

Essex Rock & Mineral Society Annual Report for 2024

Membership

Our membership of 145 is higher than it has been for many years. Our Affiliation to the Geologists' Association is sustained by the fact that 13 ERMS members are also GA members. Thanks go to Mark Matthews for his work on the Membership and payments system before transferring the system to ERMS member Don Kees.

Venues and meetings

Meetings continued with steady attendances at both the Shenfield and Stanway venues. Online Zoom talks have also continued, often with a differing selection of members. Speakers for the two monthly venues as well as Zoom have been organised by Ginny Hall, who will step down this year after several years of effort.

Field Visits

There were 10 visits with two cancelled visits in 2024; the Colemans Farm visit had to be postponed yet again due to adverse conditions. Visits were attended by a varying number of members plus paying guests. Jonathan Spencer has organised and ran the field visits through the year, with assistance from John Walmsley and Kevin Timmons; the online booking system is in full use. The 2025 draft programme is well under way.

The ERMS Show

The 42nd ERMS Essex Gem and Mineral Show in February was again very successful, with over 300 visitors slightly down on the previous year. The 43rd show at North Romford will be on 22nd February 2025. Thanks go to Jeff Saward for his continued effort; an understudy is needed for the admin and bookings. Trev Johnson has taken on the setup on the day, assisted by the ERMS stalwarts early and late.

Publicity

Our publicity and Show leaflets continued to bring success. ERMS Facebook was maintained by Helen Vickers. The website www.erms.org has been changed again, with ownership transferred to Ros Mercer, having been set up by Jan Dunford. The pages have been simplified and members' feedback is welcome. The ERMS Members' Facebook page is seldom used and could be more prominent.

Chairman Succession, committee and volunteers

During the 2023 AGM, no new chairman was voted onto the committee. The role of Chairman must be filled as soon as possible. Meanwhile the splitting and devolving of tasks has been reasonably successful, many members are helping e.g. with libraries, The Show, field visits, venue welcome tables, etc. However, four committee members are now stepping aside, after years of highly valuable input looking after venues, membership, programme and website. In order to maintain proper running of ERMS, we now need committee replacements plus members' help with various valuable and vital tasks such as publicity, Zoom hosting, setting up venues. The Society has retained a good number of members and its meetings, zoom, visits and Show remain popular. However, there is a danger of losing momentum unless members come forward right now to help and, vitally, for some to join the committee and maintain its quorum.

My sincere thanks to all our members and committee for keeping ERMS buoyant and popular through 2024.

Ian F Mercer, acting Chairman