerposts – and supplied to Evesham Town Council, which will now clean and update them as necessary.

Gill, helped by Tim Haines, has compiled two catalogues which detail all of the 166 listed buildings in Evesham and Hampton – our fifth project. There are area maps and a page for every building which includes the listing description and photographs; many have the 1992 photograph from the previous survey by the Society plus a current one, where we needed to show the changes that have taken place. This was a huge piece of work over some

months and provides a valuable new baseline of the state of the 166 buildings in 2023/2024. These catalogues will be brought to meetings and events for yourselves and others to browse through.

Project 6 - In the autumn we secured the support of Evesham Town Council, the NatWest Bank restoration project manager and the manager of the Valkyrie pub to put up a banner and posters in the Market Square asking people not to feed the pigeons. These had an almost immediate positive impact in the state of the Market Square area.

Finally - project 7 - on behalf of the Town Clerk in February, we carried out an audit of the benches in the town centre and main roads in/out of the town which has allowed her to update the Town Council asset register and suggest which benches need repair/replacing. All benches in the town parks are the responsibility of Wychavon District Council.

As a "business as usual" activity Gill and Paula continue to remove out of date posters and notices, together with the plastic ties and sellotape that hold them in place.



# Vale of Evesham Civic Society

## Income & expenditure account for the year ended 29 February 2024

<u>Income</u>	2024	2023	Notes
Subscriptions	1,205.00	1,161.00	
Donations	20.00	35.00	
Sale of publications	74.25	66.00	
Interest on deposit account	10.97	1.59	bank interest rate increases
Proceeds from meetings	459.10	384.65	
Gift Aid reclaimed	208.75	220.00	
Garden party surplus	60.00	-	<i>[the bakers did not submit expenses and classed as donation]</i>
<b>Total income</b>	<b><u>2,038.07</u></b>	<b><u>1,868.24</u></b>	
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Newsletters, envelopes and stamps for same	73.60	120.02	reduced number of members requiring hard copy to be posted
Subscriptions	259.00	263.00	Civic Voice, Cotswolds Line, Campaign to Protect Rural Eng
Insurance	341.82	341.82	
Speakers	203.00	229.32	
Ecgwins room hire ~ talks	250.00	137.00	increased in charge per person
Ecgwins room hire ~ committee meetings and AGM	100.00	126.00	When possible, meetings held at committee members' homes.
Expense for auditing	10.50	9.50	
Website hosting	144.00	144.00	
Web domain name	20.99	20.99	
Annual programme & AGM printing & postage	10.50	63.84	Amendments to design in 2022. No programme printed in 2023
Room hire & food - 50th Anniversary	-	290.00	Party in June 2022
Redesign Town Trail leaflet	-	84.00	
Reprint of Town Trail leaflet	-	50.00	
Redesign art and text for VECS joining leaflet	-	96.00	
Leaflet holders	-	23.76	
Photographic competition leaflets	-	30.00	
Membership leaflets	99.00	-	
New display banners	711.66	-	Banners will last a number of years
Hire of display stand in library	38.50	-	
Loss on Huddington Hall trip	-	10.00	
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b><u>2,262.57</u></b>	<b><u>2,039.25</u></b>	
<b>(Deficit) for year excluding Fountain Project</b>	<b>(224.50)</b>	<b>(171.01)</b>	
<b>Bengeworth Fountain area project :-</b>			
Wychavon DC	-	1,500.00	Contribution to relocating of the cattle trough
SLS (lifting)	-	(1,832.40)	Move trough from the Almonry to Bengeworth roundabout
David Ogilvie Engineering	-	(1,266.00)	Cost of replacement bench
PD Hughes	-	(216.00)	Install bench and repair ground
<b>(Deficit) / surplus for year inclusive of project</b>	<b>(224.50)</b>	<b>(1,985.41)</b>	
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,303.02	4,288.43	
<b>Total cash held</b>	<b><u>2,078.52</u></b>	<b><u>2,303.02</u></b>	
<u>Balance sheet</u>			
Deposit account	1,107.58	1,096.61	
Current account	1,045.94	1,206.41	
less subs pd 28th & 29th Feb for 2024/25	(75.00)	-	not included in financial year 2023/24's income
	<b><u>2,078.52</u></b>	<b><u>2,303.02</u></b>	
<b>Increase/(decrease) from previous year</b>	<b>(224.50)</b>	<b>(1,985.41)</b>	

**A. Peake, Hon Treasurer**

I have not audited these accounts, but I have examined them and on the basis of the information provided truly reflect, in my opinion, the present state of the society's finances.

**Peter Gay**

Date accounts examined