

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIETY

held on Saturday 11 June 2021 at 11 am
at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

1. **Attendance:** the Meeting was quorate.
2. **Apologies for absence:** a list is available from the Society's office.
3. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting** held on 12 June 2021 were approved. There were no matters arising.
4. **Annual Reports** from the Hon Membership Secretary and four Regional Groups had been placed on the Society's website, with paper copies available on request from the office.

5. President's Address

President Catherine Slessor welcomed members to the meeting, and introduced herself in her first attendance at an AGM in the role of President, with a presentation recalling post-war optimism, and emphasising the need to fight the good fight.

6. Chair's Address

- 6.1. Chair of Trustees, Ian McInnes, expressed the Society's gratitude to former Chair Peter Ruback for leading the Society through the recent pandemic, and also to retiring trustees David Heath (Casework Committee Chair), John Clarke (Audit & Risk Committee Chair) and Julia Lane (Honorary Secretary). Trustees had appointed Ellen Gates, a long-time casework volunteer, as Honorary Secretary, Otto Saumarez Smith would be appointed Chair of the Casework Committee. Trustees were proposing qualified auditor Jeremy Gostick to be elected Director and Trustee at this meeting by members and then to be appointed by Trustees as Chair of their Audit and Risk sub-Committee.
- 6.2. The Chair observed that the Society had come out of lockdown in reasonably good shape financially but the economic landscape post-Covid was still sliding downwards, both for our work and for our members personally, as we all faced an uncertain future. The Society needed to be more financially resilient to support the expanding casework load and carry out our charitable objectives which are:
 - To educate the public in the appreciation, knowledge and understanding of the arts, architecture, crafts and design for the period after 1914
 - To encourage the study of these and the related social history and to afford advice to owners and public authorities with regard to the preservation and repair of any buildings constructed or designed during this period

- To save from needless destruction or disfigurement, buildings or groups of buildings, interiors, and artifacts designed or constructed after 1914.
- 6.3.** The Chair reported that the Society's office had been strengthened with two new members of staff and a new deputy editor for the Society's magazine, Alexa Baracaia, who was also monitoring the Twitter account. Thaddeus Zupanic continued to lead on Instagram. Coco Whitaker would be joined in the casework team in early July by Sean Ketteringham to stand in for Clare Price who would be taking a 12 month sabbatical – although continuing to monitor church casework.
- 6.4.** The Chair drew attention to one of the key questions the Society needs to address: how it can best influence both public perception of the value of C20 buildings and national planning policy towards them; how to reinforce the message that twentieth and increasingly twenty-first century buildings deserve to be appreciated in a similar way to our Georgian and Victorian heritage. In addition, how should the Society attract younger, active, members to ensure its growth and continued relevance, to form the next generation of campaigners, caseworkers and conservationists and new event leaders, and to reinforce the expertise and in-depth knowledge that the Society can offer in a more competitive market place. During Covid others had moved into the Society's area, obviously not as statutory consultees in the planning process, but certainly on social media and also into events, walks and talks. The Society needed to respond pro-actively.
- 6.5.** The Chair observed that part of his remit was to enable Trustees to take a more strategic view of the Society's future. A strategy sub-group had begun to meet to examine and develop different options for promoting the Society's objectives while widening its public impact, and for encouraging younger members and volunteers, throughout the country, a strategic review of Casework, Campaigns and Community – the three C's.
- 6.6.** Trustees had been reviewing and updating the Society's governance documents and had proposed the repeal of the Society's Rules, in order to modernise the management of the Society and to reflect the confidence that members could now justifiably place in the increased compliance culture enforced by the Charity Commission and by company law, both of which contribute to the high standards of regulation now expected by the Trustees as they work to achieve the Society's charitable objectives. It would also give the Trustees the opportunity to be more flexible in setting subscription categories and rates. A benchmarking exercise found that most arts, heritage and cultural organisations offer a lower concessionary rate to younger members but not to older members. The Chair asked for support for the motion to phase out concessionary rates for older members in terms of: (1) existing over-65s subscriptions to continue; (2) to review after 12 months and consider removing the concession completely or continuing with a phased reduction; (3) all new members 65 and over plus existing under-65s as they reach 65 to pay the full rate following the passing of this motion. It was noted that a number of members over 65 had supportively chosen to pay the full rate without the discount to which they had been entitled, for which the Society was very grateful. Trustees would also be intending to increase benefactor and corporate rates.

- 6.7. Trustees did not expect that Historic England would significantly increase its annual contribution. Funding could be sought from other grant-giving organisations in the case of specific projects. Increasing membership and offering more events would increase income. Another effective method of fundraising was legacies, which had benefitted the Victorian Society and the Georgian Group substantially. The Society's Director and several trustees, as well as members, had already made legacies to the Society in their wills. The Chair appealed to members present to consider this if they had not already done so. A Society member who is a solicitor had offered to answer questions in confidence free of charge, his contact details being available from the office. Legacy income would help to expand campaigning and casework as well as funding the Society's Legacy Caseworker Scheme, which trains the next generation of young heritage professionals.
- 6.8. The Chair noted the growing public appreciation of the links between the reuse and upgrading of existing buildings and achieving net carbon zero growth, and the opportunity this provided for the Society to take a leadership role.
- 6.9. The Chair thanked the Director and staff for their work.

