



2020 AGM Minutes

The Twentieth Century Society
West Midlands Region
18th May 2020

Venue: Online Via Zoom

Purpose of meeting: Annual General Meeting

Attendees:

| | | |
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| Katriona Byrne | Chair | KB |
| James Phillips | Secretary | JP |
| Joe Holyoak | Casework Liaison Officer | JH |
| Catherine Jones | Social Media Editor | CJ |
| Matthew Vaughan | Treasurer | MV |
| Alan Van Wijgerden | Committee | AVW |
| Larry Priest | | LP |
| Eleanor Cook | | |
| Sian Bradley | | |
| + several local members | | |

Apologies:

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| Paul Billinger | Committee | PB |
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| ITEM | ACTION BY | TARGET DATE |
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| 1.0 APOLOGIES | | |
| 1.1 | As above. | |
| 2.0 MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM | | |
| 2.1 | Item 3.8 - Reduced rate for students was put to the group, Katriona followed this up but the idea was rejected by HQ due to a marketing strategy for the whole organisation being taken forward by C20 in the future. | |
| 2.2 | Item 4.9 - Piccadilly Arcade was recommended for listing by JH and is still on our radar. | |
| 3.0 CHAIR'S REPORT | | |
| 3.1 | KB gave the following chair's report: | |
| 3.2 | <u>Change of personnel</u> Over the past year there has been no change in personnel and we have a regular core of about 5-7 people who regularly attend committee meetings. Our Secretary James Phillips is now stepping down for family reasons and we will elect his replacement later. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to James who has done a superb job over the past 2 years, in his very undramatic and smooth way, always prompt to respond to people and to handle the events bookings and to liaise with other officers. We have had wider support from the committee and other members who may not attend meetings but keep us in touch on various subjects and sponsor various items. Again we welcome anyone who has a good idea or who wants to get more involved. | |

3.3

Meetings

A West Midlands committee continues to meet formally the last Monday of the month in Birmingham, generally in Cherry Red's on John Bright Street, where we are given a room free of charge, and they benefit from our custom. We tend not to meet in December or August, so we average 10 meetings a year. We missed the meeting at the start of lockdown in March. The Committee has a very good diversity of skills, including planning, conservation and architectural knowledge, with time-served professional expertise. This year we continued our practice of inviting people to committee meetings as guests to see if they are interested in getting more involved so we have had a number of guests this year.

However as always we are a group of busy professionals, so not everyone can make every meeting and we also have to negotiate our ambitions against our actual capacity for activity.

3.4

Finances

We sorted out the signatories for the change in Treasurer but we have not heard yet back from Lloyds about the name changes. For this AGM I went into the bank to get physical statement. The Treasurer's report is coming up later.

3.5

Events

We tend to be quite successful running events. Catherine co-ordinates the events calendar and has taken to organising many events herself, often in conjunction with members. We will have a report from her later on. I wasn't able to attend as many as in previous years because I now teach every second Saturday more or less but I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people who have organised and delivered events. Some highlights for me were our second Architecture Slam held in cosy quarters in January and the Austin Village tour which was repeated in March.

We continue to ask for donations to sites or organisation which facilitate our visits and I am proud of this.

Our events were broadly based across the region to reach our members and we get 15-25 people attending each event. We usually make a modest profit of £50-100 but if we don't make a profit then there are other benefits too.

We were gearing up for helping arrange the national AGM in Coventry in June 2020 but that has been postponed till next year which is actually a wonderful opportunity to piggy back onto the City of Culture so we are putting together a small subcommittee to work on that.

3.6 Casework

The Committee has one case-work lead, architect Joe Holyoak. The current way of working, and in line with Head office guidelines, is to alert Grace Etherington with our concerns, and she decides whether to take to the monthly National Casework Committee at HQ. Regrettably after 2 ½ years' wait we were informed that the application for listing on The Elephant, in Coventry, led by Joe, was rejected.

The National Casework Committee has commented on applications in the regions such as the concrete repairs and the new extension to Coventry cathedral.

We often get alerted to sites which are at risk from members of the public or our own members but we struggle to mount a successful campaign to save these or even to co-ordinate a response. We had a couple of instances of partnership working on this, where we were alerted to matters by Brutiful Birmingham, thanks to Mary Keating's communication, and we looked at sites with her, including the Flapper pub on the canals behind New Library, one of the earliest of the new canalside pubs which epitomised the canal revivalism that was starting; we also visited and were invited to meetings about the House of Fraser, former Rackham's Department Store, on St Philip's Square and we used our contacts around the city to try and get a better design for the retention and redevelopment of this iconic building.

