



The Friends of Mount Edgcombe Country Park

Registered Charity No. 295261



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 12TH APRIL 2026

2pm the Belvedere, Mount Edgcombe

MINUTES

Present: Ben Church (Chair), Harry Vosper (Vice Chair,) Carol Drummond (Treasurer,) Shane Perry (Membership Secretary), Janet Vosper (Secretary), Committee Members: Dave Hardy, Natasha Northcott, Dan Cock, Hollie Rickard; Members: Anne Carne, Tony Carne, Geoff Rhodes, Sue Rhodes, Brian Rayden, Tonny Steenhagen, Neil Rugg, Barbara Buckley, Peter Saunders, Cynthia Gaskell-Brown, Nigel and Stephanie Bruce-Robertson, Peter Walker, Nicky Wilson; Visitor: Paul Brown.

The meeting started with an interesting report from Chris Burton, Park Manager, on highlights of the past year and plans for the coming year, see APPENDIX C on page 9 of these minutes.

- 1 Apologies for absence: Rozanne Griffiths-Woodcock, Wendy Smale, Simon Hughes, Maud Evans, Sylvia Brice.
- 2 Approval of Minutes of the AGM held in April 2025 as true record: the draft minutes were approved as a true record without dissent and were signed by the Chairman.
- 3 Matters arising from the minutes: the main matter was the revised Constitution, item 6 below.

- 4 Annual Report of the Executive Committee: The Chairman's and Treasurer's reports, see Appendices A and B.
- 5 Approval of Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2025: After various points of clarification, plus confirmation that the accounts had been independently scrutinised, the accounts were approved without objection. However, Cynthia Gaskell-Brown suggested that the Friends should be aiming to spend a lot more of the reserves than had happened in 2025-6, and that there should be clear advertising to members and to the public of the Friends' contributions to the Park for the greater benefit of its visitors. It was explained that the Friends can only pay the Park towards agreed projects on receipt of relevant invoices, and that some of these are still awaited. In addition, there is a mismatch between the accounting years of the Friends and the Park, as the Friends' run from 1st Jan to end Dec, and the Park's April to April. Expenditure so far planned this year includes the Lock-up for Friends' equipment, the Camellia Trail signage, Bedding Plants, Car Show and Trees.
ACTION: The Park should be asked to put up signage thanking the Friends for the Orangery toilets. It was also noted that signage in general around the Park is mixed, poor and needing repair or replacement.
ACTION: Ben Church to show Cynthia Gaskell-Brown the recent improvements in the Park funded by the Friends.
- 6 Approval of the revised Constitution: The Secretary explained that the Committee had reviewed the version produced by Neil Rugg in accordance with the action from the previous AGM. This version had been compared with the Committee's previously approved revision and nine points of significant difference remained, which were voted upon unanimously in the Committee meeting in February 2026. The version now proposed to members had been produced following this February agreement. The Committee's new version was displayed, highlighting and explaining any significant changes in meaning. The meeting did not see more than the first page because Neil Rugg (NR) raised the three following objections:
1) the proposed Constitution omitted a line by line list of differences (which the Committee felt to be of little relevance as there had been a rewriting into modern English with numerous changes having no bearing on the meaning, plus an attempt to make the document a much more useful guide to committees, present and future); and
2) the first major change highlighted (that the Constitution and Policies and Procedures would only be reviewed in response to relevant changes in Law or circumstances) contravened the Constitution approved in 2023 which required all this documentation to be reviewed by the Committee every year with a report to each AGM;
so a discussion followed in which NR stated that the the Charity Commission requires annual review; the Committee view was that the Charity Commission provides guidance, not instruction, and that the guidance covers the whole field of registered charities whether tiny or huge businesses, and what is appropriate for large charities is disproportionate for comparatively tiny ones with no paid employees; and

3) the new logo displayed on the proposed Constitution had not been submitted to the membership for approval; it was clarified that the existing Constitution is silent about any logo and that the Committee is therefore able to design and introduce a new logo.

ACTION An EGM to be called after members have been invited to compare a) the current 2023 Constitution, b) a new NR version including the Committee's February 2026 decisions and c) the Committee's proposed version. This EGM would choose a preferred version.

