

Registered Charity Number 297488

Regional Furniture Society

Annual Report and Accounts
for the year ending
31st December 2021

TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2021

The Trustees present their Report and Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2021.

If you wish to obtain further information about any aspect of this Report or the Society in general, please write to the Honorary Secretary:

Jeremy Rycroft, Holwood House, Goosnargh, Preston PR3 2WD

SOCIETY OBJECTS

The Regional Furniture Society has recorded its aims and objectives in the ‘Objects’ section of its Constitution. They require the Society to:

- advance the study of the history, design, production, distribution and use of regional furniture in the British Isles and areas under British influence, and of Continental and other overseas influences on British regional furniture; and to further public knowledge and appreciation of it.

To achieve this, the Society seeks to:

- encourage the conservation and preservation of examples of all such furniture and related archives both in museums and in other collections, and their current use as sources for study.
- encourage research in all aspects of regional furniture and promote the development of interest in regional furniture in relation to social and economic life and history and in the relationship between regional furniture design and architecture and other arts and crafts.
- publish material selected by its Editorial Board, organise exhibitions and meetings alone or in conjunction with other bodies, and record and store information in appropriate institutions.
- raise funds and invite and receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscription, donation or otherwise, provided that the Society shall not undertake any permanent trading activities in raising funds for its charitable objects.

TRUSTEES

The trustees who served from 1 January 2021 were:

Chair	Chris Pickvance (until 31 August) Liz Hancock (from 31 August)
Secretary	Jeremy Rycroft
Treasurer	Keith Robinson
Membership Secretary	Diana Halliwell
Journal Editor	Stephen Jackson

Newsletter Editor	Liz Hancock (until 31 August) Linda Hall (from 31 August)
Bursary Secretary	Nick Humphrey
Website Editor	Julian Parker
Book Sales	Gerry Coughlan
American Secretary	Daniel Ackermann
Council Officers	Crissie White Louis Platman Catherine Grigg Rosalyn Sklar (from 10 April)
Events Organiser	Jeremy Bate

OVERVIEW OF MAIN ACTIVITIES

The Society was founded in 1984. Its membership of over 400 includes museum curators, furniture historians, furniture collectors, furniture makers, restorers, antique dealers, auctioneers and students.

The Society has a full programme of events which are often fully subscribed. These events provide the opportunity to visit properties and collections that are not open to the general public; residential events allow members to see a very wide range of furniture in one area, which would otherwise be difficult. Occasionally overseas visits are arranged.

The main event for 2021, the Annual Conference, went ahead but most events were deferred, due to the Covid epidemic and the related lockdowns.

A programme of webinars (lectures held via Zoom) was arranged in the autumn and drew good audiences. Lectures were free. That fact probably encouraged non-members to join these events, widening the society's outreach to others interested in particular aspects of regional furniture. Free admission to webinars for non-members is not intended as a long term arrangement, but webinars are intended to remain a permanent part of the Society's activities, complementing events held at venues of interest.

The retirement of the former Chairman and the hand over to the new Chairman who had in turn to hand over her Newsletter responsibilities to a new Newsletter Editor was achieved very smoothly.

Very sadly, the former Chairman died a few months after his retirement. The Society gratefully thanks Chris Pickvance for his enormous contribution over the last ten years as Chairman. He strengthened the Council; he led the revision of the Constitution; he oversaw the introduction of a number of policies required by the Charity Commission; he led the revision of our Bursary procedures and the introduction of our new Grants procedure. His personal focus on medieval chests has broadened the research interests of the Society.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIETY BY THE COUNCIL IN 2021

Grants & Bursaries

After making a request for support in 2019, the Judges Lodgings Museum in Lancaster made a formal grant application in late 2020 for £5,000 towards a new Gillows Gallery within the museum. The Museum was applying for similar funding from a number of other bodies. It was agreed to support this request, provided the full funding for the project was achieved.

An application for a grant to support the publication of a volume on ‘Furniture & Furnishings in Medieval Europe’ was received from Cécile Lagane. Although intended currently for publication in French, it promised to be an important source book for anyone researching European Medieval furniture. After some debate, it was agreed to make a contribution of £500, plus a further £500 if online access was made available.

There was also a bursary application for dendrochronology work on three items of medieval furnishings in Norwich Castle Museum. The award of £1500 was agreed.

