# The Prehistoric Society - Trustee Directors’ Report

*For the Year Ended 31 December 2022*

The Trustees (who are also the Directors for the purpose of Company Law) have pleasure in presenting their annual report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. The provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” (SORP FRS 102- implemented 1 January 2015) have been adopted in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

## Directors and Trustees

The Directors of the charitable company are also its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Directors and Trustees who served during the year covered by the accounts and up to the date of this report were:

President Prof L Hurcombe (elected at AGM June 2022)

President Prof C Gamble (demitted at AGM June 2022)

Vice-Presidents

Professor J Brück (demitted at AGM June 2022)

Professor J Mulville

Professor L Hurcombe (demitted at AGM June 2022)

Professor Eileen Wilkes

Dr R Housley (elected at AGM June 2022)

Prof R Pope (elected at AGM June 2022)

Secretary Dr R Crellin

Treasurer Dr C Randall (demitted at AGM June 2022)

Treasurer Dr L-E Mayering (elected at AGM June 2022)

Editor Dr J Gardiner

Editor – Newsletter Dr S Greaney (elected at AGM June 2022)

Editor - Research papers Dr M Allen (demitted at AGM October 2021)

Meetings Secretary Dr M Knight (demitted AGM June 2022)

Meetings Secretary Dr F McDowall (elected AGM June 2022)

Council Members

Dr R Brunning (demitted at AGM June 2022)

Dr H Chittock (demitted at AGM June 2022)

Dr A Teather (demitted AGM June 2022)

Dr S Harris

Dr J Cole

Dr B Roberts

Dr F McDowall

Dr S Greaney

Mr R Hedge

Dr M Laing (Elected AGM June 2022)

Dr R Wiseman (Elected AGM June 2022)

Dr C Freiman (Elected AGM June 2022)

## Structure, Governance and Management

### Governing Document

The Prehistoric Society is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 2 August 1990. The company incorporated the assets and liabilities of The Prehistoric Society on 5 February 1991. The Prehistoric Society was registered as a charity on 12 October 1990. Anyone throughout the world can become a member of the Society. Members are required to pay an annual subscription to the Society. Council reviews the annual subscription every five years. Members guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £5 to the assets of the company in the event of winding-up.

### Appointment of directors and trustees

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the Articles of the company are known as the Council. The Council comprises the President, four Vice-Presidents, the Officers and the Council Members.

The President retires from office at the fourth Annual General Meeting after being appointed. At each Annual General Meeting, the longest-serving Vice-President retires from office and is not eligible for re-appointment for four years, the Officers of the company retire from office but are eligible for re-appointment, and the three longest-serving Council Members retire from office and are not eligible for re-appointment for one year.

The objectives and activities of the Society cover all prehistoric periods throughout the world. The Council seeks to ensure that this wide range of interests is reflected as much as possible in the diversity of members of Council.

After due consideration Council nominate to the members of the Society suitable persons to be President (when applicable) and Vice-President on the basis of their specialist expertise and suitable experience. The Officers usually continue in office from year to year. When an Officer retires from office, the new Officer is either co-opted from Council or, where specialist professional knowledge is required, all members of the Society are notified of the vacancy in the Society’s newsletter. The nominated President, Vice-President and Officers are elected by the members at the following Annual General Meeting.

All members of the Society are invited to nominate potential Council Members. A notice requesting nominations is published in the Society’s newsletter and on the Society’s website. Each nomination is requested to include a short statement about the suitable expertise and experience of the proposed candidate. Based on these criteria, Council produces a shortlist of nominees to be put forward for election by the members at the following Annual General Meeting.

### Trustee induction and training

New trustees are provided with an induction pack explaining the legal status of the charitable company, the obligations of trustees under company and charity law, the composition of Council, and the activities of the Society.

### Risk Management

The Council has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. The significant external risk is a reduction in the total amount of member’s subscriptions, which are the main incoming resource. However, this risk is minimised because about two-thirds of each year’s subscriptions are received during the first month of the year. Internal risks are minimised by control procedures for the authorisation of external payments. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.

### Organisation

The Council, which meets three times each year, makes the strategic decisions about the current and future direction of the charity. Sub-committees, comprising several members of Council, are created, when appropriate, to consider specific matters affecting the Society. These sub-committees report their conclusions to the following Council meeting. The Executive Committee, which comprises the President, Vice-Presidents and Officers, meets twice each year and formulates strategic and tactical policies for consideration by Council. The Officers manage the day-to-day operations of the charity.

Council members are kept informed by electronic communications of all-important actions made by Officers on behalf of Council.

## Objectives and activities

The objectives of the charity are the advancement of education and interest in prehistory and all its branches and allied subjects, and the promotion of the conservation of the prehistoric archaeological heritage for the benefit of the public.