7 Election of Officers and other Trustees to the Executive Committee

Ben Church stood down from the Chair. He was thanked and applauded as was Shane Perry who was standing down from the Membership Secretary role and he, Simon Hughes, David Cherry, Julie Griffiths and Emily Parsonage also stood down from the Committee, with thanks from Ben for their support.

The Vice Chair officiated for the election of the new Chair who then presided over the election of the rest of the Committee.

Officers and other Trustees were elected with no dissenting votes as follows:

Chair: Dan Cock, proposed by Anne Carne, seconded by Nicky Wilson

Vice Chair: Harry Vosper, prop. by Dan Cock, sec. by Shane Perry

Treasurer: Carol Drummond until Dec 2026, prop. by Barbara Buckley, sec. by Nicky Wilson

Membership Secretary: Hollie Rickard, prop. by Dave Hardy, sec. by Natasha Northcott

Secretary: Janet Vosper, prop. by Anne Carne, sec. by Shane Perry

The other Trustees: Ben Church, Rozanne Griffiths-Woodcock, Dave Hardy, Natasha Northcott and Marjorie Creek were elected, prop. by Neil Rugg, sec. by Cynthia Gaskell-Brown.

Nominations were sought but not received from members present to fill the vacant posts.

8 AOB

a) It was agreed that the Committee investigate feasibility and cost of commissioning replicas of 18th Century flower planters held by the Park, which could hold spring bulbs to add early colour to the beds to be formally planted with annuals later in the year; all subject to Park Management agreement.

Other suggestions:

b) Put photos and introduction to new Committee members in the Journal

c) Produce up to date publicity about Friends' activities

d) Utilise local free papers such as The Courier and Plymouth equivalents as well as website and social media for publicity about Friends@ activities

e) Update people on projects for which funds are being raised

f) Refurbish the notice board under the archway to the Orangery

g) Refurbish the donation boxes

9 Date of next meeting: tba

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking all for coming and asking that the Committee be trusted to act on behalf of the members to uphold the object of the Friends.

Appendix A Chair's Report

Appendix B Treasurer's Report

Appendix C Park Manager's Update

APPENDIX A CHAIR'S REPORT

Chairman's Speech – Friends of Mount Edgcumbe AGM 2026

Good afternoon everyone,

It's a real pleasure to welcome you all to this year's Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Mount Edgcumbe House and Country Park. Thank you for taking the time to join us, and for your continued support of this very special place.

Whether you are long-standing members, dedicated volunteers, trustees, or new friends joining us for the first time, your presence here reflects something we all share — a deep appreciation for Mount Edgcumbe and a commitment to preserving it for future generations.

As Chair, it's been both an honour and a privilege to be part of this organisation. Mount Edgcumbe is more than just a historic estate; it's a living landscape, rich in heritage, natural beauty, and community spirit. It continues to inspire all who visit, and it is our role to help ensure it remains protected and celebrated.

Over the past year, we have seen some truly meaningful achievements. Thanks to your support, we have been able to contribute to a number of important projects across the estate. These include the restoration of the English Garden House roof, helping to preserve an important feature of the gardens for years to come.

We have also supported seasonal bedding planting, along with the replacement of additional shrubs and trees, ensuring that the gardens continue to flourish and evolve in keeping with their historic character.

One particularly exciting initiative has been the Ships Project Barn Pool dig — an archaeological dig at Barn Pool involving local schools. This has been a wonderful way to connect younger generations with the history of the estate, sparking curiosity and learning through hands-on experience.

Our ongoing commitment to the care of the estate can also be seen in the continued renovation and upkeep of statues throughout the grounds, preserving these important features for visitors to enjoy.

Watch out for upcoming improvements to the Camellia Trail, with enhancements due to begin shortly, further enriching what is already a much-loved part of the gardens.

Alongside these projects, the Park has hosted a number of highly successful events and festivals over the past year, bringing the community together and showcasing all that Mount Edgcumbe has to offer. Most recently, the Christmas Fayre was a tremendous success, full of festive spirit and very well attended.

And of course, just yesterday, we held our Friends Easter Egg Hunt, which was met with fantastic feedback and smiling faces all around. Events like these remind us how important this

place is, not just as a historic site, but as a space for community, enjoyment, and shared memories.