The prime source of funds for grants is the bequests received by the Society. The bequests have been invested but to make sufficient impact, the Council has decided that grants may exceed investment returns. Inevitably this will gradually reduce investment capital. Further bequests would allow the Society to sustain its grant giving for a longer period or even increase grant spending. The Society is therefore encouraging legacy giving. The Society has gratefully received in 2021 a donation of £10,000 from the retiring Chairman and an anonymous donation of £250.

Investment Management

The Investment Committee has three members of whom two have business/accounting experience and one has significant investment experience. A simpler target rate of investment return has been set. Attention continues to be given to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on investment returns, and the anticipated cost inflation is also being monitored. No restrictions on grants or publication costs have been necessary in this financial year. 2022 may bring greater difficulties.

Archive Management

A detailed Archive Retention plan has been agreed; some paper records have now been transferred to the Museum of the Home and others are being reviewed for archiving there. It is intended that later documentation typically from 2017 will be transferred electronically.

Succession Management

As in previous years, new Council members have been identified to take the place of those retiring. In one case the person was co-opted to the Council and formally elected at the June 2021 AGM. The other person was simply elected at the AGM. The average age of Council members is reducing.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was again held by Zoom in June instead of at the Annual Conference. It allowed more time for general discussion after clearing formal business.

Council Meetings

The Covid epidemic and its related lockdowns continued to affect the way the Council functioned. The April and October Council Meetings were conducted via Zoom.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH SOCIETY MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC

In a specialist society of this type a number of levels of communication are necessary:

Firstly, publication of the results of major or minor pieces of research in the regional furniture field is essential.

Secondly it is important to keep members abreast of Society events and developments and general Society news.

Thirdly it is important to share information about regional furniture and the Society with the wider public.

The Society uses three media to achieve this:

The annual Journal, *Regional Furniture*, publishes major research and is distributed to members. The Journal articles are also made available to the general public on the Society's website with a three-year time lag.

The bi-annual Newsletter publishes visit reports, short reports by members and regional museum curators on items of regional furniture and book reviews. It also provides the membership with Society news. Visit reports have an important role in allowing those unable to attend an event to share in the information and insights gained during visits.

The Website provides information to members and the wider public on activities and importantly provides an introductory guide to regional furniture for the general public. An innovation this year has been to make webinars available on YouTube.

In terms of involvement of the membership in decision making, the AGM allows the Council's plans, policies and reports to be discussed and voted on by the membership and for Council members to be elected democratically.

CONSTITUTION AS GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The Society is governed by its Constitution which was approved by the Charity Commission at its inception and has been revised periodically – most recently in 2017. This latest version was approved by the Charity Commission and is available on the Society website. In addition, the Society follows Charity Commission guidance on appointment, clearance and briefing of trustees, reporting of serious events, risk management including governance matters, and more recently data protection, all of which are discussed by Trustees, with appropriate policies and procedures adopted at Council meetings.

The Society is an unincorporated association governed by its Council which consists of officers and members who are trustees. The Honorary President and Vice-Presidents may attend Council meetings but are not trustees. Potential new trustees are identified by Council members, who may consult or receive proposals from members. Where there is a vacancy during the year, the Council would normally co-opt the new Council member/Trustee to fill the vacancy, and this would then have to be confirmed by election at the AGM. Alternatively, the Council (or Society members) can nominate a member for election at the AGM. All trustees are subject to annual election at the AGM with limits on how long they can serve.

REVIEW OF CHARITABLE PURPOSE AND PUBLIC BENEFIT

The prime aim of the Regional Furniture Society, as indicated above, is to promote the preservation and conservation of regional furniture, to promote research on regional furniture and to publish information relating to these subjects and arrange for important information to be archived. As an educational charity, pursuing those objects is the Society's main way of providing public benefit.

The Society intervenes in co-ordination with other bodies when important examples of regional furniture are at risk of being sold or disposed of or even withdrawn from prominence in Museums. The Society challenged plans by the V & A to reduce dedicated furniture curators. The Society offered support to the Judges Lodgings Museum in Lancaster when it was threatened with closure and will be providing a grant towards the new Gillows Gallery.

Research

The Society encourages research by:

- a) offering bursaries to those carrying out research on specific areas of regional furniture, directed particularly to younger researchers;
- b) providing members who carry out their own research with a forum for encouraging and discussing results among peers, through its events and publications;
- c) holding a Research in Progress day in most years where the latest developments in regional furniture research nationally or internationally are presented and debated.
- d) running a programme of events which allow members to become familiar with collections of furniture and their regional differences, including some which are not open to the general public;
- e) Offering grants of up to £5,000 to facilitate more major projects, including archiving important regional furniture research, carrying out more major investigations than would be possible through bursaries, and supporting publication of significant books covering aspects of regional furniture.

