

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Members

Like many other organisations, the East Family History Society finds that its membership is dwindling. Subscriptions were due in May, but nine members are yet to renew. This year we have attracted just one new member. Potentially, we have 48 members, of which 12 are life members. So, our income from subscriptions will be £540 to cover postage, printing costs, venue hire, insurance and running the website.

Our membership is aging, and more than half of the members are aged over 75 years. We have struggled, since COVID, to attract new committee members and, this year, four of the six members of the committee are resigning.

There is a lot of work to maintain the Society in its current format. For example, the committee members write documents, produce the journal, maintain the website, keep all the East records, respond to enquiries, organise the AGM and keep the accounts.

It would be very sad to close the Society, but, if we do not have volunteers for the committee, we may have no option. What I would like to propose is that, should we disband as a formal society from May 2026, we continue to maintain the website while the funds allow us to do so. Our Points East magazine would not be published but any articles that people wished to share could be placed in the members' area of the website. All digitised archive material could also be available there too, together with potentially a "chat" facility to enable members to stay in touch with one another. Although we would no longer have to have an AGM, research and adding information to the Big Tree could still take place. Informal lunches, rambles and events could still be organised and advertised on the website.

This is a matter on which we will vote at the AGM on October 18th and I hope that many members will join us to debate the way forward for our Society and support us by voting, being more active members or becoming committee members.

I hope that this less formal way of organising ourselves may encourage you to join us in any future activities and events that we arrange. As the Chair of four years standing, I welcome the chance to meet you.