



# HYTHE CIVIC SOCIETY

## **SUBSCRIPTION LEVEL FOR THE YEAR COMMENCING 1 APRIL 2024**

The Executive Committee is proposing to increase the annual membership subscription from £10 to £15 per annum/per household from 1st April 2024.

As Trustees of a registered Charity, the Committee is required by the Charity Commission to periodically review the Governance of the Society. This includes ensuring we have proper management of the Society's finances. Over the last year we have carried out such a review.

Whilst we have ensured that we have acted in the interests of the Charity and that the assets have been safeguarded, we are required to ensure we have a reserves policy. This means we have a designated fund set aside to meet essential future spending such as funding a project that could not be met from future income at the current level.

It is this particular policy that we now need to address.

Some 6 years ago we received a generous bequest of £10,000 from the late Brian Searby who was a long-time member of the Society. Subsequently a further bequest of £500 from Doug Amans, our late President, and also a £500 grant from the Draper's Charitable Trust, as mentioned in this year's accounts instigated by our former Patron, the late Lord Boyce .

At the time of the Searby bequest our capital was around £4000, so £5000 was added to it to ensure we could meet all our expenditure requirements for the year. The remaining £5000 put into a reserve account.

However since then our income has not been sufficient to ensure we could continue to meet expenditure requirements for each subsequent year. So we have had to draw from the reserve account over the years and just over 2 years ago the total had been absorbed into the normal running accounts.

You will see from our annual statement that our capital stands at £8335.99. However of that amount £1535.75 is the balance of grants made to the Society purely for the Eaton Lands Community Orchard project and will now be set aside into a new restricted account. This in effect means that our capital now stands £6800.24.

Allowing for the deduction of the Eaton Lands expenditure there is every likelihood that there will be a shortfall. We have already made some reductions to current expenditure, such as not renewing the CPRE and the Kent Building Preservation Trust subscriptions. Also we have obtained lower quotes for our insurance, from £234.08 to £157.00, with the same cover from Zurich Insurance.

However this has to be offset against this year's increase in:

1 . The hire charges of the Town Hall, some 16% per session . South Road Pavilion by approximately 20% per session (This varies depending what facilities are required). In addition we have to pay a returnable deposit.

2 . The rent of the Archive Room in Oaklands. We are awaiting this year's rental figure, but in previous years the annual increase has been around 2-3% (Rent currently £683). In addition we have yet to receive notification of the rates for the Archive Room set by F & H DC (Currently £45 after the deduction of mandatory relief).

Another factor we will have to consider is various printing costs we are likely to incur for projects, other than newsletters and significant publications such as 'A Walk Around Historic Hythe'. We have regularly used Artwrite, Clive Brown, who has been generous in his charging, and frequently went out of his way to give practical help. Artwrite has now moved to Rye but has offered to continue to help, but there will be additional postal or travelling costs to deliver or collect unless, of course, we can find another local firm who can offer the same service.

The main source of income is subscriptions which were down on last year. The only other regular annual source of income is the gift aid donations we receive via HMRC. The annual subscriptions are eligible for gift aid and we would be grateful if more members would take up this option if they are tax payers. The completed declaration has only to be sent to the Treasurer and there is nothing further for the member to do. The Gift Aid claim is normally submitted any time after August each year.

It does mean that by setting up a reserve account it will reduce the capital available for normal expenditure, and thus perhaps the need to draw on the reserve account. The knock on effect will be that funds for one off projects will be limited. By increasing the subscription it is hoped that the need to do this will reduce the number of times this will be necessary.

Based on our current capital, the intention is to set up a reserve account of £4000 to meet the Charity Commission recommendations.

We have researched the subscription fees for 16 other Societies in Kent and East Sussex and find that with 4 exceptions who are below, the increase is in line with 3 and less than 9 others. The greatest subscription is £30pa.

I now propose that the annual membership subscription is increased from £10 to £15 per annum per household from 1st April 2024 and be approved by members .

Alan Joyce  
Hon Treasurer.