3.7 Other Activities/News

We continue to work with other groups and initiatives including:

- a. Brutiful Birmingham, as above.
- b. The Post-war architecture consortium initiated by Gavin Orton, the Brutiful Group, Birmingham Modernists, and BCU, which through new Chair of the Civic Society Matt Vaughan, submitted an application for HLF funding bid to work on a local listings.
- c. We are affiliated to the Wake Green Rd Prefabs project in association with Committee member Lou Robson. This has now got planning permission and LBC to renovate the pre-fabs as their current use as social housing. Our involvement has helped to maintain their high profile.
- d. In Coventry we are working with HE and other bodies around the Heritage Action Zone Initiative, the Great Places scheme, and City of Culture 2021. However Coventry currently has no Conservation Officer but there is a lot of potential there with 200 people being employed by City of Culture projects. We have great plans to appoint a paid Engagement Officer but have not managed to date to fill in the necessary grant application forms or to finalise a brief for the role.

ITEM**ACTION BY TARGET
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| 3.8 | <p><u>Membership</u> Membership continues to grow. Approximately 180 members of The Twentieth Century Society live in the West Midlands Region, which includes Staffordshire, Shropshire, West Midlands, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and Oxfordshire.</p> <p>While traditionally it has been our events programme that has engaged members we also now have a significant social media presence that also engages members and a wider group of people. So we will hear from Catherine Jones further on this.</p> <p>The Committee inaugurated an award to a Conservation student at BCU for the best essay on C20 architecture, planning or design, which would include a year's membership. If anyone here would like to sponsor that please get in touch with me or any member of the committee.</p> <p>I proposed to Catherine Croft, Director of C20, that we, as a trial, offer free or very cheap membership to students, with my own new Year 1 students studying conservation as guinea pigs. They get free IHBC membership for 1.5 years while they are studying and most go on to become members. I proposed we would offer something similar for C20 Society. This was deemed impossible unless it was put to the national AGM. So I would like to ask for support from this meeting to put a motion seeking a trial of this sort.</p> | Note - Support for action on last item in this point given by attendees. |
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| 3.9 | <p><u>The Future</u> We have plenty of potential for growth and influence, however, the key issue continues to be our capacity as a Committee to act strategically as well as reactively.</p> <p>Finally thanks to the Committee members for all their hard work this last year and to you the members who make it most enjoyable.</p> | |
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| 4.0 | CASEWORK LIAISON OFFICER'S REPORT | |
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| 4.1 | JH gave his report. JH noted that as a regional group we don't have autonomy to do our own casework. We can only refer casework to HQ. | |
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| 4.2 | We are still unsure as to what what are allowed to do at regional level - need to clarify what we can do. We feel that the current setup isn't working well, as it is too slow a system to enable us to quickly respond to threats. Improving this situation is a real target for the future | |
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| 4.3 | One thing that has been dealt with well is the Civic Centre 2 scheme in Coventry. Coventry University are proposing quite radical changes, contrary to what we would want. HQ has made a strong objection which we are very pleased about. | |
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| 4.4 | One relative success is Austin village conservation area which was to be de-designated. In response to several protests, that de-designation has now stopped. The final outcome is not sure, but it looks positive that something will be brought in which will allow for conservation whilst allowing the residents some more flexibility to upgrade | |
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| 4.5 | There has been a focus on the work of William Mitchell. We would like to see some better protection to some of his works, which hasn't happened yet. Something we will continue pursuing as we think this is an important item. | |

ITEM**ACTION BY TARGET
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4.6 Recent planning proposals have come to light which we believe are a threat to Digbeth, so this is an area which we will be looking at for now.

5.0 TREASURER'S REPORT

5.1 MV provided his treasurer's report, as follows:

5.2 Balance at year start: £1231.24 credit

5.3 Commentary: A profitable year with income from eleven events, nine of which were profit making, two of which breaking even.

5.4 Bank account: There are two signatories to the bank account: Anna Douglas and Katriona Byrne. Online banking facility. We have sought to add three further signatories, Matthew Vaughan (treasurer), Catherine Jones (social media), James Philips (secretary) but have been unable to secure Anna Douglas's signature to do so. The bank requires two (i.e. both) signatories to make any change. We are again seeking to add three further signatories (one of which for the incoming secretary).

