**Merseyside Civic Society – Changes to Membership**

Following approval at our Annual General Meeting, Merseyside Civic Society is making a number of changes to the way membership works in the Society.

**Why change?**

* The Society’s membership has been growing gradually over recent years, but like many local civic societies has an ageing membership profile.
* There needs to be a step-change to a larger membership to enable MCS to be more effective in our campaigns, policies and events through attracting new, more active and younger members.
* The requirement to ‘pay before you can join’ isn’t entirely in keeping with our ethos as a grassroots organisation in one of the UK’s most deprived regions.

**What changes are proposed?**

We are moving to a system of **Open Membership supported by Voluntary Donations.**

Instead of a subscription fee, anybody who wants to help us achieve the objects of the Society will be able to become a Member by registering without charge.

MCS will use our social media and other channels to encourage lots of people across the city region who are interested in the civic life of Merseyside to become part of the Society.

Members agreed to amend our constitution to reflect this change at the AGM.

**When will these changes take effect?**

The changes take effect from 1st January 2021.

**If we do not charge for membership, how will we fund our work?**

It is still just as important as ever for us to raise money to pay for our campaigns and other activities. But we will seek to do this by voluntary donations, with suggested donation levels for both membership and for attending events. We hope that as many people as can afford to will give generously, so we can do more than we are able to at present, especially on policy and campaigns. But membership will no longer be dependent on your ability to pay.

**I have a Standing Order/pay by Paypal. What should I do?**

If you already have a regular payment mechanism set up, we urge you to leave it in place if you would like to continue giving at that level.

If you cannot afford to give, you should feel free to cancel the payment and your membership will be unaffected. If you are able to change your gift to a slightly larger amount, or, would like to make a small monthly gift instead we would be most grateful for your support.

The MCS Council believes this is an exciting step to helping the Society grow so that we represent more people and companies who share our vision for a region that is a great place to live.