



Annual General Meeting 22 November, 2016

COUNCIL'S REPORT
by the CHAIR



CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Constitutional Matters and Council Structure
3. Financial Report
4. Issues Addressed
5. Events and Activities
6. MCS accounts for 2015
7. Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Merseyside Civic Society
8. Selected examples of MCS media representation



1. Introduction

Once again, this has been another eventful year for the Merseyside Civic Society, thus maintaining something of the momentum generated by the Society's 75th anniversary, now three years ago and the following through of a number of constitutional changes prompted by the opportunity that the year provided for reflection on how and why the Society functions as it does. Before commenting on some of the consequences of those changes, I should like to record my thanks once again, to those Officers, and MCS Council members, who have assisted this year in this process of evolution and contributed to the activities in which the Society has been engaged.

2015/16 has been a mixed year in terms of the outcome of efforts to secure the protection of heritage assets and improvements in applications for planning permission. The positive news about the Welsh Streets, and the ultimate success of the case promoted by SAVE Britain's Heritage (partly as a result of the enthusiastic contribution of MCS Council member **Jonathan Brown**) and supported by MCS. On the negative side was the failure of our efforts to retain key heritage features of Lime Street as part of the radical scheme put forward by Neptune for the redevelopment of the eastern side, with most of the buildings between the Vines and Crown public houses now demolished. A modest positive result was the successful submission of an application to Historic England to secure the listing of a building at 7 Sweeting Street (between Dale Street and Cook Street).

Before noting other developments of the year, we mark here, with great sadness, the passing of two figures who have made such significant, inimitable contributions to the activities of the Society. Former MCS Council member **Fred O'Brien** was, for so many years, an ever present ray of sunshine at Council meetings and other events, with his ready wit and repartee to complement his massive contribution as the source of inspiration, and his own design flare, that he used so lovingly in the production of a plethora of commemorative plaques that now adorn the city in celebration of so many individuals, causes and events about which Fred felt so passionately.

The other irreplaceable and shockingly sudden loss was that of MCS Council member **Andrew Pearce** who, in recent years, had been making such enormously valuable contributions to the Society's activities, drawing upon his experience as a former MEP (for Wirral) and in establishing the Liverpool Heritage Forum (ahead of Capital of Culture year 2008) and, for a period, editing its extremely informative newsletter. More recently he has been contributing so much to discussion of many topical issues, most notably the future governance of the Liverpool City Region and, together with **Glynn Marsden**, providing fresh inspiration and impetus to the role of the MCS Newsletter – a future edition of which will feature a fuller appreciation of the contributions made to the Society by both Fred and Andrew.



In 2013, 2014 and 2015, the success of the MCS celebration of national Civic Day was marked by the Society's receipt of an award from Civic Voice in recognition of **Jean Grant's** masterminding of the 'State of the City' themed events. This gave fresh encouragement to those involved in organising the 2016 Civic Day 'State of the City IV' event on the theme of 'Who Cares? We Care' which again took place at the Bluecoat in June. The leaflet that records the principal issues to arise from discussions that took place during the event, together with a fuller report on the more precise conclusions, can be found on the MCS website at merseysidecivicsociety.org.

At last year's AGM, reference was made to the development of a 'business plan' for the Society as a framework for planning MCS activities for future years. Here I should like to record our collective thanks to **Glynn Marsden** for his sterling efforts in moving this forward – under the now more strongly favoured title of a 'Development Strategy and Action Plan'. This continues to progress and provides a valuable framework within which to assess the priority to be given to Council action under the working group arrangements noted above.

Major progress has been achieved this year in pursuit of one of the most important initiatives set out in the above plan that relates to increasing the Society's corporate membership and the securing of additional funding that can facilitate the more effective operation of the society in achieving its objectives. **Susan Spibey** has led this initiative with characteristic tenacity and determination and her efforts are now bearing fruit. We shall look forward to her providing a fuller account of how developments are progressing in a future edition of the MCS newsletter.

