

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Twentieth Century Society**

held on Saturday 17 June 2017

at St Paul's, Lorrimore Square, Kennington, London SE17 3QU

**1. Apologies for absence**

Michael Atkinson, John Clarke, Anna Douglas, David Heath, Barnabas Calder, Jane Rosier, Matthew Schofield, Tony Stokoe, John Latham

**2. Approval of Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18 June 2016 at Leicester**

The minutes were approved and there were no matters arising.

**3. President's Address**

Gillian Darley spoke about praising the unsung. We look at buildings of quality for all sorts of reasons, sometimes because of the engineers. The centenary of women being admitted to the Architectural Association reminds us of the immediately postwar tranche of women, who were often multidisciplinary, not just architecture but also for example landscape and planning for example. Complex buildings and complex skills were considered at the recent 'Architecture, Citizenship, Space' conference at Oxford Brookes, and the results of working jointly in groups – many of our buildings are products of groups putting together all their skills. We have seen that these interrelationships have crumbled away, but they are central to architecture for the future, regardless of listing.

**4. Chair's Address**

Peter Ruback said that the AGM is an opportunity for members to not only see the progress that is being made in the work of the Society but also to gain an insight into the issues that the Trustees are grappling with. He spoke about the steps that Trustees have been taking with the Director to address the financial position of the Society and the management of its operations.

The Society is dependent on non-recurring income: we operate at a considerable loss – of the order of £16,000 each year - only made good by donations, legacies and contributions from special projects and sponsorship. And if we publish a Journal, then the financial position is worse, despite a good track record of grant funding and donations specifically for the Journal. So in planning for 2017, Trustees had to look very hard at the options we faced, especially in relation to publications. Our starting position was that what matters most for the Society is its casework and that should be protected at all costs. We recognised that publications, the Magazine and the Journal, are valued

by members, contribute to knowledge, get our wider campaigning messages across and give credibility to our casework.

The membership survey that over 600 people responded to confirmed the overriding importance members attach to the casework and promotion of conservation that the Society does. There is no doubt that as well as work we do identifying and putting forward candidates for listing, we are doing work on listed building consent cases that simply will not be done unless we do it ourselves. The case of St John's Waterloo a Grade 2\* listed church is instructive: we stepped in as formal objectors, marshalling expert and pro bono advice and briefing pro bono barristers, when no one else was willing to commit that level of resources. And we have succeeded in preventing highly damaging alterations. Quite simply it wouldn't have happened without our formal objection. The Society is very grateful not only to the advisers, but to Clare Price and the Trustees who supported her on this case. And Number 1 Poultry, where Ministers declined to take a decision on listing at all, despite Historic England having researched the case and advised to list the building, was only reversed, with listing being granted, after we had requested a review and shown that Ministers were obliged to take a decision, backed up with detailed pro bono legal work.

Our casework is of the utmost importance and we are determined to protect this area. Where the Trustees did look for savings was in the publications budget: we decided to move to a Journal on a one every two years basis: publishing in 2017 and with a strong intention for publishing in 2019. We committed to 3 editions of the magazine in 2017 but will review that position for 2018 in the next few months. The Trustees think that brings us into balance (with some cautious application of legacies) over 2017 and 2018. Looking further we are also seeking to maximise our ongoing income:

- first by encouraging contributions from younger people who cannot yet afford membership. We will be introducing Supporter Status for the 30 y/o and under that is not a form of membership, but entitles you to the e news letter;
- secondly, we will be enabling monthly direct debit payments and signing up to direct debits on line, to enable a more affordable payment option;
- thirdly we will be looking to expand the events programme and the contribution it brings to casework and campaigning.

Peter Ruback expressed the Society's deep thanks to retiring Trustees: Matthew Schofield and Ian McInnes. Matthew has been terrific at reminding us of the wide range of casework and the needs of members and buildings away from London. Ian has done almost every unpaid job in the Society and his energy and business like style will be missed.

## 5. Director's Report

Catherine Croft expressed the Society's gratitude to the staff. We have five paid staff, of whom one is full-time, and a team of volunteers. We now have a new Head of Operations. We are seeking to expand the Magazine distribution: for example the Tate is now stocking it. The office IT system has been updated. The website needs review,

having only ever had one overhaul. Social media is increasingly important such as the example of the recent crowdfunding campaign which succeeded in raising what was needed to restore the Sunbathers.

