

Essex Society for Family History

Treasurer's Report for the year ending 31st March 2020

I am pleased to report that the Financial Accounts show a very healthy outcome arising from our general, day-to-day activities during the year resulting in a surplus of nearly £5,500. This is shown in the Accounts as Net Income/Expenditure before gains & losses on Investment.

I use this figure as a rather more reliable indicator of our success or our failure in our endeavours as these are 'Real Money' results. By this I mean that Accounts such as these are required to show any change in the value of our Investment since the previous year and that the 'loss' (or drop in value) of £1,656 this year and the 'gain' of £3,848 declared Last Year, are purely paper gains and losses based on an investment of £40,000 which, at the time of this report, was valued at £50,903. Two days ago (15/10/20) this was valued at over £60,000. Swings in value like this easily mask any 'real -life' gain or loss that might be occurring and are best ignored for the purpose of steering the Society.

Income from Subscriptions in the year decreased by £2,000 as a result of falling membership numbers and the increasing trend towards e-membership. This has been reported before, and will, no doubt, be repeated next year. Regrettably, this year there have been no compensatory savings arising from reductions in the costs of printing and mailing the Family Historian as there were last year and, in fact, those costs are now beginning to rise as the print numbers fall. However, the announcement last year by Find My Past that they had uploaded some thousands of Essex records, although from a source other than ourselves, fuelled such an interest from their American subscribers that the royalties paid to the ESFH increased by £1,000 over a two month period and they remain a little higher than had been the norm ever since.

These two excepted, all other items of Income and of Expenditure have remained consistent with those of last year, with no significant differences other than those arising from annual inflation.

Much of what was required to make a bigger and more effective impact at Shows and Fairs in 2020/21, was purchased in the year being now reported, items such as new Essex

Society Banners and new Table-Coverings, that would make our stalls more immediately visible and more welcoming. A mobile credit card reader, a laptop and a portable printer were also purchased to enable us to take payments off-site. Unfortunately, the capability to 'sign-up' new members on-the-spot, to make sales and take subscriptions at Shows, Fairs and Open Days, was never tested as the Family Tree—Live event at Alexandra Palace, where it was to be first used, was cancelled at the last moment, as were all subsequent Fairs since then.

Since the start of the present year, Membership numbers have begun to stabilize, have even grown very slightly, though Subscription income still lags that of last year. However, the Society has a healthy cash reserve and we shall be using some of this as we continue in our efforts to stem the decline in membership. We shall continue with our plans to have the Society attending, and perhaps organizing, more Events in London and in our surrounding Counties - albeit via Zoom at present, - but also in REALITY, as soon as that returns.

In the meantime, we shall 'Carry On' with our programme of now-Virtual-Branch-Meetings across the County, but now with a world-wide reach via ZOOM. We shall continue providing Research Services and the collection, transcription and publication of MI's and Parish records. We shall continue to maintain, and enhance, the Society website which will now include recordings, where possible, of talks given by the Speakers at our branch meetings (both real and Virtual) and we shall continue to publish a Society Journal that is read with great interest by members world-wide.

Present reserves will support us for several years ahead, giving us the time to confront, to adapt and to overcome the challenges we face. Please remember that although the Executive Committee can analyse situations and can plan measures, it is the help and the co-operation of you, the, Members, which will determine how effective those measures may be.

R F Knights (Honorary Treasurer -ESFH)

17/10/2020