The outcome of a longer term initiative was the emergence of the Society's second statement of MCS policy in the form of White Paper 2 entitled 'Terraced Housing in the Liverpool City Region '...the most sustainable and attractive option....''. This was assembled by MCS Council member **Trevor Skempton** and drew upon responses to his presentations at the State of the City event in 2014 and subsequent events which provided members and others with the opportunity to offer comment on the consultation draft statement in the form of a Green Paper. This policy statement relating to terraced property now sits alongside White Paper 1 on '**Urban Design and Design Review**' as a clear statement of MCS policy in these crucial areas of concern to the Society. Further Green 'consultation', and eventually, White Papers will be produced in the future.

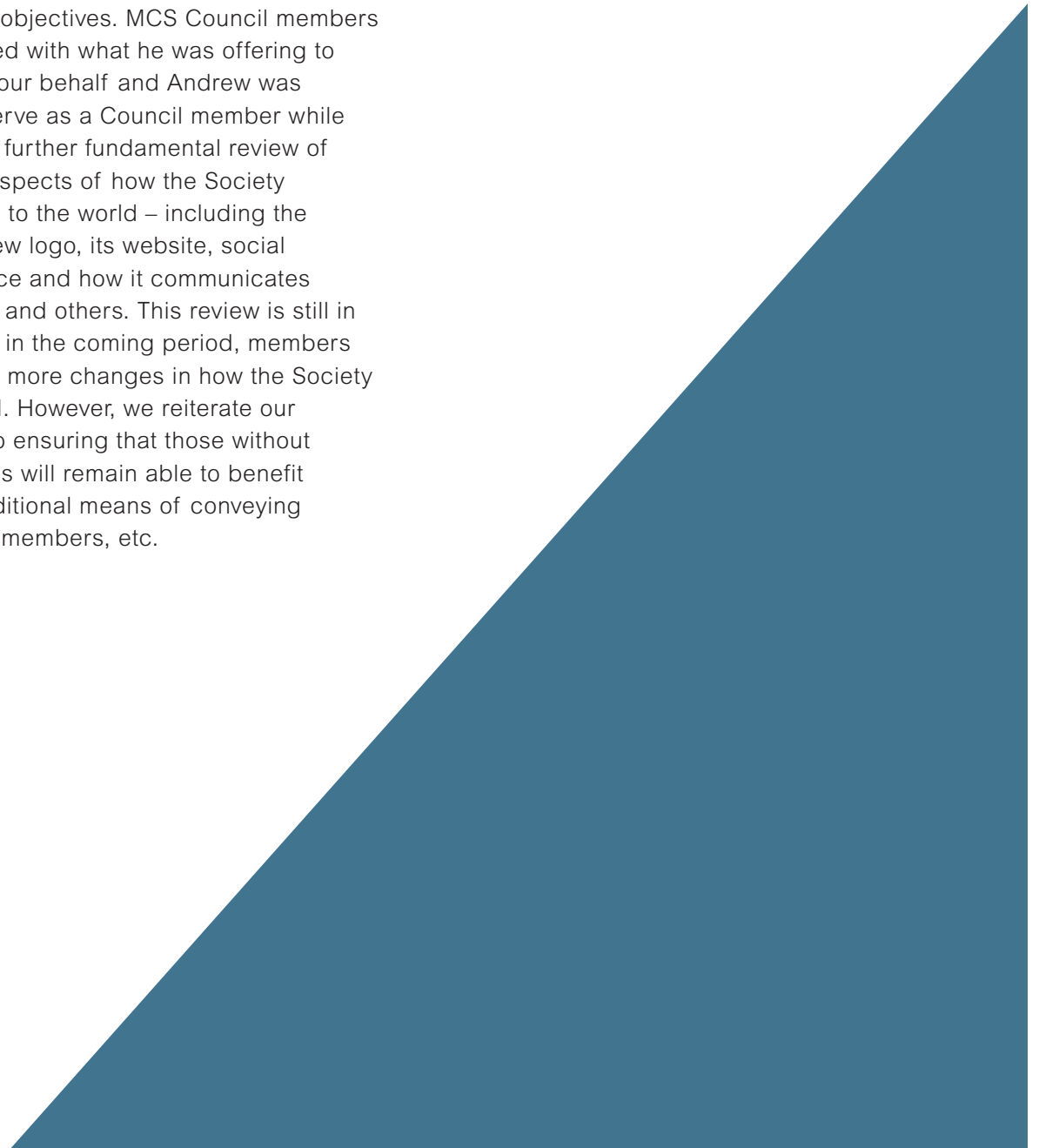
In the course of the early part of 2016, MCS Council members took an active role in contributing to the discussion of issues addressed by Mayor Joe Anderson's Strategic Green and Open Spaces Review Board chaired by Simon O'Brien.

