

Essex Society for Family History

Treasurer's Report for the year ending 31st March 2019

The Accounts report a very satisfactory outcome arising from our general, day-to-day activities during the year 2018/19, being a surplus of a little more than £6800, and shown in these Accounts as 'net income/expenditure before gains/losses on investments'.

We report also a Gain in the value of our Investment since last year of £3848, a purely notional figure, not representing money in the bank, but re-assuring to know.

Whilst Subscription income in the year has decreased by £1500 resulting from falling membership numbers and an increasing trend towards e-membership, it has been more than compensated for, this year, by savings made on the printing and distribution of The Essex Family Historian. This, too, is owing to some extent to those same factors which are causing Subscription income to fall.

These two items 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. Gift Aid could not be claimed this year, it being no longer an option for the Society.

Since the start of the period we are now in, the total Membership number, as well as the proportions of Full and e-Members, is becoming a more critical issue. Whereas, till now, falling numbers have on occasion reduced certain of our costs, they are now at a level where they are adding to those costs as we

begin to lose the benefits of large-scale mailing. The Society has a healthy cash reserve and we shall be using some of this in our efforts to stem, if not reverse, this continuing decline in membership. We are already planning to have the Society attending more Events in London and the surrounding Counties, though finding enough Volunteers to represent us at the Events is not as easy as finding the money to fund those Events. We have already this year, purchased such items as new Essex Society Banners and new Table-Coverings in our efforts to make our stall highly visible at the events we attend. More funds will be spent on purchasing two Card Readers and on the necessary software which will give our volunteers the ability to 'sign-up' new members and to take subscriptions at Fairs and Open Days.

Recent announcements by Find My Past - regarding its greatly expanded range and number of Essex records they now offer, many of which were previously available only from the ERO or from our Society, are a cause of concern. Online-access to our database of Essex records, available only to Members of the Society, has been the main, and highly successful, plank in our effort to recruit new members; these same records form the basis for our sales of CDs and they are also responsible for a significant part of the royalties which we have received from FMP. We shall have to wait to see exactly what impact this may have on our finances and on our ability to gain new membership in the coming years - but it seems unlikely to be beneficial.

In the meantime we shall 'Keep Calm' - and 'Carry On' with our programme of meetings at our Branches across the County; with the provision of research Services; and the collection, transcription and publication of MI's and parish records, we shall continue to maintain a Society website and to publish a Society Journal appreciated by members the world over.

With our present reserves being able to support us for several years ahead we should have the time to confront and to overcome these various challenges we foresee. The Executive Committee can analyse, and can plan measures, but it is only the help and co-operation of Members which will determine just how effective those measures may be.

R F Knights (Hon. Treasurer – ESFH)

21/09/2019