

## **Annual General Meeting EXARC 2020**

Held online, by e-mail: 30 March - 21 April 2020

*Votes by:* Roman Abušinov (SK), Lizet Vlasveld (NL), Eva Götting (DE), Rüdiger Kelm (DE), Richard Brunning (UK), Stephen Blakely (US), Roeland Paardekooper (NL), Ute Drews (DE), Milica Tapavički Ilić (RS), Claus Detreköy (CH), Chris Bussutil (MT), Diana Ayapova (KZ), Andrea Mariani (PT), Antonis Vlavgilakis (GR), Cozette Kremer (FR), Neil Peterson (CA), Javier Baena (ES), Annemarie Pothaar (NL), Julia Heeb (DE), Aidan O'Sullivan (IE), Pascale Barnes (UK), Linda Hurcombe (UK), Maureen Page (UK) & Catarina Magalhães (PT).

24 votes.

### Opening

Due to the extraordinary circumstances caused by the worldwide COVID-19 outbreak, the Annual General meeting (AGM) 2020 took place by email.

Pascale Barnes, EXARC Chair, opens the Online Annual General Meeting on March 30, 2020, sending notes to all EXARC members with the request to answer before April 11. The replies were noted and suggested decisions were put up for voting in an email to all members, dated April 14, 2020. 24 Members voted until April 20, 2020. This led to decisions. The full process is reported in these minutes.

It is established that the AGM is able to take decisions. It is verified that the meeting was called early enough. The Agenda of the meeting follows the usual agenda. If anybody wants to bring in any extra point, please let us know via [info@exarc.net](mailto:info@exarc.net). No new points were brought forward to be included in the agenda.

### 1. Annual and Financial Report of the Previous Year

We refer to the PDF of the PowerPoint we intended to show at the AGM, <https://exarc.net/sites/default/files/2019-EXARC-PPT.pdf> (slides 1 - 33)

Please see also report from our accountant for more details on the finances of 2019: <https://exarc.net/sites/default/files/2019-ABAB-report.pdf>

### 2. Auditors' Report on the Previous Year's Finances

The auditors are Yvonne Lammers & Caroline Jeffra. Please see their statement: [https://exarc.net/sites/default/files/2020-02-19\\_statement-auditors.pdf](https://exarc.net/sites/default/files/2020-02-19_statement-auditors.pdf)

There were no remarks to the annual and financial report of the previous year (2019).

**DECISION 1:** Following the auditor's report on the previous year's finances, the suggestion is to accept the accounting of 2019 and release the Board. This means that Dr Aidan O'Sullivan will hereby leave the EXARC Board, after serving six years. We thank Aidan for his work for EXARC.

#This decision was accepted by all who voted; two people abstained.

### 3. Appointing new Board Members

The full board can be found here: <https://exarc.net/about-us/board>.

Annemarie Pothaar has ended her first three years, and goes for re-election.

Aidan O' Sullivan spent 6 years on the board and leaves now.

There is one position open. For this position, there is one candidate so far, Caroline Jeffra: <https://exarc.net/members/ind/caroline-jeffra>. To her candidacy, she states:

*"I'm writing to express an interest in running for a position on the EXARC Board during the 2020 AGM.*

*My first experience with archaeology during my BA was within the living history archaeological open-air museum at Historic St. Mary's City, and my lifelong engagement with crafts brought me to experimental archaeology 15 years ago for an MA in Experimental Archaeology at the University of Exeter (UK).*

*I wish to join the EXARC Board this year because I have found a tremendous amount of personal and professional fulfilment in participation with EXARC. I attended and presented at the last two EAC conferences, as well as the recent #EXARCBerlin digital conference where I assisted with video presentation editing/subtitling and managed the "digital pub" Discord server which hosted q&a sessions as well as other meeting conversations. In the autumn, I am co-organising another conference with EXARC called "Archaeological Approaches to the Study of the Potter's Wheel" which will be livestreamed open-access.*

*I've been volunteering my time with EXARC over the past two years in a number of ways: as a representative during the first CRAFTER meeting in Mula, Spain, as auditor for the annual financial reports, and within a focus group on digitisation.*

*I currently hold a position in academia, where I have been working on finding new ways to best share ongoing research with the widest possible public – both in-person and digitally. This role has given me great insights into many tools which could significantly benefit EXARC in the coming years. I have also taken a much stronger stance on widening access to research, through explicitly addressing the broader public as well as ensuring that publications are open access.*

*I would like to continue to work with EXARC on new initiatives as well as refining and strengthening existing ones. EXARC is a growing organisation which has always been a welcoming and supportive community, and I wish to help find more ways to keep that personal connection I feel for EXARC as we grow in size. Thank you very much for your consideration."*

**DECISION 2:** Annemarie Pothaar is re-elected and Caroline Jeffra is elected into the EXARC Board.

#This decision was accepted by all who voted.