The Director spoke about recent casework; we have not given up on Dunelm House; Birds Eye at Walton on Thames, 1960-61, is facing demolition; the Alan Boyson mural in Hull was turned down; the Old Kent Road mural was listed. We have created our Top 10 Buildings at Risk and are about to launch our RIP list. We are gaining increased recognition and have had a year of good publicity. Grenfell was an issue on which we were asked for our opinion and we immediately put a press statement on the website, but we have avoided getting too drawn into a debate which is arguably peripheral to our remit.

## **6. Hon Treasurer's Report and presentation of 2016 Accounts**

The Hon Treasurer, Carolyn Parmeter, reported that 2016 was a good year. A combination of unusually low running expenses (no Journal, Magazine expenditure reduced by £2,500, and six months of no paid Co-ordinator) with some windfalls, yielded a significant surplus and enabled us to replenish our depleted reserves.

The non-statutory page (page 13 of the Accounts), first introduced last year, shows recurrent activities (casework, publications, events, etc.) split out from special projects and Events profits (which are up by about £8,000 at around £32,000).

Membership income showed a decent increase (around £16,000) but with some linked increase in expenses. It reflects the subscription increase at the start of 2015 and our success in sustaining our membership numbers, where Regional Groups have been key. Gift aid has improved, now around 20%, previously used to be 15%. The Society is grateful for gifts and donations of around £18,500 and legacies of £50,000. There was a surplus on running the conference for Getty. We continued to receive a HE grant towards casework of £43,000, reduced by 5% from 2015.

Looking forward we have the HE grant through to April 2020, though reduced by a further 5%; and staff costs will increase since we are now legally obliged to pay pensions, and rates will increase. We are proposing a very modest increase (£1-3) to subscriptions, to facilitate monthly direct debits. In parallel, we are looking to reduce expenditure wherever possible.

In summary, the accounts show a good position, reflecting a successful year for the Society, but we need to continue to grow our income and fundraising. Legacies will continue to be an important part of that picture. In response to a member's question about the tax benefit of a legacy to the Society the Treasurer confirmed that no Inheritance Tax is payable, and if over 10% of the estate it is excluded from the IHT calculation.

The Resolution to accept the Accounts was passed.

**7. Ordinary Resolution to re-appoint Argents Accountants Ltd as auditors**

The Resolution to re-appoint Argents Accountants Ltd as auditors for a further year was passed.

**8. Ordinary Resolution to re-elect the President for a further term**

The resolution to re-elect **Gillian Darley** for a second term of three years was passed.

**9. Ordinary Resolution to elect five Directors**

One third (5 of the 14) of the Directors retire from office in accordance with the rotation requirements of Articles 24 and 25 of the Articles of Association. Of these, Ian McInnes and Matthew Schofield do not seek re-election. The remaining three, Barry Arden, Timothy Brittain-Catlin, and Alan Powers, being willing to stand for re-election, and David Heath and Cela Selley having been recommended by the Directors under Article 27, stand for election.

The Resolution to appoint **Barry Arden, Timothy Brittain-Catlin, Alan Powers, David Heath** and **Cela Selley** was passed.

**10. Ordinary Resolution to increase subscription rates**

The Hon Treasurer proposed an Ordinary Resolution to increase subscriptions. This modest increase is intended to cover the costs of modernising payment administration, including the introduction of the facility to pay subscriptions by Direct Debit at 12 equal monthly instalments. It was noted that once the new DD system is in place renewals will be on the anniversary of the start date, instead of the fixed subscription year of January to December.

The Resolution to increase the rates as follows was passed:

Individual from £55 to £57  
Household from £75 to £78  
Concession from £40 to £42  
Household Concession from £65 to £66

**11. Annual Reports**

Annual Reports from the Publications Committee, the Hon Events Secretary, the Hon Membership Secretary, and the Hon Regional Groups Committee Convenor had been

placed on the About Us page of the website, together with Annual Reports from Regional Groups. Paper copies of all these are available on request from the office.

**12. Any Other Business Meeting**

There being no other business the meeting closed. The formal meeting was followed by a Trustees' Question Panel discussion consisting of the Trustees heading the Casework, Publications and Regional Groups sections, chaired by the Chairman, on questions raised by members, including: the consequences for events of post Brexit; whether we think we are concentrating on the right buildings; and how do we get more young people.

Signed .....

Date ..... 2018

Peter Ruback, Chairman