



SOUTHWELL CIVIC SOCIETY

Chairman: John Loughton

Report from the Trustees 2024

It was an enormous honour for me to be appointed as Chairman of the Southwell Civic Society Trustees after last year's Annual General Meeting and it now gives me great pleasure in presenting this year's annual report.

Membership

Membership of the Society currently stands at xxx 130 and quite simply there needs to be a concerted effort to increase our membership in the near future if we, as a group, are going to develop and flourish.

To put our membership total into some sort of context, the well-respected Cheltenham Civic Society serving a population in the region of 120,000 numbers has in the region of 400 members, so recruitment could well be a national issue. However, if we really care about our all but unique town and its surrounding area, we must ensure that we increase our numbers to share the load.

This is especially necessary given the widely published intention of the new government to streamline the house building process (whatever that might mean in reality). Societies such as ours need to embrace the good points of change but challenge the less than well thought out procedures that might lead to irretrievable environmental damage in the longer term.

I invite all members to invite and nominate new people to join us on a one for one matched basis as a personal commitment and self-challenge. The subscription, at £10 per year, is extremely reasonable (and due on 1st January each year by the way, irrespective of joining date) and the benefits are boundless.

The Trustees

In my first year as Chairman I have been incredibly impressed by the commitment and time given by my fellow trustees to the benefit of the Society and I commend each and every one of them to the membership for the selfless contributions being made, often unseen, but always effective.

Just to remind members of the process in appointing trustees, the maximum number allowed is fifteen. At the Annual General Meeting members can appoint duly nominated trustees for a three-year term of office, after which time reappointment can take place for another three-year term as decided by the membership. Due to sensible management in the past, this leads to a rolling scheme of appointment and resignation which enables regular change to take place in a context of experience and knowledge.

Jonathan Butler, Glenys Herbert and Margaret McCaskill have all served as hard working and effective trustees but, on coming to the end of their three-year period, have decided to finish in their

role. I thank them all for the significant contributions they have made to the Society over the years and trust they will continue to share their highly respected expertise with us over the years to come.

This year, Jan Richardson is due for re-election. I am delighted that Jan has agreed to stand again. Her re-appointment has been proposed and seconded and it only remains for this meeting to formally accept her as a trustee for a further three-year term.

Planning Issues

These matters are dealt with by an appointed sub-committee who which meets regularly. A great amount of time, and no little expertise, is given to ensuring appropriate responses are made to the democratic consultation processes when necessary and I place on record my grateful thanks to Mike Struggles and his team for the exceptional work they undertake.

Such is the high status and specialist nature of this work, a separate dedicated report is prepared by the Planning Committee for further information of the membership.

Archive, Storage & Display

It is pleasing to confirm that with the help and support of the Town Council, the Society archive collection has now been returned to the former Police Station on The Burgage. The material has been relocated into the cells which, reflecting on the earlier use of this building, gives a certain amount of confidence in terms of our storage security. However, given our role as custodians of some particularly generous legacy donations made to the Society, the next issue becomes one of access to enable these artefacts to be shared and viewed within our local community.

This will be one of our major items for consideration next year and any ideas with respect to a venue which would allow accessibility and safe display within the town would be welcomed.

Social Events

Two interesting Talks were arranged this year together with two most enjoyable visits.

After the AGM in October 2023 Jane Holt, one of our trustees and a Conservation Architect by profession, described the work being carried out on the Saracen's Head North Range. Jane showed a range of interesting photographs and the lively discussion afterwards was testament to both an excellent presentation and also the significant place in which the hotel is held in the eyes of local people.

In May 2024 we had a Presentation from Chris Matthews – local historian, designer and Conservation Officer for Nottingham City Council – entitled “After Elain Harwood & Twentieth Century Nottingham”. Elain Harwood's Pevsner City Guide changed the way we look at Nottingham. Like Elain, the book was full of colour, modern, informed, concise, helpful and accessible. It provided a fresh opportunity to reassess the challenges and strengths of the city and made its twentieth century history more coherent. Given our current challenges, this approach to the modern city would appear to be more important than ever. The illustrated talk by Chris Matthews was relevant and interesting over a whole range of issues and seamlessly linked historical facts to modern day thinking.

In June 2024 there was a “Walk in the Palace Gardens” where Claire Connely, the immensely talented and popular Head Gardener of the Minster, gave wonderful insight and detailed information on this relatively new project based around the Archbishop's Palace. The walk was preceded by drinks and nibbles, the weather was good and the evening will live long in the memory.

The final visit, in July 2024, was to the Tuxford Museum of the Horse and the Tuxford Lock-Up. A detailed and most interesting tour of the museum, hosted by the incredibly knowledgeable owner, was followed by a trip to the local jail built in the reign of George IV. Thanks are due to Jane Holt who arranged the visit to such a delightful, yet hardly known, gem so close to our own town.

The Future

Notwithstanding the need for careful monitoring of new planning applications which will occur under the government's new national planning guidance there are a few areas that require our Society to make investment. Currently we are looking at the possibility of linking up in an informal way with other local groups to share expertise and increase participation in targeted projects but essentially, I suggest we need to consider next year as being a SCS Southwell Civic Society DIM challenge year.

- 1 Display – we need ideas to enable our Society to promote and share the wonderful artifacts that have been gifted to us.
- 2 Ideas – we need to know what members would like by way of talks, presentations and visits to enable planning to be more effective and meetings to be better supported.
- 3 Membership – we need more members so please take up the challenge of every existing member recruiting a new member.

Thank you for showing the necessary stamina to reach the conclusion of this Report.

John Loughton

Chairman

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st JULY 2024

BALANCE SHEET at 31st July

.....Auditor

Date: 6/10/2024