#### 4. Appointing new Auditors

Yvonne Lammers remains as auditor. We need a second auditor, replacing Caroline Jeffra. There are two candidates for the second position as auditor. The first one is Uli Wagner, Chair of Gladiatorenschule Trier e.V. This group from Germany is EXARC member since January 2020 (<https://exarc.net/members/groups/lvdvs-treperorvm-de>). The second candidate is Andrea Mariani. He is both member of the Board of Popolo di Brig (IT) (<https://exarc.net/members/groups/spa-popolo-di-brig-it>) and APPA-VC (PT) (<https://exarc.net/members/groups/appa-vc-pt>).

**DECISION 3:** based on experience of the candidates, Andrea Mariani is elected as second auditor.

#This decision was accepted by all who voted.

#### 5. Presentation of the Plan for the Forthcoming Year

We refer to attached PDF of the PowerPoint we intended to show at the AGM, <https://exarc.net/sites/default/files/2019-EXARC-PPT.pdf> (slides 34 - 47)

All reports and prospects we present here were made and announced before the COVID outbreak. The situation for this year, and the years to come, has become increasingly unstable, but what we present here gives a direction. EXARC will stay open, and we will continue with our services and help. The Journal will be published and so our conferences will continue: in real life or when necessary online.

There were no questions or remarks to the plans for the forthcoming year. The Board would like to add that we monitor the current situation and will need to adapt fast.

#### 6. Adoption of a Budget for the Forthcoming Year and setting the Annual Contribution

The suggestion for the annual contribution is twofold.

- For individual members, we suggest to extend the reduced fee which currently is for students only, to unwaged people as well (including retired people).
- For institutional members, the suggestion is not to look anymore at what country a member is in, but base the fee they pay on their annual turnover. We expect to include three categories: those below 30,000, those above 250,000 EUR a year and the ones in between. The lowest category would pay towards 80 EUR, and the highest category towards 300 EUR. The changes, especially for the highest category, would be spread over several years.

These plans were formed before the COVID outbreak, and although we understand that for many cultural institutions, life has become increasingly difficult, we think this change in fees structure will enable the smaller institutions to join EXARC more easily. We want to support as many organisations as we can. The PowerPoint (slide 42) shows an increase in membership for category A in two years (from 150 – 225 – 300 EUR). Given the current situation, we suggest to change this to three years (150 – 200 – 250 – 300 EUR)

The current fee structure can be found here: <https://exarc.net/become-member>.

There were few remarks regarding to the suggestion for the annual contribution fees from 2021 onward. It was applauded that EXARC will include a fee for unwaged individuals. The idea is to change the fees for institutional membership and have it based on annual turnover instead of geographic location: this makes it easier for the smaller institutional members, but also makes it easier for larger members if they see their income going down.

**DECISION 4:** The AGM accepts both the budget for the forthcoming year and the suggested annual contribution and put the increase in fee for Institutional members in place over a period of three years.

#This decision was accepted by all who voted.

#### 7. Any Other Business

Save the Date: EXARC is happy that, circumstances permitting, the next International Experimental Archaeology Conference #EAC12 will take place in Exeter, 29-31 March 2021.

EXARC Journal Digest postponed: As postal services do not guarantee delivery for the time being, EXARC decided not to send our members the Journal Digest this Spring. However, we plan to bring you a new and thicker publication in Autumn.

#EXARCBerlin: last week we held our annual conference. We are pleased to say that with our new approach, we reached a lot more people than anticipated. The format (YouTube and online discussions at Discord) needs some fine tuning for future application.

Yvonne Lammers, director of the Eindhoven Museum (NL) made a point, that usually the dates of the annual conference are close to the season opening of many open-air museum members. This conference is always combined with the Annual General

Meeting, and for that reason needs to be before July 1st. Another issue, is that the accountant and member audit needs to be able to do their work in January and February. For the larger EAC conferences, EXARC depends on the availability of a venue. If we meet at an open-air museum, they usually want to have the conference taking place in good weather. Easter and early May are usually a no-go, meaning there are very few windows of opportunity left for EXARC. The #EXARC Berlin conference was all online, which made it easier to follow, but that is of course not a perfect solution. However, we believe that future EXARC conferences may include such an online component.

