

Members Meeting 12 March 2026

Hilary Farrel, Chair, welcomed 71 members, plus 2 visitors to the monthly members meeting in the Hunstanton Community Centre. There were 2 apologies. The actual branch membership totals 379.

Members will be keen to learn that Sylvia Pratt, erstwhile editor of the Newsletter, will celebrate her ninetieth birthday in April. In 1991 she was a founder member of the branch and has held a number posts through the years. In recent times she has been a valuable commentator on tricky issues, and gave up editing responsibilities only a few weeks ago. We thank her for those years of loyal service.

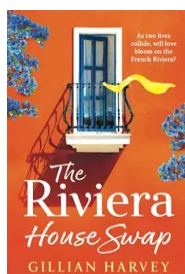
Secretary, Virginia Young, informed the room that the branch vote for a regional council representative has, by a narrow margin, gone to Ruth Freedman. The results will be known by the end of the month. Other communications, including a monthly update from the CEO, were routine administration activities.

Pat Eckersall, Treasurer, reported £10,771 in the main account and £755 in the social fund. There were no significant transactions to report. The balance of the main account will reduce by about £2,000 next month when we pay our levies to the Third Age Trust.

Today's speaker Gillian Harvey



Gillian spoke easily and naturally throughout her account of a life that grew from infant ambition to be a writer to adult success in the role. It was not straightforward. Wearing by teaching, and strained by home counties life, she suggested to her husband that they move to rural France. It did provide the peace and beauty Gillian sought but also presented the challenges of change and, sometimes, social isolation. In the event the Harveys stayed in France for 14 years.



Though productive, after several years Gillian was stuck to publish and she addressed the issue through a correspondence course. It provided the boost she needed. However, the pandemic interrupted sales and progress slowed. She honed her skills over the years through pursuit of a range of assignments together with a studied response to comment and criticism. Gillian became a successful novelist and freelance journalist. She has 14 books to her name, translated into as many different languages. The latest is due to be published in May, when there will be book signing at Hunstanton's independent bookshop, *by the book*, at 9 High Street.

We learned how the pressures of family life spurred Gillian to make effective use of time. She commented wryly "You don't have time to procrastinate, or have writer's block." Gillian's humour threaded through her talk. The flow of questions at the close of the presentation showed that she had touched hearts and minds through dedication to transform observations and experiences into popular literature.

Speaker Secretary Ann McKimm warmly thanked Gillian for an engaging talk.

The meeting closed at 3pm. when coffee, tea and biscuits were served.

The next meeting will be held at 2pm on Monday 20th April at the community centre. Kevin Mackie will talk about the music portion of his life as a brass player.