

**ST ALBANS CIVIC SOCIETY
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018**

Reference and administration details

St Albans Civic Society is a charity registered with the Charity Commission, number 200330. Its reference address is 9, Upper Lattimore Road, St Albans AL1 3UD. The charity trustees who served during the year are:

Tim Boatswain	(Chairman)
Jill Singer	(Secretary)
John Thomson	(Treasurer)
Paul Brecknell	
Freda Chaloner CBE	
Marion Hammant	(deceased 4 April 2018)
Malcolm Holliday	(resigned 31 December 2017)
Brian Holmes	(resigned 29 June 2017)
David Lloyd	
Peter Newby	
Robert Osborne	
Eric Roberts	

Structure, governance and management

The Society is an unincorporated association governed by its constitution. The charity trustees are its officers and its committee of management. They are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. The trustees annually review the composition of the committee and new trustees are invited to join where it is felt they would strengthen the expertise of the committee. They are then inducted into the workings of the committee and their role as trustee. The Society has no employees and is run entirely by volunteers.

Objects, activities and public benefit

The objects of the Society are set out in its constitution and are in summary:

1. To encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in and around St Albans.
2. To stimulate public interest in, and care for, the beauty, history and character of the City and its surroundings.
3. To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of the conditions in which we live and work.
4. To pursue these ends by meetings, exhibitions, publications, schemes and co-operation with other interested parties.

The Society has no political or religious activities and is non-profit making. Membership is open, without restriction, to anyone who shares the objects of the Society. The trustees therefore believe that they have fulfilled the public benefit requirements of the Charity Commission.

The principal activities that have been undertaken to fulfil these objects have been similar to previous years. The Society, through its design advisory group, met with developers at the pre planning application stage to comment on and influence the design of major development proposals. The planning advisory group has continued to oppose planned developments which have been considered as being not to required standards. Both groups express their comments

either by campaigning or making representations to local planning officers and politicians, and have presented its views to the Council at a variety of meetings and discussion groups. At the annual Awards Evening recognition has been given to those architectural and environmental projects which the Society considered to be the best. A series of Speaker Evenings has been held and visits to other towns and cities have been organised. The main means of communication with the membership is the quarterly Newsletter together with regular email updates and a website which was extensively updated during the year. In the summer season, as well as for other seasonal events, the Society provides volunteers to help open the Clock Tower to the public.

Achievements and performance

Some of the main activities in 2017/18 have been:

Planning and development: The Society continues to make significant contributions to the planning and licensing processes of the District. The Society's planning advisory group regularly scrutinise the many incoming applications to the Council and alert the committee to those of special significance to the City. The Society continues to monitor ongoing planning and development issues, such as the Railfreight Terminal, and Verulamium and Clarence Parks. Monitoring of Green Belt planning applications and the draft Strategic Local Plan have occupied the Society's time.

Communication: The Society has a website, extensively updated during the year, under the immediate control of the Committee. Topical articles are written each month for the Herts Advertiser newspaper and the Society is a regular correspondent in the letters pages of the local press. The Society acts as a source of comment and informed opinion for the local press on breaking planning news. The Newsletter continues to maintain a lively and visually attractive layout, using editorial material provided by the co-editors and contributions from other members of the Society. The Society also communicates by email to members with topical comments.

Representation: The Society has been represented on many local committees, including the Verulamium Park Forum, the Visitor Attractions Group, and the Clarence Park Forum. It has contributed towards the discussions over the future of the Museum of St. Albans with the projected move to the Town Hall and the latter's enhancement as a Heritage Lottery Fund project.

Awards Evening: The winner of this year's award was Newsom Place (formerly Oaklands College), Hatfield Road. The Society also commended two other developments: The New Sports Hall, Administration and Classroom Block at Beaumont School and Sweet Briar Mews Housing in Victoria Street. The Trevelyan Prize was awarded jointly to The Prae Wood Arms, Redbourn Road and Spencer House in Holywell Hill. We are grateful for the small dedicated group, who undertake the preparation and presentation of the Awards evening.

Sponsorship: The Society worked with the Council and the Review Newspaper to set up and organise the 2008 inaugural Retailer of the Year event, and has maintained its involvement and sponsorship ever since. Of the six categories of shops/traders the Society has championed the Market Traders. A Best Festive Shop Window award for Christmas has been added since 2012 in addition to the Best Festive Pub category. The Society has given sponsorship for the awards at the Gala Evening. This has been well received.

The tree sponsorship in partnership with the Council was re-launched in August 2011 and has continued this year, with trees sponsored for over £2,100 by the public. Details of the income and expenditure during the year are contained in note 6 to the accounts.

Clock Tower: From Easter through to the end of September, the Society provides volunteers to help open the Clock Tower to the public at weekends. The Society also opened the Clock Tower for the Christmas lights switch-on, for Heritage Open Days and for the Saturday afternoon of the Enjoy St Albans Weekend in January, all of which events attracted a further number of visitors.

Visits: The visits this year were to Folkstone and Southwell (Notts).

Speaker evenings: Topics this year included a talk by John Whalen, on “what’s the point of an architect”, Ann Dean, on “life in St Albans during the first world war”, Sir Terry Farrell, on “designing modern architecture in a historic city”, Catherine Newley, on “the new St Albans museum and gallery project” and Bob Thomson, on “reflections on architectural quality”.

Statement of Trustees’ Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees’ Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accountancy Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accountancy Practice). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, and the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Financial review and risks

The trustees consider the state of finances to be sound. The Society is a not for profit organisation and this year a deficit of expenditure over income on unrestricted funds was recorded of £668 (2017: surplus £1,716). The accumulated surplus of unrestricted funds of £22,854 (2017: £23,522) represents approximately 21 months of unrestricted expenditure (2017: 28 months). The reserve is available to meet any unusual expenditure which might be necessary. The Trustees consider themselves justified in preparing the accounts on a going concern basis.

The trustees have identified the major risks facing the Society and are satisfied measures have been taken to mitigate these.

The trustees declare they have approved the Trustees’ Report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees:

Signed Date...3 May 2018.....

John Thomson Treasurer