MCS was pleased to support Dr Christina Malathouni, of the University of Liverpool, School of Architecture, in undertaking her externally funded Future Heritage Project, an aim of which was to better understand the arguments behind the listing and other designations of 20th century, and especially post WW2, developments or properties. MCS members were invited to participate in a phase of the project concerned with securing the views and personal testimonies of key contacts and members of the public on five Merseyside 1960s buildings that had won a built environment award or commendation, and thus received a degree of initial professional and specialist appreciation, but over which a question remained about their heritage future.

A crucial aspect of how MCS operates is the way in which it communicates with members and the outside world about the issues with which the Society is concerned and how this relates to marketing – hence the key role of the Communications Working Group in steering the re-launch of the Society’s presence on social media as well as the more familiar medium of the MCS newsletter. There has also been good local radio coverage of MCS activities, including that relating to the State of the City Civic Day event. Shortly after that event, following his involvement in helping to promote the event over the last couple of years, **Andrew Weatherstone** of Nonconform kindly offered to assist the Society in the wider promotion of its image and objectives. MCS Council members were impressed with what he was offering to undertake on our behalf and Andrew was co-opted to serve as a Council member while undertaking a further fundamental review of a number of aspects of how the Society presents itself to the world – including the design of a new logo, its website, social media presence and how it communicates with members and others. This review is still in progress and, in the coming period, members can anticipate more changes in how the Society is represented. However, we reiterate our commitment to ensuring that those without internet access will remain able to benefit from more traditional means of conveying information to members, etc.

In 2016, MCS maintained its membership of the North West Association of Civic Trusts and Societies (NWACTS) and we are grateful that **Susan Spibey** was also happy to continue her role in representing MCS on the NWACTS committee.

Below we highlight a number of constitutional matters that relate to the Council of the Society and its structure. Consistent with the charitable objectives of the Society, the later sections report on issues that have been addressed by the Society during the year, together with a brief report on the events and activities with which we have been concerned.



2. Constitutional Matters and Council Structure

The Merseyside Civic Society operates under terms set out in the Constitution (found at [www.liv.ac.uk/mcs/lfs/docs/MCS Constitution 2014 Approved.pdf](http://www.liv.ac.uk/mcs/lfs/docs/MCS%20Constitution%202014%20Approved.pdf)) [approved at MCS SGM, 24 February, 2015] in pursuit of the aims of the Society. These are stated as follows:

“The Society is established for the public benefit for the following purposes:

- a) to protect and preserve and stimulate public interest in Merseyside, which area is hereinafter referred to as ‘the area of benefit’;
- b) to promote high standards of town planning and architecture in the area of benefit;
- c) to secure the preservation, conservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity, or historic, or public interest in the area of benefit.”

The Officers of the Society and Council members are appointed according to terms set out in the Constitution. The Chair has principal responsibility for considering the composition of the Council and for inviting new members to consider appointment to the Council and the Officer posts.

Council members are appointed to serve 3-year terms of office and 2- or 1-year periods where vacancies occur, and may seek re-election to serve for successive terms.

During 2015/16, elected Officers of Council, and those taking responsibility for the areas of MCS interest indicated, were as follows:

President: The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Derby

Vice Presidents: Rodney Holmes, Roger Phillips, Paula Ridley, Professor John Tarn

Chair: Peter Brown

Vice-Chair: Jean Grant

Hon. Secretary: (Vacancy)

Hon. Treasurer: David Massey

Members of Council in 2015/16

Jonathan Brown, Mona Devereau, Sarah-Jane Farr, Liam Fogarty, Jeff Gibbons, Dai Gwynne, Ian Harvey, Brian Hatton, John Hinchliffe, Rob MacDonald, Glynn Marsden, Andrew Pearce, Robin Riley, Trevor Skempton, Susan Spibey, Olivier Sykes, Eileen Willshaw, Felicity Wren

Under the new Working Group arrangements adopted in 2014, responsibility for conducting aspects of MCS Council business is devolved to 3 working groups, each of which nominated a spokesperson (or persons) to represent the group's views at Council meetings, etc.

