

CIO 1181126

## Didsbury Civic Society Report to The Charity Commission for 2023

The year 2023 generally improved as life continued in its return to normality. With our members returning to our regular monthly face to face meetings along with the DCS returning to The Old Parsonage where we used to meet prior to 2020.

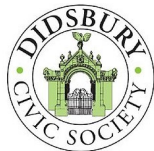
We also started our largest and most demanding project as a civic society with a fund-raising target of £40,000+ made up variously in donations from the local council, local businesses, charitable institutions and local community minded individuals. The project included a competition for local garden designers to create a new garden (The Garden of Contemplation) on the existing site of the tired and unkempt rough plot with little or no biodiversity to the surroundings or its support of wildlife.

The winning design was voted on and chosen unanimously by the community after several public displays around Didsbury. The first funds were secured from Manchester Parks in Partnership, along with another from the Manchester Realms Office which was to clear and level the site of its unexciting laurel bushes, and a not insignificant amount of dumped soil and rubble. We were also lucky to obtain community labour and materials donations rather than actual funds from a company called Equan`s which gave the team a tremendous start to Phase 1.

Underground electrical ducting was laid, along with the steel plate border edges and disability friendly wide bonded gravel paths with new paving stones laid in flowing lines. Several thousand pounds had also been raised in grants for plantings and perennial bulbs which were seasonally planted to complete Phase 1.

A minor crisis emerged at the start of Phase 2 when the main wall of a building which backs onto the newly created garden area owned by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party property company was found to be in a state of near collapse. Time was the spent tracing the ownership to request that the work was carried out as soon as possible as the problem was totally beyond our remit. After several months delay the wall has now been rebuilt as required. With new gutters added and missing roof slates replaced. Along with the ability to capture rain runoff from the buildings roof to water the perennial plants and trees.

We were then now fully into the second phase which will include the installing of the proposed seating. Along with the actual electric cabling for the newly installed Christmas tree pit and P A facility. A new flag pole and flange plate is to be installed to replace the wind damaged one, new screening for displaying school project work is also planned. The work programme is continuous and should hopefully finished during 2024.



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### The Deterioration of Street pavements and driveway entrances:

The DCS remains concerned that Didsbury's pavements continue to disintegrate both by wear and tear, poor maintenance, and builders damage from vehicles and the heavy skips placed during the perpetual building extension works which continuously take place and the lack of planning regulation to stop the large amount of flagging, concreting and tarmacking over taking place. Along with the lack of enforceable regulation to use permeable surfaces to ensure the return of rainwater to the ground water system rather than the waste water system. Importantly that builders do not use the water drainage system to dispose of plaster and concrete. After which, the drains seem to be blocked soon after the builders vacate site.

### The Auto Enrol of Members:

We are working to devise and design a system to allow potential members to complete a membership application on line and pay by card using our Stripe payment facility. Which would reduce the need to have manual intervention to obtain the appropriate application form, a Gift Aid recovery agreement and of course their membership fee including agreement to auto charge subsequent recurring fees.

### Our regular Social Trips:

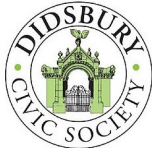
Our social trips remain ever popular and a regular feature of the society starting with usually a visit to a retail outlet for a coffee, a good lunch usually at a carvery which caters for all tastes, and a listed building private house tour when possible. Significant research is carried out into the venue's history, with snippets of historical interest, the local land marks and regular information updates enroute. Including the house building costs where known, the number of years in build, it's architect and the build style etc.

### Support of Community Functions:

We continue to support functions in the community such as Didsbury Pride, Christmas Fayres, Garden Parties, the Didsbury Festival and the Didsbury car show. We also affiliate to and support Didsbury Mosque and Didsbury Synagogue who in turn have strongly supported our garden of Contemplation project

### Green Issues, Climate and Pollution:

The DCS and the local Community fully support all of the issues contained in the package of Climate. Didsbury has several areas of green spaces in public areas which are not supported by the community groups. With the triangular park at Parrs Wood, close to Tesco, the Sandhurst Road and Wilmslow Road corner, and the area fronting Beaver Road school on Wilmslow Road and Barlow Medical Practise. Which all need some tender loving care There will be other similar areas to these across the Didsbury Wards.



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The community currently do not have any real knowledge of whether MCC are achieving reductions in carbon or pollution as they currently look to the community rather than industry and business to make reductions. Litter still remains an issue in the central street areas with inadequate and not fit or purpose litter bins overflowing, we do not have any on-street can crushers allowing simpler metal recoveries and recycling. The types and volumes of waste has changed since the bins were installed along with the significant increase in food and drinking taking place on the move. Which was not the done-thing in bygone years. There are groups of people who believe it is acceptable to leave their rubbish kerb-side for someone else to shift. There are also agencies being paid to manage our rivers and railway property etc, but they do not really want to have to take action or responsibility if possible. As there seems to be a case of profit before people.

