

Merseyside Civic Society Annual Report 2020

Introduction

Who we are?

Since 1938 the Merseyside Civic Society has campaigned to preserve the best of our existing buildings and spaces, such as the Albert Dock and green spaces and parks, and, to insist on good quality design for our new ones.

While Liverpool is at the hub of our activities, we embrace the whole of the city region and take a concerned interest in its environmental development and regeneration.

Although we admire many of its achievements, we do not live in the past. We believe Liverpool and the wider city region have a splendid future and we want to contribute to making that all the more splendid for all residents and visitors.

Our members come from all walks of life, and are mostly ordinary local citizens with an interest in making our city region a better place to live.

We engage in expressing independent views on matters of public concern, particularly those relating to development projects, threats to heritage, the protection and enhancement of parks and open spaces, and, make awards in support of activities which celebrate personal and institutional achievements contributing to the city region's quality of life.

Events

Leading the debate

One of our key areas of activity is usually the delivery of a substantial programme of topical public events. This year, in common with many other similar organisations, our events programme has been severely curtailed due to the Corona virus pandemic

We were able to put on 2 events in the early part of the year however which attracted a total audience of 78

- Historic Environment of HS2 - Sarah Jane Farr, at RIBA North – February 13
- Visit to Bluecoat School and organ recital – Peter Elson, - February 26

In a first for MCS, our Rita **Cheesman Heritage Interpretation Awards** were presented virtually this year on June 29th to:

- Richard Moore, author of the Historical Background to Liverpool's Piazza Fountain which led to its eventual, successful 'Listing'
- Liverpool City Region Blue and Green Badge Guides – in recognition of their contribution to Heritage interpretation over the last 40 years

Looking ahead, we hope to start a series of virtual events using Zoom which will run from December to Easter. From Easter onwards we anticipate a return to our 'face to face' events and have planned out a series of interesting topics which we will share with you in due course.

Membership

Get involved

Membership has continued to grow, from individual members to affiliated societies and corporate members. We actively seek new members and welcome their contribution to our activities from volunteering to supporting the work of the Groups within the Society and spreading the word about events and discussions. We also connect groups with the expertise they need from marketing to campaigning and fund raising.

We are excited about the reforms we are making to our membership scheme and hope this will enable us to increase our membership even further in the coming years.

Merseyside Civic Society Council

The Council meets four times a year, with much of its activity now actioned through its three working groups. We have continued to meet via Zoom during the current lockdown.

How we work

Merseyside Civic Society is organised into a number of working groups which focus on distinct aspects of the Society's business. These meet regularly to respond to matters of public interest, to plan our events and campaigns and to organise the Society's working and membership services. If you want to contribute and have ideas on issues which need attention, suggestions for events or activities, or can help with administration, we want to hear from you:

secretary@merseysidecivicsociety.org

Planning, Campaigns & Policy

MCS reviews and responds to planning issues and activities within Liverpool and the wider city region. We encourage public engagement with on-going debate and aim to draw together diverse voices from our member communities and make a positive contribution to discussion that have an effect on the quality of life for us all. The Planning, Campaigns & Policy Group has met four times this year and brings together professional experience and community engagement

In the course of 2020, the group has engaged with a number of topical issues:

- Response to Liverpool City Centre Connectivity proposals for Lime Street and the Strand
- Meeting with LCC Highways and Planning re Connectivity Strategy
- Produced a statement on the Zip Wire proposal
- Represented MCS on the World Heritage Site Steering Group
- Supported the Everton FC stadium project for Bramley Moore Dock
- Supported the proposal to relocate Jesse Hartley's shard to Stanley Dock
- Responded to the consultation on the Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy
- Produced a Principles Paper for High Streets and Town Centres for consideration by the Liverpool City Region High Streets Commission
- Responded in detail to the Government's Planning for the Future White Paper

Communications & Events group

The group has met three times in 2020. Activity has been curtailed due to COVID19 and restrictions placed on public meetings, which forced us to cancel many of our planned events including a celebration of Conservation Areas and Blue Badge Guides through a series of guided walks. Hopefully many of these events will be able to take place in 2021.

However, communications with our members has remained a priority and this year we have introduced an e-newsletter. Three editions have been produced in March, July and September with a further one planned before the end of the year. The e-news contains details of our own campaigns and activities as well as news and publications from other relevant organisations. We have also started to feature our Affiliated Societies. Similarly, we have stepped up our Facebook posts and Twitter feeds to keep people informed. Our current project is to develop a new website for MCS which we hope will be complete by the New Year. This will be easy to manage and navigate and contain more relevant and up to date content.

Resources, Governance & Membership

The group met three times during the year and focuses its activities on: membership recruitment and services; governance issues, financial supervision; and, liaison with national and local groups. It also plans the Annual General Meeting. This year we have managed to reclaim £691 in Gift Aid from our members subscriptions and donations over the last four years.

Charity Registration Number 221700

Members of the Council 2019/20

COUNCIL MEMBERS	ROLE
Gavin Davenport	Chair & Team Leader, Communications and Events
Andrew Evans	Vice-Chair & Team Leader, Resources, Governance and Membership
Pam Wilsher	Hon Secretary
Vacant	Hon Treasurer
David Massey	Co-opted Council Member (Acting Hon Treasurer)
Lucy Antal	Elected Council Member
Victoria Alderton	Co-opted Council Member
Erik Bichard	Elected Council Member & Team Leader, Planning, Campaigns and Policy
Chrissie Byrne	Elected Council Member
Sebastian Dempski	Elected Council Member
Peter Elson	Elected Council Member
Sarah-Jane Farr	Elected Council Member
Steven Garnett	Elected Council Member
Jean Grant	Elected Council Member
Dai Gwynne	Elected Council Member & Deputy Team Leader, Planning, Campaigns and Policy
Joyce Hughes	Elected Council Member – resigned January 2020
Suzanne Jameson	Elected Council Member
Trevor Skempton	Elected Council Member
Adrian Swift	Elected Council Member
Andrew Weatherstone	Co-opted Council Member
Eileen Willshaw	Elected Council Member