SUFFOLK FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

(Registered Charity No. 1087748)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held by Zoom on 13 October 2026
The Meeting started at 19:33

Andy Kerridge, Chair of the Society, introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the Meeting. He explained that Doug Howlett, the Society's Patron, would chair the meeting. Andy thanked everyone for their attendance and patience as we sorted out a technical issue.

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

   63 members were present on the Zoom and there had been thirteen (13) proxy votes received. The meeting was quorate (quorum being 30). Several apologies had been received by email. Unfortunately, about a dozen members could not view the other participants or presentations and could not participate in the Zoom polls due to an issue with Zoom updates. On the basis that there were still 49 members able to vote plus the proxy votes, the decision was made to continue. Those not able to see presentations or participate in polls were still able to ask questions and make points.

2. **Minutes of the previous AGM held on 28 October 2025, as published in the September 2026 issue of *Suffolk Roots***

   Andy explained that some amendments had been made to the *format* of the Minutes to reflect the agenda's numbering from 4 onwards, but no content had been changed. No questions or comments were raised, and the minutes were accepted and approved.

3. **Trustees' Report for the 2026 AGM presented by the Society's Chair, Andy Kerridge**

   Summary of the Trustee's Report for the 2026 AGM
   The trustees continue to meet regularly via Zoom, with occasional in-person meetings. Garry Pyett, appointed at the last AGM, sadly passed away in July. Joan Horton has stepped down as a trustee but continues advising on the potential move to CIO status and hopes to return if members approve the change.

   The Society attended several fairs and local events throughout the year, including the FHF East Anglian Fair, the Society's own fair at The Hold, Redstone Celebration Day, Framlingham Country Show, and an Alde Valley event. We will not attend Kempston Park or Woking fairs for now, but plan to attend Aintree (Liverpool) and trial a virtual fair with East Surrey in January.

   Groups in Ipswich, Lowestoft, Sudbury and Haverhill remain active with good attendance. Bury group has reduced activities to occasional research evenings. Monthly Zoom talks remain popular, with speakers booked through spring 2027.

   Membership has fallen from ~1500 to just under 1400, partly due to newcomers to family history assuming everything is available online. Ancestry's release of Suffolk parish registers has also significantly reduced transcription sales.

   The Society continues expanding members-only resources such as Coroner's Inquests for St Etheldreda's (completed to 1933) to increase the attraction of membership There are ongoing additions to SNAPPI. Wills Beneficiaries project showing early results. BMD Certificate Index now over 1000 entries. Suffolk Pub & Publican Index (20,000+ entries) soon to be added as open access. Plans for the future include transcribing post-1733 Manorial records.

Family Histories/Anthologies from the library are being digitised and made accessible to members.

New website launched in January; generally successful with minor issues still being refined.

Suffolk Roots. Rising printing and postage costs have forced changes with overseas postal rates increased. Suffolk Roots has been redesigned to A5 format with simpler layout to reduce costs. A UK postal membership fee increase is being discussed.

Continued collaboration with Suffolk Archives, Suffolk University, and local history groups on projects such as Ipswich Vaccinations, Manorial Records, and the Pubs & Publicans database.

Trustees, led by the treasurer, have spent considerable time evaluating a move to Charitable Incorporated Organisation status. Reasons were published in the September Roots issue.

Members will be asked to vote on two special resolutions to proceed.

Thanks were given to members and volunteers for their support, with an invitation for brief questions.

The Chair thanked Andy for his report and contributions on behalf of the Society.

4. Financial Accounts (as posted on the website prior to the meeting)

The Treasurer, Carolyn Alderson, presented the Society's Consolidated accounts for the financial year 2025-26. She explained the Society's structure as a charity and company, and with a trading sub-company, SFHS Publications Limited. She detailed the income and expenditure figures, explaining that the publications income had reduced. She explained that a new investment had been made with CAF Investment Funds of £10,000 aiming to offset service charges for Direct Debits. The total members' funds at the year-end were a healthy £208,000+. Carolyn also mentioned the Society's current focus on reducing financial complexity and its objective to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Questions were asked by attendees as follows:

a) Why was there a difference in the Marketing figures between FY24-25 and FY25-26? Carolyn explained this relating to timing.

5. Independent Examiner

The Independent examiner, Counterculture Partnership, was reappointed by an online poll.

6. Appointment of Trustees

Kevin Pulford was re-elected. The Chair thanked him for his continuing efforts on behalf of the Society.

7. Appointment of Officers

Andy Kerridge was re-elected as Chair. Carolyn Alderson was re-elected as Treasurer & Secretary.

8. Special Resolutions

Carolyn introduced this item and the two Special Resolutions required to move from being an Incorporated Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Details for the proposed plans to convert to become a CIO were provided in the September edition of *Roots* at pages 97 and 98.

The proposed CIO Constitution was posted with the Agenda on the Society's public-facing website.

The Special Resolutions were posted with the Agenda on the Society's public-facing website along with explanatory notes, which Carolyn summarized.

- The Society is currently regulated by both Companies House and the Charity Commission. This creates much duplication of effort and administrative work in relation to the Accounts process.
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation status entails sole regulation by the Charity Commission, which would remove this duplication but make no tangible difference to how the Society is run.
- Our current governing document (Articles of Association) would be replaced by a new governing Constitution, which accords with the model template issued on the Charity Commission's website, with some small variation in wording and layout.

Carolyn thanked Joan Horton for her support and advice in generating the paperwork required for our submission to The Charity Commission. She invited any questions:

(1) Would there be any change to the liability of Members? Carolyn explained that the current situation is that members are liable to pay £1 if the Society winds up. The new Constitution would mean that members have no liability.

(2) Would the Society be taking out a loan? Carolyn advised that the Society would not be taking out a loan.

All Members present voted in favour of the two Special Resolutions:

The Conversion Resolution

That the status of the Suffolk Family History Society which is both a Registered Charity, and a Company Limited by Guarantee, be converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

The Constitution Resolution

That the proposed Constitution document contained in the document submitted to this meeting, and for the purpose of identification initialed by the Chair, be approved to the entire exclusion of the existing Articles of Association.

9. AOB

There was no AOB.

10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF THE 2026-2027 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Society's Chair advised that the date had not been agreed but would be announced by end of July 2027 and publicised as soon as possible thereafter. It would be by Zoom.

Doug Howlett thanked the Chair and the Treasurer for their efforts. The Chair thanked Doug Howlett in return for chairing the meeting.

The meeting finished at 20:25