

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**OF**

**THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIETY**

held on Saturday 5 July 2025 at 11.00 am  
at the Warburg Institute, University of London, School of Advanced Study,  
Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB

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 6 July 2024 were approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them.
4. **Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising not covered in the items below.
5. **President's Address**

President Catherine Slessor welcomed members to the meeting. She referred to the exhibition on the Warburg Institute's original paintings of the Thoth Tarot, devised by Aleister Crowley and painted by Lady Frieda Harris. She noted that card 16 (the only card to feature a building) showed a destroyed building. It suggests upheaval and change, but that can also lead to growth. The C20 Society tries to protect buildings, and the work of the Society goes on. Unlike the Georgian and Victorian Societies, the numbers of C20 and C21 buildings eligible for listing, and hence the potential workload, continues to increase. She emphasised that the Director, caseworkers and staff do much of the heavy lifting. There has been much change since she became President, with new political regimes and world turmoil. We need to consider what the Society will evolve into, with an increasing caseload that will soon include C21 buildings. The support of volunteers and members is essential.

6. **Chair's Address**

- 6.1. The Chair noted changes to the President, Officers and Trustees. Carolyn Parmeter will take over as Hon Secretary from Ellen Gates, who will remain as a Trustee only. Jeremy Gostick will take over from Carolyn as Hon Treasurer. Andrew Jackson is stepping down as a Trustee, and was thanked for his efforts, as was the departing President.
- 6.2. The Chair thanked the Trustees who are continuing in current roles: Otto Saumarez Smith as chair of the Casework Committee, Mark Eastment as chair of the Publications Committee and Colin Mitchell as chair of the Fundraising Committee.

- 6.3. The Chair noted that the Society has had a distinguished list of Presidents, and that will continue with the proposed new President, Samira Ahmed, a prominent journalist.
- 6.4. The Chair had met recently with Thomas Heatherwick to discuss his Humanise campaign. They agreed a list of post-war buildings that are 'not boring'. The list can be seen on the Society's website. 'Always engage and look for common ground' is a good principle.
- 6.5. There are many activities behind the scenes that members do not see, such as the untangling of some complex bookkeeping issues and work (in particular, by Trustee Colin Mitchell) on fundraising. Several Trustees have helped with the response to the Government's evaluation of amenity societies. Although the outcome of that evaluation is not yet known, we made a convincing case for continued and increased funding. Challenges remain, including the change in Casework personnel and in the responsible Government minister.
- 6.6. The Society's profile remains high, but we want to remain relevant. The Trustees have acknowledged the need for a rebrand, now that we are well into C21. It is hoped that rebrand can coincide with the upcoming publication of a book on C21 buildings. The views of members will be sought.
- 6.7. On fundraising, the Chair noted that there had been an invitation-only event hosted by Lady Patty Hopkins at her home. Invitees included people from the most successful built-environment practices, with the objective of persuading them to become Patron-level supporters; several subsequently signed up. A repeat event will be held at her house in September.
- 6.8. The Chair also noted that another effective method of fundraising is legacies. In addition to making donations, members are encouraged to include the Society in their wills. Both donations and legacies can go into the Elain Harwood Memorial Fund. Please include a legacy in your wills and let us know you have done so.
- 6.9. The Chair thanked the Director and staff for their work and volunteers for their contributions.

## 7. Hon Treasurer's Report

- 7.1. The financial position is better than anticipated at the beginning of 2024. Overall income for the year was £464,115 (up 15%) against expenditure of £381,610 (down by 8%), giving a surplus of £82,505. The surplus was largely due to fundraising efforts, including the new recruitment of Patron members and further contributions to the Elain Harwood Memorial Fund. Higher than projected Events profits helped. Gaps in staffing, and the absence of a Journal in the year, also reduced expenditure compared with 2023.

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Fund balances were: Restricted funds of £4,888 and unrestricted funds of £424,765 on 31/12/24. Of this, the Elain Harwood Memorial Fund amount of £76,928 is designated for casework, while JSTOR royalties of £6,056 are designated for future Journals.

Trustees decided to start a long-term investment of a part of our reserves in stocks and shares during 2024. Our aim is a combination of growth (to retain value in real terms) and income. £75,000 has been invested to the end of 2024, with a further £75,000 invested in early 2025. It is hoped this will be the start of a substantial endowment.

### 7.2. The largest sources of income for the year were:

Membership subscriptions	£161,971
Patrons (new)	£30,000
Elain Harwood Memorial Fund	£45,653
Other donations and legacies	£20,018
Historic England and Cadw grants	£46,235
Other grants (including Pithead Baths project)	£32,139
Events profit	£61,564
Publications profits	£8,865
Miscellaneous (includes paid casework advice and merchandise)	£13,529
Investment income	£5,209

7.3. Membership subscriptions remain our largest source of income but are down 9% on 2023. We are looking at the reasons, but they may include an aging demographic. For many years (up to and including 2021) subscriptions (and associated Gift Aid) were equivalent to or more than our payroll costs. That's no longer the case - by a fair margin.