Campaigns and Policy Development

Jonathan Brown and Jeff Gibbons

Communications and Events Planning

Sarah-Jane Farr and Liam Fogarty

Resources, Governance and Membership

David Massey

MCS is a Registered Charity:

Charity Number: 221700.

The Society's banker is Barclays Bank plc, 48B-50 Lord Street, Liverpool L2 1TD.

The Society's Independent Examiner is Dr J.R.S. Wrightson.

MCS is a Member of Civic Voice, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, the Merseyside Environmental Trust, Liverpool Charity and Voluntary Services and the North West Association of Civic Trusts and Societies.

3. Financial Report

Financial Report for 2014

- a) The Society's Income for 2015 was approximately the same as that for 2014. Membership subscriptions increased to make up for lesser receipts from donations and interest. The Society is once again most grateful to the Bluecoat for its support in kind through access to its facilities and advice for our "State of the City" contribution to national Civic Day in June. Expenditure was at a more normal level in 2015 due to the several one-off charges incurred in 2014. Both administration (which includes insurance, websites, as well as postage and stationery) and activities (including meeting rooms, newsletter and Civic Day expenses) were both reduced, while maintaining a full range of activities.
- b) Overall, the balance of Income over Expenditure for 2015 was £233-54, with an equivalent increase in our accumulated funds to £12,666-51. These were held in our Barclays Bank current account and two Virgin Money charity deposit accounts.
- c) The MCS Council's reserves policy continues to be based on retaining £10 000 for income (despite current low interest rates) and potential medium- to longer-term development activities and potential liabilities, and the balance to support current activities and to support short-term development activities.
- d) We are grateful to Dr J.R.S. Wrightson for once more agreeing to be nominated as Independent Examiner of our accounts for 2015 and for his advice.

4. Issues Addressed

In the course of 2016, a number of topical issues have exercised members of the MCS Council.

- In January, MCS made representations to Cllr Liam Robinson, Chairman of Merseytravel, commenting on Merseytravel's 20 year vision for Mersey Ferries.
- In January, MCS made representations to Liverpool City Council (LCC) commenting on a planning application relating to the conversion of Bellerive School buildings at Windermere Terrace to apartments.
- In March, MCS made representations to Historic England commenting on prospective listing of Former Ritz Roller Rink, 109-113 Mulberry Street, Liverpool L8.
- In March, MCS made representations to LCC commenting on a planning application relating to Knolle Park : St Gabriel's.
- In March, MCS made representations to LCC commenting on a planning application relating to 40 Ullet Road, Liverpool L17 3BP.
- In March, MCS made representations to LCC commenting on a planning application relating to Land at Mill Street; Harlow Street; Bessemer Street and Beresford Road, Liverpool L8.
- In April, MCS made representations to LCC commenting on planning applications relating to 58 Devonshire Road, Liverpool L8.
- In May, MCS made representations to Cllr Liam Robinson, Chairman of Merseytravel, relating to Saveaway and Walrus Card issues.
- In May, MCS made representations to Cllr Liam Robinson, Chairman of Merseytravel, commenting on issues relating to Mersey Ferries and Woodside Ferry Terminal.
- In June, MCS made representations to Cllr Joe Anderson, The Mayor of Liverpool about Liverpool's Local Plan and Industrial Heritage.
- In June, MCS made representations to Lucy Horne, Liverpool City Council in connection with the consultation relating to Liverpool City Region Combined Authority : Devolved Powers.
- In June, MCS made representations to Cllr Joe Anderson, The Mayor of Liverpool, about Liverpool City Region.
- In July, MCS wrote to MCS affiliated and other civic / amenity society representatives to share information about Liverpool City Region policy matters.
- In July, MCS made representations to LCC commenting on a planning application relating to 8 Croxteth Road, Liverpool L8.
- In July, MCS made representations to LCC commenting on a planning application relating to Bushells Building, Springfield Road, Liverpool (late 19th century) : featuring the demolition of the building and the erection of a steel training tower.
- In August, MCS made representations to Lucy Horne, Liverpool City Council, in response to further consultations relating to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority : Devolved Powers.
- In October, MCS made representations to LCC commenting on the Liverpool Draft Local Plan.