The Society’s membership at 31 October 2022 stood at 1115. There were 84 new members compared to 170 in 2021. This is due to the Society stabilising to pre-covid levels of new membership.

The principal activities of the charity are:

• the presentation of lectures held throughout the country, addressed by eminent prehistorians, and run either directly by the Society or in association with other archaeological organisations. Non-members may attend these lectures with no charge.

• the organisation of conferences and day schools addressed by leading prehistorians. The annual Europa conference is organised by the Society to honour a prestigious European prehistorian who is presented with the Europa Prize, a significant financial award funded by the Europa Fund, a restricted fund donated to the Society by Professor Grahame Clark

• the organisation of one-day field trips and, occasionally, longer study tours to prehistoric sites. Through its contacts with other archaeological institutions, the Society is able to arrange for leading prehistorians familiar with the sites being visited to be available to explain each site to the tour members.

• the payment of small grants to individuals to assist their research into prehistoric subjects throughout the world. Grants cover fieldwork, travel bursaries, radiocarbon dating and the study of collections in museums.

• the annual publication of the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, an internationally prestigious journal that covers all aspects of prehistory worldwide. Copyright in the Proceedings rest with the Society. Back numbers of previous Proceedings are sold each year to academic institutions throughout the world.

• the publication three times a year of the Society’s newsletter, *PAST*, which includes articles about recent prehistory projects and research, and information about the Society.

• the publication of research monographs in a *Research Papers* series.

• the publication of book reviews on-line

• presenting and debating prehistory through social media

• disseminating our knowledge and expertise through an online education blog

• making representations to appropriate government organisations, through the wide-ranging contacts of Council members with other archaeological institutions, about the conservation and protection of prehistoric sites.

## The purpose of the Prehistoric Society

The Prehistoric Society, founded in 1935, is dedicated to researching, protecting and promoting the global archaeology of deep human history. The purpose of the Society is to investigate the fundamental questions of humanity; who we are, where we came from and how we evolved. Since its founding the objects of the Society have been to advance education and promote interest in prehistory in all its branches and allied subjects and to promote the conservation of the archaeological heritage for the benefit of the public Through its grants, publications, conferences and meetings, the Society supports those interested in human prehistory to discover new evidence both from the field and in curated museum archives. Through its advocacy for prehistoric heritage, the Society provides a voice to help protect landscapes, monuments and artefacts that may be under threat. Through its promotion of the value of prehistoric archaeology, the Society benefits primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as everyone with a passion for, and interest in, the deep human past.

## What is Prehistory?

Prehistory describes the study of the deep history of humanity through material, rather than written, evidence. This distinctive approach to the study of the past gained traction among the northern antiquaries of Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. Today researchers employ rigorous field methods and cutting-edge scientific techniques, often in conjunction with methods from the arts and humanities, to answer a wide range of questions about communities in prehistory. These relate to their identities, economies, beliefs and are often concerned with matters such as long-term cultural stability, social change and innovation. Understanding chronology and the environments of the past are central to the work of prehistorians and it is common for research to consider millennial timescales. The theories and techniques of prehistory can be applied to all people whose history depends on the evidence of objects rather than texts and oral traditions. Deep human history starts with the first stone tools over 3 million years ago. Its legacy continues today.

The aims of the Prehistoric Society are to:

• Encourage and support research of the highest quality

• Foster the skills and expertise needed to investigate prehistory

• Disseminate widely the knowledge about our prehistoric past

• Raise awareness of the benefits and value of human prehistory

• Speak out for prehistoric heritage

## Report on the year 2022

### Research

The benefits of the research work of the Prehistoric Society are enshrined in our annual conference, publications and the support of research through grants.

The annual Europa conference celebrating the work of Prof Eszter Bánffy was held in person in Bournemouth, June 17th to 18th. It was wonderful to hold our first in person conference since 2020 organised by Dr Annabell Zander and Prof Tim Darvill. Speakers from Britain and Europe addressed the theme of *Sans Frontières: mobility and networks in Neolithic Europe*. The mixture of presentations from early career researchers and key establishment figures created a great atmosphere and sense of the fine research in this field.

From its research funds the Society gave grants to seven research projects with the society able to support a mixture of established and early career researchers. The research grants awarded totalled £8,732 for fieldwork and/or archival research on a range of prehistoric sites and collections in Africa, Serbia, and Italy as well as the UK. Some grants from previous years had been disrupted by the pandemic and were held over until 2022.

In 2022, the undergraduate dissertation prize was awarded to Katherine Hearne (UCL) A Neolithic epidemic? The first farmers of Europe and disease. The 2022 winner and runners up along with those from previous years affected by the pandemic were all invited to receive their certificates in person at the Sara Champion lecture in October 2022.

Most members opt to receive a paper copy of our annual academic journal the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society (PPS) as well as three issues of our newsletter PAST. These are available also on-line through our publisher Cambridge University Press. They are also available more widely to non-members through library purchases. Volume 88 contained 12 papers and one review article. The papers ranged from the Mesolithic to the Iron Age and covered research from the Mediterranean to Scandinavia.