While we celebrate successes, we also recognise challenges. The American Classic Car Show, a much-loved event, had to be cancelled for 2025. However, I'm delighted to say that it will be returning — bigger and better than ever — on the 2nd of August 2026, and we very much look forward to welcoming it back.

Financially, we remain in a stable position, thanks to the continued generosity of our members and supporters. Your contributions enable us to support projects like these and make a real difference across the estate. Carol, our Treasurer will go more in depth with her report.

I would like to take a moment to extend my sincere thanks to our volunteers, whose dedication and enthusiasm are at the heart of everything we do. To my fellow trustees and committee members, thank you for your ongoing commitment and hard work. And to all of you here this afternoon — your support truly matters.

As some of you may know, this has been my final year serving as Chair. It has been a truly rewarding experience, and I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved together. While I will be stepping down from this role, I will of course continue to support the Friends and remain involved in the future of this wonderful organisation.

Looking ahead, we have much to be excited about. There are more opportunities to contribute to the Park, to grow our membership, and to build on the strong sense of community that makes this organisation and site so special.

I would encourage you all to remain involved, to share your ideas, and to help us continue to grow. If you know someone who would value becoming a Friend, please do encourage them to join us.

I would simply like to say thank you.

Together, we are helping to ensure that Mount Edgcumbe remains a place of beauty, heritage, and enjoyment for generations to come.

Thank you.

Ben Church.

APPENDIX B TREASURER'S REPORT

The Friends of Mt.Edgumbe Country Park
Registered Charity No. 295261

Treasurer's Report
Year ending 31st. December 2025

These accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis. The Trustees have prepared the accounts on a going concern basis as there are no uncertainties regarding the charity's ability to continue. The charity has no paid employees, and there were no transactions with related parties. No trustee expenses have been incurred.

Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestrict ed Funds	Restrict ed Funds	Total Funds	Prior period Total Funds	Further details
	£s	£s	£s	£s	
Current Account & Petty Cash	2025			2024	
Income & endowments from:					Note 1
Membership	9,509		9,509	6,329	Note 2
Bequest	0		0	250	Note 3
Donations	734		734	540	Note 4
Events	23,666		23,666	17,394	Note 5
Sales of donated items	4,567		4,567	4,532	Note 6
Sale of goods	458		458	117	Note 7
Gift Aid	565		565	747	Note 8
Deposit Account interest	3,212		3,212	5,263	Note 9
MERMS	539		539	761	Note 10
Total	43,250	0	43,250	35,933	
Expenditure on:					
Restricted Fund expenditure	0			0	
Mount Edgumbe	(25,375)		(25,375)	(61,774)	Note 11
Membership	(3,694)		(3,694)	0	Note 12
Event costs	(1,250)		(1,250)	(944)	Note 13
Internal Projects	(232)		(232)	(18)	Note 14
Journal	(1,820)		(1,820)	(1,885)	Note 15
Administration	(970)		(970)	(1,914)	Note 16
Insurance	(712)		(712)	(619)	
Total	(34,053)	0	(34,053)	(67,156)	
Net Surplus/(Deficit) funds	9,197	0	9,197	(31,223)	

