

## Exeter Historic Buildings Trust (EHBT)

### Chairman's report for AGM 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018

#### Completion of the lease

I said at our last AGM in December 2017 that we could look forward to a momentous year, and so it has turned out. EHBT had managed the West wing of the Priory on licence from Exeter City Council from April 2018. On the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2018 EHBT finally took ownership of the West Wing (formerly "The Priory") on a 99 year lease from the City Council. This was completed with a ceremony of presentation of a baked loaf outside St Nicholas with the mayor and choir. This ceremony will be an annual event. EHBT now owns both wings of the Priory on long leases.

#### Trustees

Over the year we have gained and lost some trustees. I thank Lesley Lake, who resigned as trustee, but remains a very knowledgeable and energetic volunteer, particularly organising our on line presence. I also thank Hugh Meller for his service. Our present trustees are Lorraine Arrell, Katharine Chant, Paul Chant, Ben Clapp, James Clark, Richard Parker, David Radstone, George Simpson and Jo Sinclair. If any member would like to become a trustee there is room in our constitution for more trustees.

#### Staff

Thanks to the inspired work of Project Team of Jo, Katharine, Paul and Lorraine, EHBT was fortunate in being awarded a sizeable HLF *Resilience* grant. This has enabled us to move forward with plans for the Priory. This grant in particular has allowed us to employ staff. I thank Judith Morgane our manager and Annie Yeulett our caretaker for their tremendous contribution.

#### Members & Volunteers

Membership has increased and the number of volunteers has also increased. The volunteers have kept the Priory open in sometimes challenging conditions. Without the volunteers caring for the Priory, stewarding, and curating we simply could not exist.

#### Events

The number of events at the Priory has dramatically increased over the last year. We have had music, drama, school visits, banquets and many visits by the public. The total number of visitors was considerably more than the target that we had predicted for the period. Wandering Tiger has almost become our resident theatrical group. The Exeter Red Coat guides regularly bring tours into the Priory. We are cooperating with the Cathedral in school visits.

#### University of Exeter

The Priory has hosted a number of University events including tutorials and meetings. EHBT has started negotiations with the University through the kind offices of our trustee Prof. James Clark, which we hope will result in a formal agreement for placements next academic year.

### **The Priory Gardens**

The Priory Gardens have been magnificently improved. I thank our gardening volunteers for their work in rain, cold and occasionally shine. Toby Buckland has kindly advised on further development of the gardens.

### **Architects**

With the HLF grant we were able to commission Jo Hibbert of Levitate Architects to undertake a quinquennial and heating and ventilation survey of the whole Priory (both West and North Wings). We shall report to the membership on the results of that survey and consequent plans for the future next year.

### **Devon & Exeter Medical Society**

EHBT continues to enjoy a fruitful partnership with the Devon & Exeter Medical Society (DEMS). The DEMS collection of old medical artefacts is stored and partially displayed at the Priory. The DEMS Collection at ST Nicholas Priory is seeking formal accreditation as a museum.

### **Tenancies**

The income that EHBT derives from tenancies is fundamental to our financial future. As part of the quinquennial review we are looking at maintenance and improvements to the lettings. The trustees recently decided to exclude the back room on the NW end of the House from future lettings and to bring that room back into the trust's own use of the North wing.

### **Other partners.**

We are developing mutually beneficial arrangements with local partners including Tuckers' Hall, Exeter Community Centre, BID, Visit Exeter and the Exeter Heritage Group.

May I thank our secretary Katharine Chant, and our Treasurer Paul Chant for their support and skills over the last few years. Paul will now present the accounts.

*Merry Christmas,*

*David*

Prof. David Radstone  
Chairman of the Exeter Historic Buildings Trust