

On the afternoon of 5th April 2025 April FOAM held their annual general meeting. Over 30 members were present, but if you were unable to attend, here is a brief summary of the topics covered.

After the minutes from our 2024 AGM were passed unanimously by members, Phil Mack summarised our activities in 2024 and our plans for 2025.

In 2024, FOAM provided grants to Winchelsea Corporation totalling more than £16k. These were used for the restoration of the west elevation and chimney stack of the Court Hall and clearing vegetation from the three town gates. The money was generated from membership fees, donations, cellar tours and a series of special events during the year.

In 2025 FOAM plan to support two further projects, the refurbishment of the Lower Court Hall door [and stone surround] and support to the museum, on their project to restore the Anne gun and mount it on a historically accurate carriage. [Chris Chappell explained that unfortunately the Parish Council has withdrawn from the Anne project, but it was hoped that the project will still go ahead in time to celebrate the museums 75th anniversary later this year.]

Ian Rowlands presented FOAM's audited accounts to members. He explained that income was up 16% in 2024, totalling more than £24k. This meant that after expenses and grants to Winchelsea Corporation, there was a surplus of almost £7k, increasing FOAM's reserves to £67k.

Ian explained that revenue from membership, cellar tours and our annual events, should be sufficient to support the two projects planned for 2025 and therefore FOAM are unlikely to embark on any extra fund-raising initiatives during the year.

Mark Harris reported that we now have 171 members, [157 at the start of the year]. To attract new members, he plans to run a special cellar tour in the next month of so, for those who have recently moved to the town or existing residents who are unfamiliar with our activities.

Chris Chappell ran through our key fun raising events in 2024, these were the FOAM Quiz, Our cellar tours, the wonderful 'Winchelsea to Compostela' event, and the ambitious performance of the 'House of Usher', [both performed in the cellar at Lines End] our bottle stall at the Summer Fete and our annual 'Carols in the Court Hall.

Chris continued by explaining that over one thousand people visited the town's cellars during 2024 and that a new season of cellar FOAM tours begins in Easter, with three new guides joining the team.

Ian continued by explaining that the FOAM constitution is almost 25 years old and doesn't really reflect our current activities. The Charity Commission recommend that organisations regular review their constitutions to ensure they remain pertinent. With this in mind, FOAM would like to begin this process, using a template provided by the Charity Commission. Members at the AGM voted unanimously that the committee should continue working on the first draft constitution [submitted to members prior to the AGM] and open discussions with the Charity Commission. Ian stressed, that once finalised, the new Constitution would need to be approved by members either at a special meeting or at the next AGM.

The officers and members of the committee have offered to stand again, and the members present voted unanimously that they should continue in their current role.

Chris Chappell, Mark Harris, Phil Mack, Glen Marks and Ian Rowlands