Publications

These are a major activity for the Society. As mentioned above, the Journal is published once a year and allows major pieces of research to be presented. Many articles cover recent developments or discoveries. By publishing the Journal to members and then putting Journal articles on the website with a three-year delay, members retain a significant benefit of membership but the wider public also has access to the Society's research. Articles are by members, non-members and by curators of particular collections. This is particularly useful as it can draw attention to important items of furniture that may not be well-known or well-researched and also to problems or issues with them and their conservation. It helps set an agenda for the Society.

The Newsletter has shorter articles and visit reports, both important for those who are less expert in the field of regional furniture and are trying to increase their expertise. It is hoped that the Newsletter may encourage them to do more to support the Society's objects, particularly research. The less formal style encourages wider debate about topics that are less well understood. It was expanded and reformatted in late 2019.

The Society's website helps to raise public awareness of the complexity and regionality of vernacular furniture, thus helping the Society to achieve its objects. Website activity has continued to increase in 2021. The Society is developing an increasing presence on social media –Instagram and Twitter – which has allowed various examples of different regional furniture types to be shown and described. The Society runs a service, via its website, responding to queries from members of the public about regional furniture, which has the same aims of encouraging wider interest in regional furniture. Hypertext indexing of all Journal and Newsletter articles available on the website is well advanced and will enable members of the Society and the public to explore particular research interests far more easily.

REGIONAL FURNITURE SOCIETY TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

A substantial surplus of £13,479 was made by the Society in 2021 (2020: a deficit of £10,814). This figure excludes unrealised gains on investments. It is unusually high because of an unanticipated donation of £10,000. This generous contribution to the Society came from the retiring Chairman and was given to fund bursaries awarded for research into medieval chests. The specific research for which the money is given has been made a condition of the gift and it therefore becomes a Restricted Fund, to be shown separately in the accounts, and can be used only for the purpose set out by the donor.

The coronavirus pandemic continued to restrict the Society's activities but a number of lectures and an online Research in Progress day were organised using Zoom software. These events were free of charge. By June the virus situation was sufficiently improved for the postponed Annual Conference in Lincoln to take place.

The policy of promoting bursaries and grants continued in 2021 and £3,850 was spent during the year. Of this, grants accounted for £1,000 and bursaries for £2,850 half the latter coming from general funds and half from the Dewdney designated fund. A further grant of £5,000 was approved during the year but has yet to be claimed. Additionally, some £1,680 in grants and bursaries approved in previous years remains to be claimed. There are consequently liabilities of £6,680 in the budget for 2022 in addition to the sum of £5,000 for new grant and bursary applications in that year.

The Society's other charitable activities including publication of the Journal and Newsletter, maintenance of the website and the costs of governance and administration have all been met from membership subscription income, event surpluses, balances in the current accounts and on deposit and, in 2021 for the first time, investment income. Throughout the year cash on deposit and at the bank was at a level sufficient to meet normal expenditure for a period of three months.

All the reserve funds, including those on deposit, continued to be managed by CCLA Investment Management Limited. Despite the volatility in global markets the value of the Society's investments grew by £11,429, a little over 10%. Toward the end of 2020 the bulk of the Society's equity and fixed income investments were changed from accumulation to income units and in May 2021 the remaining balances in accumulation funds were switched to income funds. The Investment Committee met for the first time in March 2021 and a revised Investment Policy Statement was approved by the Council in April.

At 31 December 2021 the net worth of the Society, including reserves, unrealised gains on investments and net of creditors, was £145,688 (2020: £120,780)

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
THE REGIONAL FURNITURE SOCIETY
IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021**

This report on the accounts of the Regional Furniture Society (Registered Charity Number 297488) for the year ended 31 December 2021 which comprise the Trustees' Report, Treasurer's Report, the Statement of Financial Activities, and the Balance Sheet, is in respect of an examination carried out in accordance with section 43 of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act).

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and the examiner.