Maura Stefani: Yvonne Lammers made a point, that usually the dates of the annual conference are close to the season opening of many open-air museum members.

I am sure that it is not the first time this point has been highlighted - and we are one of the structures that open at the end of March- but there are no options...

Annemarie Pothaar: The coinciding of the new season start and best conference time is unavoidable, and has been so for as long as I can remember. It is crucial to look at what audience and participants we want at various conferences, whether online or not. When high placed officials or crucial staff members are wanted as participants, but are unable to join due to the time of the year and their crucial role at work, the conference might be better suited to a 'lesser' staff member and a more common theme and activities.

It might be interesting to set up a matrix for EXARC of all its members and give them tags (ask people), such as management, practical skills, interpretation, educational methods, academic experimental archaeology approach, etc. You could then look at your full EXARC programme and see if you are matching the diverse membership with activities for all, and if a change is needed. There will always be one part of the EXARC membership who are inconvenienced by the conference time, place and period chosen.

Caroline Jeffra thinks that the COVID-19 situation has illustrated just how much we are all dependent on travel and free movement, and we could perhaps start thinking about ways to help our archaeological open-air museum members find strategies for maintaining visitor numbers in some respect, as well as maintaining contact between members. This isn't just something that we need in the present crisis but will be beneficial in the long term for being more inclusive of institutional and individual members who are less geographically-connected than the membership residing in the EU, for example. This is a timely thing to consider, and we're in a good position to build on existing knowledge going forward as well.

Annemarie Pothaar: The current COVID situation gives a whole new meaning to the 'Social Inclusion' discussion we have had before, fired up by the ICOM definition of museums. Working in a museum, we all have our very own special mix of opportunities and local factors.

I am much more interested in exchanging views and best practices on visitor engagement and new challenges in that field. If you are an interpretation member however, or an independent worker, your needs are different and you fear you may not get hired again as organizer / performer/ workshop, etc. It would help them to define why they matter and should be hired again soon.

A new visitor engagement philosophy and methodology is needed due to COVID, but also a new philosophy and methodology on previous event structures and visitor/ workshop forms. I would stay away from special COVID conference EXARC programming that focusses on online presence, as that scramble is already happening

and is a short term solution and people have reached that landmark already (although yes, there is always room for improvement and learning from each other).

The real questions are, how can I put on events again/ receive visitors and can we replicate what we have done before or do we look at other forms of inclusion, engagement, giving meaning and being successful. For one, the emphasis on visitor numbers as a measurement for success, will not work for medium / long term, so our success standards could change to making meaning and meaningful interactions.

Thus we are back to the discussion and making practical our role in Social Inclusion. Experimental archaeology and interpretation thrive on making meaningful encounters, it is our strong point.

Antje Wilton requested a way to support EXARC and its members. These are dark times for all our members. The Dutch Museum Association estimate that 25% of their museum members will go bankrupt this year, and we have not seen the darkest part of this crisis yet. So far, EXARC received about 20,000 EUR of the contribution fees, 11,000 EUR is outstanding. We get very few new members, and expect to lose more than usual: <https://exarc.net/history/how-many-museums-survive>.

**DECISION 5:** The suggestion is that EXARC opens for donations - and if a member tells us within 12 months, he/she/they cannot pay the contribution fees (once), this could be covered from that fund (if we get enough donations). This way the member has some financial space, and remains EXARC member. Especially now, cooperation is needed.

#This decision had one vote against it.

Roman Abušinov: The COVID-19 situation complicates the beginning of the season. According to the government's decision we are closed. We will be happy to open from June... Now by closing schools we have lost 5 thousand ordered school children...

Maura Stefani: We have the same concerns as Caroline Jeffra and Antje Wilton and we are discussing among colleagues how to rethink summer and autumn activities on the basis of social distance and safety standards, but the situation is so uncertain that it is really difficult to contemplate all possible "scenarios". We'd like to be "ready for anything" as soon as we'd be allowed to reopen, but the modes are still uncertain....

Maureen Page: All of us here at Butser Ancient Farm would like to thank the Board members and auditors for their consistent enthusiasm and help. We are very pleased to be part of such an organisation.

I agree with the five points outlined in the email. We also all recognise that trying to find a suitable and convenient time for the AGM and conference is not easy. For us the timing this year would have been good, just before Easter which is usually a very busy time for us, and yet after the worst of the bad weather. However, we were also pleased that more people were able to access the presentations as they were available on line. It would be really good if at least some were to be made accessible like this in future years.

## 8. Closing

Pascale Barnes closed the Annual General Meeting on April 21, 2020.