

Guildford Society Annual Report

April 2020 to March 2021



Chairman's Report 2020 - 2021

The year was dominated by the Covid pandemic which restricted activity for the society. Our executive and workgroups switched to using Zoom for meetings effectively. We cancelled several public events including the annual architecture lecture and our Christmas social.

One casualty was the Town Bridge Market which couldn't operate for months, and we reluctantly decided to stop its operation. The Town Bridge Market on a modest scale paved the way for the larger craft events now held on the High Street; so it has been a success in enlivening the town. We thank all the stall holders who have contributed over the years.

Executive Changes

The Executive sadly lost two members during the year.

Gordon Bridger a stalwart of the society and a much-valued member of our executive, died peacefully at home 27th November 2020, he was 92. Gordon was a member of The Guildford Society for 50 years, during that time he was an active and influential member of the Society, still attending as a member of our executive committee until his recent short illness.

Doug Scott resigned from the executive and sadly died recently after a short illness. Doug was a valued member of the Guildford Society Executive, and Design and Heritage work group for many years. He was also well known as a speaker at Heritage Open days where he provided lively lectures. He was a talented photographer and supported many Society events with photographs of Guildford and its surroundings.

Working Groups

Much thanks is given to the members of our working groups who have been as usual fully engaged in looking at their various areas of interest as you will see from their respective reports. It is worth highlighting two developments, the D&H group has been revised under the new chairmanship of Peter Coleman, and that we have restarted the Local Economy Group with new members as a Local Strategy and Economy Group.

The D&H group managed to run the Guildford Design awards by visiting the properties in a short period as Covid restrictions eased. The award ceremony was held virtually supplemented by excellent videos of interviews with the winners. In addition, each of the winners has been presented with a Plaque that can be attached to the winning building. (See Front Cover)

The Society is Relevant

In the last annual report I highlighted the importance of the society. Sadly, several of the issues identified have become more apparent in the last 12 months

The Local Plan that is based on assumptions related to Infrastructure notably A3 upgrades which have been delayed which impacts the ability to build on Strategic Sites thus impacting the fulfilment of housing targets in the Local Plan. There has also been big pressure to build on smaller plots in the countryside due to villages in part being removed from the Green Belt.

Sectors of the local economy continue to suffer due to Covid-19 pandemic, particularly the retail sector in the Town Centre.

The government is consulting on its major change to planning laws as published in the Planning for the Future White Paper plus associated proposals for Design Codes and centralised determination of Housing Numbers. The year has also seen major changes to legislation related to Permitted Development Rights which make it far easier to change the use of buildings and add extra stories.

The plans to make Surrey become one (or more) unitary authority appears to have been delayed.

The Society continues to believe we need to provide effective and informed input into the necessary debates to ensure Guildford optimises the balance between Economic Vibrancy, protecting our Heritage and Environment, and providing well designed space to live, work and play.

The Society

Ensuring the Society continues to thrive has been a challenge over the past year. We look forward to the Covid restrictions easing and the ability to run normal meetings.

Our membership has reduced slightly during the year, but we have welcomed new members as our revised website has proven effective.

We remain able to access a wide variety of expertise often gained in their working careers or gathered after engagement with our working groups. We need to maintain this expertise for the future. We are thus always pleased to have members agree to join our working groups and also value members who have links to other groups within the area.

Our new Brand, Website and Communications

We managed to relaunch our website during the summer. The website now works on Mobile devices correctly as well as Lap and Desktops.

To complement this new website the Executive have also decided upon a new logo which is crisper in appearance and more suited to appearing electronic devices such as mobile phones.

Finances

Our accounts are attached. We have invested heavily in the revised website in the belief it will pay dividends over the years to come.

THE GUILDFORD SOCIETY		
Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year to 31 st March 2021		
INCOME		
GSoc Subscription	£2,632.12	
Donations	£47.00	
Architecture Lecture Income		
Guildford Design Awards Income	£ -	
Xmas Social Income	£ -	
Town Bridge Market	£ -	
Other	£ -	
Cumulative Income YTD		£2,679.12
OUTGOINGS		
Postage	£55.60	
Print & Publicity	£116.30	
Outgoing Subscriptions	£406.00	
Website E-Mail etc.	£10,169.98	
Refreshments	£ -	
Insurance	£285.36	
Lectures and Events. Etc	£ -	
Guildford Design Awards Expenses	£ 1,768.80	
Xmas Social	£243.00	
Other	£32.95	
Cumulative Payments YTD		£13,077.99
Cumulative Net Receipts		-£10,398.87
Banking Balance at end of the Year		
Deposit Account (773)		£13,315.41
Current Accounts		
Bank Balance (701)		£564.14
Bank Balance (326)		£2,470.30
Total Funds		£16,349.85

Thanks

Finally, thanks to all of you for your continued support. We could not operate the society without you.

I would ask you all for one action to support the society in 2021-22, please try to recruit a new member or subscriber via our website where we have made it far easier to sign up to be a supporter.

Alistair Smith

Chair Guildford Society

Chair@guildfordsociety.org.uk

www.guildfordsociety.org.uk

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