Contributions included; sex and gender in the Scandinavian Mesolithic; funerary diversity and cultural continuity in British Beaker Societies; changing land use and political economy at Knossos, Greece using stable isotopes; the demographics of Iron Age salt production in England using fingerprint analysis.

Publishing in the Proceedings is open to all contributors subject to our rigorous editorial and peer review process. In addition, work progressed on two Prehistoric Society Research Series monographs to be published in 2023.

### Skills and expertise

The Society recognises the importance of training and passing on skills and knowledge about prehistory. The Conference Fund for early career researchers and the Coles award for student travel to support their research were not awarded in 2021 because of Covid restrictions but 2022 saw these return. We also support the teaching of prehistory as part of the school curriculum and 2022 continued our initiative, now facilitated by our new website, to provide schools with the resources about prehistory.

The appointment of new Council members is now overseen by a committee of Council that reviews skill sets and expertise, as well as equality, diversity and inclusion before recommending names to Council for nomination. The review of all our policies undertaken in 2022 continues to serve us well. Our aim has been to bring our governance further into line with Charity Commission best practice. New policies have been written and approved by Council, and remain under active review.

### Dissemination

In addition to our publications and conferences we held 12 meetings and a day-school during 2022 either on-line or in a blended format. Many of these were in partnership with local and national archaeological societies and formed a wide geographical spread. This year we partnered meetings with the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society, Welwyn Archaeological Society, Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Devon Archaeological Society, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Cornwall Archaeological Society, The Leicestershire Fieldworkers and the Norwich and Norfolk Archaeological Society. We continued our support for the Annual Pitt Rivers Lecture held in Bournemouth University and also supported the Painted Forest rock art conference held in Colombia and across the globe, via online access (with translations into four languages), in August. The meetings were all well attended and are an example of how the Society takes prehistory into the worldwide community.

In 2022 the Global Pasts online lecture continued to flourish with well attended online meetings on topics including the Silk routes, the Americas and Mexico. Our day school, honouring the achievements of Prof John Coles, took place on-line in March 2022 and was extremely well attended. We were also delighted to be able to hold two behind the scenes, curator led, visits to the internationally renowned World of Stonehenge exhibition at the British Museum in May and June.

2022 saw sustained growth in our on-line and social media presence. The Society's social media output continued to grow with over 8000 twitter followers and 19,000 people, from over 90 countries, in our Facebook group. We have also, following the recent Twitter upheavals, established a Mastodon presence in November 2022, and had over 700 followers. The Facebook group welcomes professional and amateur members and topics range from the latest research in prehistory, through to descriptions of museum and site visits, requests for information and favourite prehistoric finds. The group has a strong, and enforced, Code of Conduct which ensures a safe and inclusive environment in which to discuss all aspects of world prehistory. All channels host lively discussions of current issues affecting prehistory and archaeology more generally, and regularly provide a route to membership.

The redesigned website, <https://www.prehistoricsociety.org/> received around 400 individual visitors per month from over 67 countries, with 30% of visitors coming to us from beyond the UK.

### Raising awareness and Advocacy

The Society made representations regarding the threatened closure/restructuring of Truro and Stoke Museums. In addition, we wrote to protest the planned development in the environs of the Old Oswestry hillfort in Shropshire. The ongoing war in Ukraine saw us involved in several international initiatives to support colleagues in Ukraine and to amplify the voices of Russian colleagues protesting against the war.

### Response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis.

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to affect our activities in 2022. We were sensitive to the hesitancy to return to in-person meetings. We also recognised the accessibility and inclusion benefits of maintaining an online presence and as such, ran the Sara Champion lecture, given by Dr Sophia Adams or the British Museum on ‘I see the hands of the generations’ - perceiving the past through later prehistoric artefacts’ in October 2022 as a hybrid event, and the Global Pasts lectures were all online. We aim to maintain this mix in future, holding hybrid and online events wherever possible.

Following the boom in new memberships during the covid years - driven by a societal move to online resources - 2022 saw a slight decline in new members to pre-covid levels. However, we are maintaining member numbers despite the ongoing cost of living crisis. Mindful of the burden placed on so many by the ongoing financial crisis, we have been able to offer a number of free and reduced cost events. The subscription increase of 2022 was successful, with no reduction in membership numbers.

2022 continued to be challenging for archaeology. However, our social media continued to provide an international meeting place for all prehistorians during the ongoing world crises and an opportunity to share experiences. The community of prehistorians remains strong.

Looking forward to 2023, we now have an established membership and social media presence and are building upon our expertise in running very successful conferences, meetings and day schools on-line. We look forward to running more hybrid events. The Prehistoric Society continues to prosper during these difficult times.