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Act) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to examine the accounts (under section 43(2) of the Act), follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 43(7)9b of the Act), and state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the trust and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosure in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's report

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1 Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - (a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act
 - (b) to prepare accounts which accord with those accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act.have not been met
- 2 To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

David Kingsmill FCA
Hidcote Boyce Gloucestershire GL55 6LX

Regional Furniture Society

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds			Total 2021	Total 2020
		General Fund	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds		
		£	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES						
<i>Incoming resources from charitable activities</i>						
Subscriptions		12,612			12,612	11,283
Publications	1	155			155	153
Visits	2	0			0	0
Lectures and conferences	2	17,239			17,239	360
<i>Incoming resources from generated funds</i>						
Donations, legacies and grants	3	405		10,000	10,405	300
Investment income and interest	4	2,703	417	0	3,121	16
Total incoming resources		33,115	417	10,000	43,532	12,112
RESOURCES EXPENDED						
<i>Direct charitable expenditure</i>						
Donations and grants	5	1,000	0		1,000	3,080
Bursaries	6	1,425	1,425		2,850	0
Publication of the Journal	7	6,863			6,863	7,368
Publication of the Newsletter	7	7,155			7,155	6,257
Visits	2	0			0	0
Lectures and conferences	2	10,385			10,385	5,031
Governance	8	844			844	698
Other resources expended	9	954			954	492
Net incoming (outgoing) resources before transfers between funds		28,627	1,425	0	30,052	22,926
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources before other recognised gains and losses		4,487	(1,008)	10,000	13,479	-10,814
Other recognised gains and losses						
Gains (losses) on investments						
Realised						
Unrealised	4	9,900	1,529	0	11,429	10,056
Net movement in funds		14,387	521	10,000	24,908	-758
Fund balances brought forward at 1 January 2021		104,625	16,155	0	120,780	121,538
Fund balances carried forward at 31 December 2021		119,012	16,676	10,000	145,688	120,780

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2021**NOTES**

1	Income from sales of the Journal, Newsletter and other RFS publications	155	
2	Income and expenditure table for Visits, Lectures and Conferences		
		<i>Income</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>
	<i>Research in Progress day 2021 (free Zoom meeting)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
	<i>Lincoln conference</i>	<i>17,239</i>	<i>10,385</i>
	<i>Totals</i>	<i>17,239</i>	<i>10,385</i>
3	Anonymous donation	250	
	Member donations to retiring Chairman	155	
4	Investment income	3,119	
	CCLA deposit account interest	1	
	Lloyds current account interest	45p	3,121
	Investment income, deposit interest and unrealized gains and losses are split between general and designated funds in proportion to the value of the holdings on 1 January 2021		
	General Funds	98,803	86.62%
	Dewdney Bequest (designated)	14,173	12.43%
	Michael Legg Fund (designated)	1,083	0.95%
5	One grant was made during the year	1,000	
6	Two standard bursaries were awarded during the year	1,425	
	Two bursaries funded from the Dewdney fund were made during the year	1,435	2,860
7	Cost of printing and posting two editions of the Newsletter and one Journal during the year	7,155	
		6,863	14,018
8	Travel expenses for members of Council	52	
	Catering at Council meetings	0	
	Postage, stationery and general expenses	793	844
9	Public Liability Insurance	69	
	Website hosting, social media, other technology spending	527	
	Publicity leaflet	358	596

Regional Furniture Society

Accounts for the period 1 January to 31 December 2021

Balance sheet as at 31 December 2021

	£	£
<i>Notes</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2020</i>
Assets		
Cash and investments	119,911	105,524
Cash designated by the Trustees: Dewdney Bequest	14,556	14,173
Cash designated by the Trustees: Michael Legg Fund	1,221	1,083
Restricted Fund: Christopher Pickvance Fund	10,000	
1	145,688	120,780
Less creditors		
Sundry creditors	0	0
	145,688	120,780
Reserves		
General reserves at 31 December 2021	119,012	105,524
Designated reserves at 31 December 2021	16,676	15,256
Restricted funds at 31 December 2021	10,000	
	145,688	120,780

Regional Furniture Society
Accounts for the period 1 January to 31 December 2021

Balance sheet notes

	£ 2021	£ 2020
1 Cash and investment balances at 31 December 2021		
Knightsbridge current account	13,236	145
Christchurch subscription account	2,773	1,292
PayPal account	1,070	164
 CCLA deposit account	 3,122	 5,121
CCLA investment account (income units)	89,362	72,919
CCLA investment account (accumulation units)	0	5,415
CCLA fixed interest account (income units)	21,767	20,130
CCLA fixed interest account (accumulation units)	0	3,201
CCLA global equity account (income units)	14,358	10,509
CCLA global equity account (accumulation units)	0	1,885
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	145,688	120,780