#### Planning and Licensing:

We still take an active part in debating applications for planning approvals in the Didsbury electoral Ward. Though the number of big builds is reducing in Didsbury. As the larger plots suitable for development decrease. Though the Dandara Living Blackbird Yard development at Tesco's Parris Wood and the McCarthy and Stone development of Jessiefield have provoked significant local responses. Currently one of the main issues is that in Didsbury building land is in short supply. Which in some cases results in the demolition of perfectly good houses to deliver solutions. Whilst the new building will be greener environmentally and better insulated does this compensate for the damage and pollution caused when the bricks were originally cast, timber cut and energy used. We do also take responsibility at times in opposing some of the plans that we are asked to comment on, and passing many others. Especially those that are of the "affordable housing" variety. Which bring in younger residents and families to Didsbury.

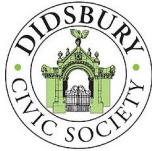
#### Heritage Open Days:

The society strongly supports the programme and has a good portfolio of local buildings included. We have done a large amount of video filming which have been posted to our YouTube channel recording heritage and history for posterity. We have recorded all of the historical blue plaques on a walk thru map, along with the name of those who made history or were involved in great writings or discoveries. The Programme usually starts off with a talk, with all charges going to charity. During 2024 we are also hoping to erect and add a plaque to the Spann's business and family to the programme. Details can be found on:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpLdglvWS98cmLf0sVBWhUw>

#### Charities and Bank Charges:

Most banks who in the past offered free Charity Accounts have now stopped offering the facility. Seeing most of the small charities as a revenue stream, with a monthly



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charge of £5 per month plus transaction charges. Where previously there was no cost to bank cheques or charges on the low-level transactions that most charities operate at. Such as membership payments received etc. Which in most cases is their life blood, charities bank charges are now usually at a higher cost than those made on individuals by the same banks.

#### Graffiti and ASB:

Finally, graffiti has become a big problem in many residential areas. It invariably takes a long time to have the initial problem removed only to find it re-graffitied within days. Spoiling both the environment and the communal areas where we all live. It is certainly not acceptable to most residents, especially as the perpetrators leave their calling card in the form of tags which can be seen far and wide across our post codes. It is further complicated by the outsourcing of maintenance, with the understanding of responsibility for resolution is never clearly detailed and responsibility denied. The DCS believes there should be a central collation point in councils to submit problems to within their website, for it to then be redirected to the railway operators, buses and trams operators etc for the franchisee companies to resolve and report back to the public via email with an allocated job ticket number. After all they receive the associated fees. The lack of actions to remove the anti-social vandalism creates a visible degradation problem, where the action is seen as acceptable, and can be further added to if so wished.

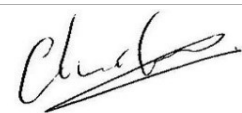
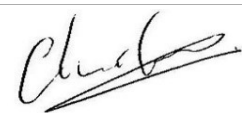
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Corlett", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Mike Corlett  
DCS

# DIDSBURY CIVIC SOCIETY

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2023

PAYMENTS	2023				2022	RECEIPTS	2023				2022
	Social	General	Restricted	Total	Total		Social	General	Restricted	Total	Total
Social events	2,796			2,796	2,395	Social events	3,217			3,217	2,422
Cenotaph and garden			1,547	1,547	3,250	Cenotaph and garden			1,347	1,347	16,790
Heritage Filming			500	500	-	Subscriptions		955		955	1,414
Committee expenses		144		144	144	Gift Aid reclaimed		684		684	415
DCS Roller Banners		133		133	-	Pride Stall		84		84	33
Public Health Meeting		110		110	-	Donations		75		75	332
Office expenses		106		106	102	Heritage books		60		60	58
Didsbury Pride		63		63	-	Ghost Art			-	-	2,000
Remembrance Day costs		22		22	27	Heritage filming			-	-	500
Jim Leeming Memorial Acer				-	180						
Insurance				-	101	TOTAL	3,217	1,858	1,347	6,422	23,964
Heritage Day Costs				-	83						
Postage				-	31	SUMMARY					
Fundraising Expenses		-		-	24	Balances as at 31 Dec 2022	1,386	4,950	18,959	25,295	7,668
						Income	3,217	1,858	1,347	6,422	23,964
						Expenditure	2,796	578	2,047	5,421	6,337
						Balances as at 31 Dec 2023	1,807	6,230	18,259	26,296	25,295
TOTAL	2,796	578	2,047	5,421	6,337						
						Bank Balance at 31 December 2023				26,296	25,295
RESTRICTED FUNDS											
		2022	Receipts	Payments	2023	I certify that the above accounts are in accordance with the Society's books and records					
Gargoyles		2,869			2,869	Mike Corlett	<div></div> 02 April 2024				
Cenotaph and garden		13,590	-	1,547	12,043	Chairman					
Ghost Art		2,000	-		2,000						
Heritage filming		500	-	500	-	CJ Smail	<div></div> 02 April 2024				
		18,959	-	2,047	16,912	Independent Examiner					