5.5 Income 2019: £1042

- Architecture Slam 19/01/19: £105
- Kingsheath Church 02/02/19: £75
- Lichfield 09/03/19: £60
- AGM 29/04/19: £0
- Shirley: 11/05/19: £160
- Municipal Bank Tour (1 of 2) 08/06/19: £95
- Oxford: 06/07/19: £70
- Municipal Bank Tour (2 of 2) 21/09/19: £110
- Art Deco Tour 22/09/19: £125
- Tamworth Tour 21/10/2019: £90
- Shropshire 09/11/19: £152

5.6 Expenses 2019: £265.09

- Architecture Slam 19/01/19: £21.50 (tea + coffee £5, lunch for helpers £16.50 – Profit = £83.50
- Kingsheath Church 02/02/19: £0 – Profit £75
- Lichfield 09/03/19: £60 (£20 donations to each of RC Church, Library and Garrick Theatre) – Profit £0
- AGM 29/04/19: £0
- Shirley: 11/05/19: £25 (£25 donation to church – Profit £135
- Municipal Bank Tour (1 of 2) 08/06/19: £3.10 (£3.10 parking) – Profit £91.90
- Oxford: 06/07/19: £0 – Profit £70
- Municipal Bank Tour (2 of 2) 21/09/19: £18.50 (Parking) – Profit £91.50
- Art Deco Tour 22/09/19: £0 – Profit £125
- Tamworth Tour 21/10/2019: £0 – Profit £90
- Shropshire 09/11/19: £31.99 (£11.99 Eventbrite fee, £20 donation to church, others donations including flowers and cakes paid in kind) – Profit £120.01
- C20 Membership 2019 for Social Media Officer: £57
- BFI Licenses expense for Social Media Officer incurred 2018: £48

5.7 Net Profit / Loss for year 2019: £776.91

Balance at end year 2019: £2008.15

Of which £254.00 in hand, £1,754.15 in bank

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| 5.8 | Overall this year has been positive and shows the events are appropriate and well run. Targeted at the right level to turn a profit. | |
| 6.0 EVENTS REPORT | | |
| 6.1 | CJ gave her report on event. CJ noted that until lockdown it was going really well. | |
| 6.2 | The trip in June last year to the municipal bank which was very successful. | |
| 6.3 | The Oxford trip was exhausting but very popular. CJ noted her thanks to Aidan for organising. | |
| 6.4 | In September Heritage Week events were very popular and successful, notably with non-members. | |
| 6.5 | Thanks were given to Roger who helped organise the trip to Tamworth. | |
| 6.6 | A particularly special trip was to the Suburbs of Shropshire and Don Fenton's house. Due to it only being suitable for limited numbers, it was arranged through Eventbrite which worked well. | |
| 6.7 | The Christmas social was held at the Flapper, allowing members to potentially get a last chance to experience a building at risk. | |
| 6.8 | For the second year we ran the Architecture Slam which went well. We are continuing to refine it and will be looking for a new venue for next year's Slam in response to member feedback. | |
| 6.9 | Jackfield Tile Museum trip was unfortunately cancelled because of floods. The Austin village was an enjoyable and successful event. | |
| 6.10 | Future events are currently on hold due to Covid 19, but CJ has a list of potential trips once restrictions are lifted. A number of those planned for this year will be carried out on new dates, when possible. | |
| 6.11 | CJ noted that as someone who has to shield she is happy to provide support but can't attend events so need people to take up the mantle and work at. | |
| 6.12 | Discussed the possibility of sharing films with members online as we don't know when we will be able to run in-person events. It was suggested that there be the opportunity to take donations at online events to aid our fundraising. CJ noted that we want to bridge the gap with events so we don't lose the momentum. | |
| 7.0 SOCIAL MEDIA OFFICER'S REPORT | | |
| 7.1 | CJ noted that she has spent a lot of time building and advertising the programme of events. We use social media to raise awareness and get people involved in action | |
| 7.2 | It was noted to be a very useful quick way in getting in touch with members. | |
| 7.3 | We have a lot of followers (though who knows how many are real people!) and we are getting out there and getting our message over. A lot seem to be local and with an interest in design. | |
| 7.4 | During lockdown people have been engaging more, which is great. | |

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| 7.5 | We also share any interesting news on design etc. engagement is good on such posts. | | |
| 7.6 | CJ needs people to tell her what is going on, if there is stuff that we need to share, send to CJ and she will post it. Photos etc are all very welcome. | | |
| 7.7 | Massive benefit in keeping members informed during lockdown. | | |
| 8.0 | ELECTION OF OFFICERS | | |
| 8.1 | KB nominated Sian Bradley as the new C20 West Midlands Secretary, seconded by CJ. | | |
| 9.0 | ANY OTHER BUSINESS | | |
| 9.1 | There was a suggestion that we could run an online 'Slam type' event rather than videos, or online lectures, whilst Covid 19 restrictions prevent events. | | |
| 9.2 | A vote of thanks was given by Roger for those on the committee for their hard work and for organising events. | | |
| 9.3 | It was noted that it was very useful for people to know dates in advance for trip, so thanks were given to CJ for her organisation of trips well in advance. | | |
| 9.4 | It was suggested that a letter drop would be useful for those who do not receive emails or have access to social media. | | |