7. Director's Presentation

- 7.1. Casework: Catherine Croft, Director, gave examples of some of the good outcomes during the past year throughout the country, of varying types. The Society had been increasingly pro-active, with campaigns for department stores and leisure centres, and the Buildings at Risk List would become annual instead of biennial. The Director spoke about some of the issues involved in the high number of recent cases involving alterations, such as the National Gallery: planning and development, climate change, new policies to monitor and comment on, such as the threatened relaxing of conservation areas. The Director noted that the 20% increase in casework during the last couple of years had put pressure on the office.
- 7.2. Inclusivity: the Building of the Month had been a good project.
- 7.3. Press coverage: it was noted that social media needed to be professional and quick to react; there was a New Tik Tok account.
- 7.4. Forthcoming publications were announced. It was noted that it had been difficult to produce the Magazine during lockdown.
- 7.5. The Director thanked former Chair Peter Ruback for having taken over the running of the Events programme, which produced a considerable income.

8. C20 Wales/Cymru Report

Susan Fielding, Chair of the Wales/Cymru Group, established 2 years ago, spoke about the aims of the Group. She mentioned a number of the buildings the Group had been concerned with, utilising the specialist and local knowledge of their members, identifying buildings at risk, monitoring developments, and proposing a programme of events to

raise awareness. There were currently 39 members of the Society in Wales. It was noted that the Welsh government was committed to climate change, with a net zero aim.

9. Hon Treasurer's Report and presentation of 2021 Accounts

- 9.1. Hon Treasurer, Carolyn Parmeter, presented the 2021 Accounts which had been published on the Society's website. The overall deficit of £8,500 was lower than had been projected. Ordinary recurrent activities showed a deficit of around £12,000.
- 9.2. Events profits were around £25,000, the programme still impacted by Covid. Pre-Covid in 2019 profits had been nearly £47,000.
- 9.3. Membership and Gift Aid income the most important income stream, increased to £163,000. It could be that some members joined during the pandemic who may not continue. Around £15,000 (similar to 2020) was received in gifts and donations, and £10,000 in legacies.
- 9.4. The annual Historic England annual grant towards casework, the claims based on a proportion of casework expenses, was £41,000 and would be £42,000 in 2022, an increase of 2% already outstripped by inflation. This grant had been diminishing in real value for some years.
- 9.5. Unrestricted cash reserves at the end of 2021 were £340,000, due to the generosity of members, including past members who left legacies. The Trustees' policy to maintain reserves equivalent to 12 months' expenditure had recently been reviewed by the Audit and Risk sub-Committee and revised to 3-4 months' expenditure, to cover the costs of winding up the Society in the event of catastrophe. This reduction was going to permit greater investment in senior and experienced staff.
- 9.6. Looking forward, the Hon Treasurer noted that Covid had been receding but the cost of living was increasing, although increases in the pro bono office rent and in salaries, reviewed at the start of each year, would not take effect until the following year. The reserves position gave confidence to weather the current uncertainties, and the strong professional staff team gave confidence to increase the reach and influence of the Society.

10. Resolutions

The following Resolutions were passed by a show of hands

- 10.1. **Ordinary Resolution:** to re-appoint Argents Accountants Ltd as auditors
- 10.2. **Ordinary Resolution:** that the Rules of the Society made under Article 50 of the Articles of Association be repealed so that the Directors be authorised to set subscription rates and categories from time to time at their discretion, acting in the best interests of the Society and having due regard to the rates and categories set by other comparable organisations, to include, without limitation, targeted and strategic promotions with the aim of broadening the membership and accessibility of the Society

- 10.3. Ordinary Resolution:** to increase member subscription income by phasing out the discount for over-65s, both individual and household (ie two at the same address), to strengthen the financial resilience of the Society and support its mission to save and protect outstanding architecture, to take effect from 1 September 2022
- 10.4. Ordinary Resolution** to elect Jeremy Gostick, recommended by the Directors under Article 27 of the Articles of Association, as a Director and Trustee
- 10.5. Ordinary Resolution** to re-elect Carolyn Parmeter as a Director and Trustee (being one of the one third of existing Directors required to retire in accordance with the rotation requirements of Article 24 of the Articles of Association)
- 10.6. Ordinary Resolution** to re-elect Sarah Jackson as a Director and Trustee (being one of the one third of existing Directors required to retire in accordance with the rotation requirements of Article 24 of the Articles of Association)
- 10.7. Ordinary Resolution** to re-elect Otto Saumarez Smith as a Director and Trustee (being one of the one third of existing Directors required to retire in accordance with the rotation requirements of Article 24 of the Articles of Association)
- 10.8. Ordinary Resolution** to re-elect Neal Shasore as a Director and Trustee (being one of the one third of existing Directors required to retire in accordance with the rotation requirements of Article 24 of the Articles of Association)
- 10.9. Ordinary Resolution** to re-elect Andrew Jackson as a Director and Trustee (being one of the one third of existing Directors required to retire in accordance with the rotation requirements of Article 24 of the Articles of Association)

11. Any other business

It was agreed, in response to a request from a member, that the Society's Trustees would consider proxy voting for future AGMs, and that the date and city location of future AGMs would in future be posted on the website as soon as they are confirmed, ie earlier than the statutory 21 days.

There being no other business the Chair declared the meeting closed.

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Date: 2023

Ian McInnes, Chair