### 7.4. Expenditure was as follows:

Staff costs	£204,414
Other office costs	£95,544 (subsequently corrected to £34,364)

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Rent	£21,468
Magazine (net of advertising income)	£40,342
Campaigns and website	£15,289
Casework (including Pithead Baths project)	£11,701
Governance	£5,963

- 7.5. Staff costs were lower than projected due to gaps in staffing, but we are spread thin. We would like to strengthen staffing and pay more when finances permit. Staff pay is a little lower than market rates and junior staff are currently paid only slightly more than the London Living wage. But to increase pay and staff, in a sustainable way, we will need to increase fundraising and membership income.
- 7.6. There was no Journal this year, which typically would cost £20,000 to £30,000; we are exploring digital publication to manage costs.
- 7.7. The Treasurer noted that we are not asking members to approve the accounts, as legally that is the responsibility of the Trustees (Company Directors). They will consider and sign off on them at the next Trustees' meeting, which is on 12 August. The Treasurer asked whether there were any questions or comments. None were raised.

### 8. Resolutions

The following resolutions were approved individually by a unanimous show of hands by those in the room.

- 8.1. **Ordinary Resolution** to re-appoint Argents Accountants Ltd as auditors
- 8.2. **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)
- 8.3. **Ordinary Resolution** to re-elect Jeremy Gostick 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)
- 8.4. **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)

- 8.5. Ordinary Resolution** to re-elect Cela Selley 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)
- 8.6. Ordinary Resolution** to re-elect Ellen Gates 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)
- 8.7. Ordinary Resolution** to elect Samira Hamed as President in accordance with Article 18A of the Articles of Association for a period of three years
- 8.8. Special Resolution** to Amend the Articles of Association to replace Article 9(1) with the following:

No business shall be transacted at any general meeting unless a quorum is present. 'Present' includes being present by suitable electronic means agreed by the Directors in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants.

- 8.9. Special Resolution** to Amend the Articles of Association to include Article 9(4) as follows:

A general meeting may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the Directors in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.

- 8.10. Special Resolution** to Amend the Articles of Association to replace Article 33(1) with the following:

The Directors may regulate their proceedings as they see fit, subject to the provisions of the Articles. Meetings may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the Directors in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants.

- 8.11. Special Resolution** to Amend the Articles of Association to replace Article 34(1) with the following:

No decision may be made by a meeting of the Directors unless a quorum is present at the time the decision is purported to be made. 'Present' includes being present by suitable electronic means agreed by the Directors in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants.

## 9. Director's Report

- 9.1.** The Director welcomed members to the Warburg Institute. The building was designed by Charles Holden in 1957-58. The successful renovation by Haworth Tomkins in 2022-24 was carried out while maintaining the original character. The

Institute itself has had cultural significance and influence on architectural history and design in C20, including through the writings of Rudolf Wittkower, who was at the Warburg from 1934 to 1956.

- 9.2.** Staff: Head of Casework Coco Whittaker moved to Purcell in March, and we wish her well. Laura Marks, a journalist, teacher and curator, will join as Head of Casework at the end of July. Lukas Novotny joined as part-time Events Manager.
- 9.3.** Funding: Our Historic England grant is declining in real terms, and is possibly threatened. Trustee Colin Mitchell has been helping with a fundraising strategy and plan. Donations are still invited to the Elain Harwood Memorial Fund; the fund has reached approximately 51% of the £150,000 target (£76,928). Elain left one unpublished book on New Towns, and Alistair Fair is working to have it published by the Liverpool University Press, with an expected publication date of September 2026. An associated day seminar and visits are planned. The Patron membership initiative with firms in the building world has been successful, and we are now recruiting high net worth individuals to be individual Patrons.
- 9.4.** Publications: Two books were published in 2024: 100 20<sup>th</sup> Century Buildings and a monograph on Erno Goldfinger (part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Architects Series). Three more books are planned for 2025: 100 20<sup>th</sup> Century Sports and Leisure Buildings; Twentieth Century Seaside Architecture; and Cooling Towers, which will be a large format 'coffee table' book. We have reproduced a set of seaside postcards in conjunction with the Seaside Architecture book. The magazine continues to be a good calling card; two issues were published in 2024 and an additional one so far in 2025. The Magazine won the ISTD International Typographic Award.
- 9.5.** Education and engagement: The Society organised a full programme of UK and international tours and lectures. We had more international tours than ever before, to Faro; Berlin and the Bauhaus; Veneto, Italy; Katowice, Poland; Split, Croatia; and Barcelona. Trips in 2025 include Chicago (in May); Gdansk and Gdynia, Poland; Cologne, Germany; and Veneto, Italy (repeat). UK tours included Blackpool and the Fylde Coast and Bradford. The autumn lecture series was on the British Housing Crisis and the Spring 2025 lecture series was on Great Exhibitions. Other noteworthy events have included a tour of buildings by Michael and Patty Hopkins and a visit to Folkestone. We worked on educational events with a number of other organisations, including the Charles Rennie Mackintosh Society, the Getty Conservation Institute, West Dean College and The Gardens Trust.
- 9.6.** Casework: The breadth and depth of our casework is indicated by the following statistics:

1,977 Consultations logged  
509 Cases taken forward for assessment  
109 Written responses to consultations

74 Pre-application consultations  
24 Designation consultations and listing support

The new Government's focus on growth could be a setback, given the frequent perception that conservation stops growth. We need to work hard to ensure conservation is seen as consistent with good growth.

- 9.7.** Recent listings include: the Bell's Centre, Perth; Central Hall at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge; Sphinx Hill, Oxfordshire; 71 Whitney Drive, Stevenage; Downside Abbey Library, Somerset; the Morris Hall, Shrewsbury; Broadmead Baptist Church, Bristol; Wrexham Waterworld, Wales; Glasgow Central Mosque; and Brighton and Hove Reform Synagogue.
- 9.8.** Other casework often related to refurbishment and change. We have been able to charge for extended advice on many of these cases, which include: the History Faculty Building, Cambridge; Smithdon School, Hunstanton; Suffolk Terrace, University of East Anglia; Cambridge University Library; Cables Wynd House, Edinburgh; RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London; the Barbican; and the Ingenium Classroom.
- 9.9.** In 2025 the National Trust has published *Pride in Place*, a report which looks at what makes people engage and feel pride in place. Key findings were that people rank physical sites above stories, that local history and heritage make places better to live in, and that protecting and caring for national and local history and heritage matters to people.
- 9.10.** An Impact Report is available for download from our website.
- 9.11.** A member questioned what our status is in Scotland, given that a number of the cases mentioned are in Scotland. The Director explained that we do not have a statutory role in Scotland (unlike in England and Wales), but we get involved in Scottish cases when we are informed about them by members. We would welcome a more formal role in Scotland.
- 9.12.** Campaigns: This has been a busy year for Campaigns. Highlights included:
- Leisure Centres, such as the Richard Dunn Sports Centre, Bradford, which will be converted to a skatepark. This proposal generated great interest and offers of help;
  - Phone Boxes. In celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our original phone box campaign, we have proposed three examples of the 'ugly' KX100 for listing, one each in England (the box in Lancashire was the 100,000<sup>th</sup> public payphone and is at the dead centre of England), Wales and Scotland (the only one with its original livery);

- Miners' Modernism. Our Pithead Baths project sought to identify the remaining baths (approximately 70 survive) and their state of repair. Artist Ed Hall created a banner honouring the baths, and we produced tablets of pithead soap for sale.
  - Cooling Towers. The last coal powered generating plant in Britain (West Burton A) closed during the year. Historic England has said it has no plans to list any cooling towers, but we will continue to lobby for that.
- 9.13.** The biennial Risk List, a list of 10 outstanding buildings at risk of being demolished or neglected, was published in booklet form (in an effort to keep it fresh and to differentiate it from the lists of other amenity societies). The focus was on buildings in the north and northwest, in an effort to rebalance regional inequality. Publication was accompanied by the first ever billboard campaign for historic buildings, which generated considerable online interest. The themes of the list were the legacy of the Millennium projects, High Tech and 1930s department stores.
- 9.14.** The Coming of Age campaign, recognising buildings turning 30 years old and thus eligible for listing, was published; it included the first Stirling Prize winner (the Centenary Building in Salford). The list will be continued as an annual 'good news' story.
- 10. Q&A:** There were several questions from the floor:
- Given that we no longer have Regional Groups, how do we intend to find and look after new members in the areas outside of London and the southeast? The Director responded that we would like to do more but are constrained by our small office and limited resources. We would love to have a volunteer to take this on. We have a number of members who feed into casework but would like to do more on the social side. We are currently putting our efforts into the Under 30 Group, which has been successful. We are looking at moving to a national rather than regional basis; a Scotland group would be particularly welcome. We are also maintaining our commitment to hybrid meetings, wherever possible.
  - Will the Grand National Scenic Rollercoaster in Blackpool re-open? A decision is outstanding on a proposal to demolish it; we have put it on our Risk List.
  - A member questioned whether we are doing enough to encourage legacies. We recognise that legacies could be game-changing and are working to encourage them. We have an email ready to go to all members. We don't have a complete picture of members who have already recognised the Society in their will. Please let us know when you do so.

**11. Any other business**

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

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Date: ..... 2026

Hugh Pearman, Chair