

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

Held on Friday 4 October at 2.45pm at the Midland Hotel, Bradford, BD1 4HU

The Society's members were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair, Hilary Grainger, and the Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Bradford, Councillor Beverley Mullaney. Hilary also introduced the Trustees and those standing for election, including James Grierson, who introduced himself to members.

1. Minutes of 2023 Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 2023 AGM were approved as a true record of proceedings. *Proposed by Mark Watson and seconded by Ben Sims and carried unanimously.*

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

There were no matters arising.

3. Chair's Report

Professor Grainger thanked the West Yorkshire group for organising this year's AGM, in particular highlighting the tireless efforts of June Diamond, Geoff Hughes and Helen Seymour. The main business of the Society continues to be conducted very successfully by the team at Priory Gardens, Tim Bridges in the West Midlands, and the many volunteers in our regional groups around the country. Two regional groups have recently recruited new Chairs: Manchester (Kate Martyn) and Liverpool (Rowena Beighton-Dykes). Hilary warmly welcomed Kate and Rowena to the Society. She also thanked Neil Jackson, and his team on the events committee, for organising such an impressive series of events to commemorate the G.E. Street bicentenary.

Special thanks go to Griff Rhys Jones who has been such a vigorous advocate of the Society throughout the year, promoting and supporting our activities, particularly in respect of the Society's campaign against the disfiguring proposals for Liverpool Street station. The campaign opposing this has been led by the Society as part of the LISSCA coalition, and it is critically important to win this battle in order to stop setting a planning precedent that could have implications for listed buildings everywhere. An appeal has been organised and has already received £31k of donations and a further £9,000 from a members' appeal.

Hilary was delighted to announce that the Society had been awarded a substantial National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £243,00, which would in part fund two new staff members of staff for two years. The new posts would concentrate on areas of membership and fundraising. Enormous thanks must go to Trustee Ben Sims, who spearheaded the application and steered it through to a successful outcome.

The Society was shocked and saddened by the early death of Elain Harwood, who was a valued member of the Southern Buildings Committee and long-time supporter of the Society. Finally, she paid tribute to retiring Trustees David Low and Steve Roman for their many years of outstanding service to the Society. She finished by saying what an honour it has been for her to serve as Chair of the Society for the past 12 years.

5. Director's Report

James Hughes paid tribute to Professor Grainger at her last AGM as Chair of the Society. He also thanked the retiring Trustees David Low and Steve Roman for their years of dedicated service. DL had been particularly helpful with the recent re-branding and new website project; and SR had been instrumental in promoting the Saving A Century exhibition around the UK over several years. He also spoke about ongoing work to launch a new website and the project to refresh the Society's branding, which was last changed over a decade ago.

James paid tribute to the huge amount of work Chris Hammond has done over many years in campaigning for buildings in Yorkshire. He also remembered the late Richard Tinker for

his work on the Northern Buildings Committee, and Peter Hirschmann, who was a long-time Chair of the West Yorkshire Group and former member of the Main Committee.

He spoke of the two recent and exceptionally rare consistory court victories at Knapton and Oakley, and welcomed Connor McNeill as his successor as Churches Conservation Adviser. He noted that Guy Newton, the Southern Conservation Adviser will be leaving the Society for a post at Historic England, and he looked forward to welcoming new members of staff at the next AGM.

Members can look forward to a new publication in the Victorian Architects series, which will be on “Rogue Goths” and has been written by former conservation adviser Edmund Harris.

4. Finance Review

Lynn Percy, the Society’s Finance Trustee, reported on the 2023 Financial Report. The accounts showed that the deficit on a recurring basis has again increased this year to £97k. This is partly due to increased staff costs, a reduction in subscription income and an increase in the running costs of Priory Gardens. The cost of producing the Journal has gone up as it is now having VAT applied to it. Members were again generous with their donations, with an 80% increase during the year helped by the Liverpool Street Station appeal. Legacy income, though, was down on previous years.

Although total expenditure fell by 1%, reoccurring income increased by 14%, with staff costs playing a significant part of this. The sale of publications did increase with the recent publication of books on Pugin and Bentley. She thanked Ben Sims for his fund-raising actives and in particular for his success in applying for the NLHF grant. The Trustees will continue to target returning the Society to an underlying surplus but, overall, she believed that the Society was currently in good financial order.

6. Resolution A: To elect James Grierson as Trustee of the Society

The Chair had 1 proxy vote against the resolution. It was proposed by Kit Wedd and seconded by Ben Sims. The resolution was passed.

7. Resolution B: To elect Iestyn Roberts as a Trustee of the Society

The Chair had 1 proxy vote against the resolution. It was proposed by Alan Davies and seconded by Tiffany Snowden. The resolution was passed.

8. Resolution C: To elect Tiffany Snowden as a Trustee of the Society

The Chair had 1 proxy vote in favour of the resolution. It was proposed by Mark Watson and seconded by Steve Roman. The resolution was passed unanimously.

9. Resolution D: To Receive the report of the trusted and the audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Chair had 1 proxy vote in favour of the resolution. Proposed by Lynn Percy and seconded by Mark Watson. The resolution was passed unanimously.

10. Resolution E: To re-appoint Begbies as Auditors to the Society

The Chair had 1 proxy vote in favour of the resolution. Proposed by Lynn Percy and seconded by Sophie Sainty. The resolution was passed unanimously.

13. Any other business

There was a question about how long Begbies had undertaken the Society audit. They have audited the Society’s accounts since 2018.

The formal business of the AGM closed at 5.00pm. It was followed by presentations by the Society’s Conservation Advisers, concluding with a presentation by Kate Davey, on behalf of the Society, of a gift to Hilary Grainger to mark her twelve successful years as Chair of the Society.