



Ipswich & District Historical Society 15th April 2021

Preliminary results and conclusions from the recent membership survey

Dear Members & readers.

It has been a difficult period for all of us over the last year. Most of us, I am sure, have missed the camaraderie and talks we have all enjoyed over the years when attending IDHTS meetings. We have probably felt that in the near future we would all come together again, especially with the advent of the vaccines. Talk recently, however, has indicated quite clearly that it will still be some time before large gatherings like ours can take place without the restrictions of social distancing and masks. We still are unsure what the situation is with The Salvation Army & future use of the hall.

Bearing this in mind the committee members have been discussing the possibility of holding some meetings including speakers, in the form of a Zoom Presentation. The software is available free to anyone of you. If you have not accessed the Zoom website before, it is quite easy to use on a PC, Tablet or even on some Smart TVs.

To this end we felt that we ought to canvass the individual views of the membership as to whether they would or could attend IDHTS meetings in the future by means of Zoom. We have been delighted with the response. As of today (15/4/21), we have had a 40% response from the total membership, with 64% stating that they would attend a Zoom presentation & 36% would not or are unable to attend Zoom meetings. Several of our members have attended on-line events of other organisations. We have had some positive membership feedback on the benefits from this type of meeting. The overwhelming feedback from members has been that they would prefer face to face meetings, however there is a wide recognition that it will be some time before it will be safe to hold large group meetings. We must emphasise that we are not proposing for zoom to replace our usual meetings at the Citadel in the long term, but this would ensure we could expand our programme with a more varied subject matter.

On-Line presentations such as Zoom are now commonly used by many other societies and in fact our friends at the Norfolk Railway Society have been using this means of resuming meetings over the last year. Since early March 2021, they were kind enough to invite us, as a society, to join with them. The Zoom meetings have been very successful and included stimulating Q and A sessions at the end. Recent feedback from several members from the survey and from other local societies have stated that they have used Zoom and have found they can attract wider audiences and been able to use speakers from further afield, whilst being able to keep costs to a minimum. In addition to all these benefits we could well attract new members to our society by widening the access through internet meetings.

It is proposed that we will now start preparations to run a 'pilot' Zoom meeting open to all members, probably to run in mid-June. Full details of how to access the presentation and details of their content will be in the next edition of Transport Matters and on our web site & Facebook page. After the pilot, we would evaluate feedback in time for our first Committee meeting that we can hold after the 21st June, once government restrictions are eased. If you have not yet responded, you can still let us know your views via email, phone or completing the form sent recently by post, by the 26th April.

Thank you and stay safe. Kind regards Sylvia Kerridge.