Notes to accompany to the Statement of Financial Activities

1. The charity does not have any endowment funds.
2. There has been an increase in membership fees since 2024
3. The charity has received no bequests in 2025
4. Donations include ad hoc donations, the cash collected from goblets in the lodge and boxes placed around the park.
5. Event income accounted for came from the 2024 Car Show (£18,366) received in February, Easter Egg Trail (£1,285), Green Man (£78), Fireworks (£692) Christmas Fayre Tombola (£508) event. Closure of Car Show Account, refund of account balance (£2737).
6. Sale of donated items is the money received through the lodge.
7. The sale of goods relates to the Friends Walk book and Mt. Edgumbe Guide books. Improve marketing and use of park outlets has seen an increase in sales this year.
8. Gift aid relates to the amount of gift aid claimed back relating to memberships and donations. The amount accounted for here relates to 2024 Membership and Donations up to April 2025. The claim for 2025 will be submitted in April/May 2026 and will be accounted for in the 2026 accounts.
9. The average balance in the deposit account is lower than in previous years and there has also been a decrease in interest rates.
10. In 2020 MERMS was given a loan of £3000 for a new locomotive and to buy track. This loan has now been paid back .
11. Donations to the park paid for English Garden House Roof (£20,000) Bedding Plants (£4,000) Ship Project (£1250) Baby Changing Table - Orangery Toilets (£125)
12. Membership is now on line - Membership Mojo. Costs include fees and membership cards.
13. Event Costs include Christmas Trees (£55) Easter Egg Trail (£515) - Profit from this event was £770.65 Fireworks (£680) - the £12 difference was to cover Sum Up Fee.
14. A sample supply of Friends' clothing has been bought.
15. There have been three issues of the journal this year.
16. Administration includes: Website, Email Accounts, Sum Up Fees, Stamps and Misc. Expenses.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	2025	2024	Further details
	£s	£s	
Fixed assets			
Lambert Lodge	18,324	18,324	
Painting by Meredith Hawes, on loan to Mt. Edgcumbe House			
Road signs, cones, trackway and other functional items	10,000	10,000	Note 17
Subtotal	28,324	28,324	
Current Assets			
Santander current account	14,962	8,692	
COIF Charities deposit fund	78,366	75,154	Note 18
Cash	106	391	
Subtotal	93,434	84,237	
Less:			
Deferred income & liabilities			
Total Current Assets	93,434	84,237	
Total Fixed & Current Assets	121,758	112,561	
Accumulated Funds			
Balance brought forward	112,561	143,784	
Revaluation of assets			
Plus surplus/deficit for year	9,197	(31,223)	
Total Funds	121,758	112,561	

17. These fixed assets are at the time of the report under review.

18. Deposit account analysis:

Deposit Account	Brought forward
	£s
Brought forward	75,154
Transfer from current account	0
Deposit account interest	3,212
Total funds carried forward	78,366

APPENDIX C PARK MANAGER'S UPDATE

Main Points (Fire Escape notice in Belvedere needs correction)

Grade 1 Listed Landscape

English Garden House now reroofed and slowly drying out after 25-30 years of neglect
Plans to restore inside room by room once dry
Continue applying for grants
Utilise in-house skills where appropriate

Deer Management Plan

Fence now complete
Target 120 animals so culling will be needed and some Mount Edgcumbe venison may become available
Deer park here since 1566
Rame Head deer classified as wild

Stewardship Application to Natural England Successful

Means significant extra funding for tasks Park is undertaking
Wax Caps protected species probably one of best collections in the World
Ponies on Rame Head under agricultural tenancies
Higher tier Stewardship means more funding
Grazing flocks

Volunteers

3,100 hours and couldn't manage Park without them
Naval cadets very helpful

Archaeological Dig by Barn Pool

Possible Medieval chapel
Funding from Friends
Cynthia Gaskell-Brown requested interim reports

Woodland Management Plan Adopted

National Camellia Collection

Boards being re-done by next Feb/Mar

Garden Battery Restoration

First phase complete end Sept 2026
Open to public Apr 2027
£1m grant funding
Des Res for Greater Horseshoe Bats
Two Roman coins and WWII artefacts found

Conservation Management Plan

Production of plan and submission funded by Friends
Implementation funded by Heritage Lottery Fund (£75k so far)

French Garden House

Next historic building targetted for restoration
Please suggest possible uses
Butterfly House is a current idea

Events

European Gig Rowing Championships
Morvala festival in Deer Park
Green Man
Car Show

Trip Advisor

Very good feedback from public for 5 years running
20,00 followers and three times more than comparable businesses

Challenges

Ash Die-Back means need to fell if leaf cover reduced
Cutting fallen or dangerous trees has taken much of the three Rangers' time
Fuel price rises
Wedding marquee needs replacing
Climate change – Park now has to close for high winds 10 times per year; ten years ago only twice a year on average
Loss of two holiday lets and their income due to the fire, but the rest provide a good income
Barrow Centre will be reroofed by end summer, internals to be done next year.

Support of the Friends and Volunteers key to the Park's management.

End