5. Events and Activities

For the first part of the year **Sarah-Jane Farr** acted as spokesperson for the Events and Programme Planning Working Group and led early efforts to organise a programme of MCS events during 2016. None of these activities can be achieved without the goodwill and assistance of willing helpers prepared to put in the time and energy required to deliver these laudable services or measures. The search continues for new recruits and volunteers prepared to offer assistance in establishing a new focus for activity that will contribute in a different way to the achievement of the Society's objectives.

- An early contribution to the programme, in January, was an event organised by MCS Council member **Olivier Sykes** at which local groups presented and discussed their experience of preparing Neighbourhood Plans.
- In February, **Ian Weir** of Blackett-Ord Conservation Engineering Ltd, based in Appleby-in-Westmorland, gave a presentation on the 'Tranmere Deep Underground Air Raid Shelter'.
- In April, **Simon O'Brien** (Chair of the Liverpool Strategic Green and Open Spaces Review Board), and **Professor Robert Lee OBE** (Chair of the Wirral Parks' Friends Forum, and, the Friends of Birkenhead Park) gave presentations and led a lively discussion on the subject of 'W(h)ither Parks and Open Spaces? Current Issues and New Approaches in the City Region'.
- In June, **Jean Grant** again organised a fourth MCS 'State of the City' day as an MCS contribution to celebrating national Civic Day, at its now established venue of the Bluecoat. This year the event was devoted to exploring the theme of 'Who Cares? We Care. Local people working for BIG change'. The leaflet that records the principal issues to

the event, together with a fuller report on the more precise conclusions, can be found on the MCS website at **merseysidecivicsociety.org** and print copies are available on application.

MCS wishes to express its appreciation to: the Bluecoat (particularly to **Bryan Biggs**) and its welcoming staff; to 'Non conform' for its support over the production of the leaflet; and to the following for providing exhibits: Civic Voice; the Friends of Walton Hall Park; Merseyside Environmental Trust; Mission in the Economy; Merseyside Industrial Heritage Society; Friends of the Earth; and, the Wirral History and Heritage Association.

- Later in June, MCS members were able to participate in a fascinating Pre History Mystery Tour, a unique experience, in the company of **Ron Cowell** of the archaeology section of the Museum of Liverpool, including following the course of the River Alt, as one of the most important thoroughfares in local prehistory, and later following the landscapes and sites of the early farmers after 4000BC, stretching from the sea to the fringes of the West Lancashire plain, ending at the site of a modern farm that goes back to before Roman times.
- In October, **Mike Eccles** of the Liverpool City Planning Department gave a presentation and encouraged discussion of the recently published Draft Liverpool Local Plan.
- In November, the Annual General Meeting takes place at the Quaker Meeting House, chaired by MCS President **Lord Derby**. The AGM features the presentation of reports from the Chair and Hon. Treasurer and elections of those to serve the Society in a variety of positions. The formal business will be followed by a presentation by **Bryan Biggs**, in his capacity as Artistic Director/ Project Director of the Bluecoat, on the plans for the celebration of the Bluecoat's tercentenary in 2017.

6. MCS accounts for 2015

INCOME	2014	2015
	£	£
Members' Subscriptions Current Year	629-50	752-50
Members' Advance Subscriptions	383-00	450-00
Activities	122-80	110-00
Donations	184-00	89-00
	196-27	122-91
	<u>£1,516-27</u>	<u>£1,524-41</u>

EXPENDITURE	2014	2015
	£	£
Administration Costs	1,064-71	388-42
Activities	2,379-60	652-45
Subscriptions to Outside Bodies	235-00	250-00
	<u>£3,679-31</u>	<u>£1,290-87</u>

DEFICIT/SURPLUS	2014	2015
Income	1,516-27	1,524-41
Expenditure	3,670-31	1,290-87
Deficit/Surplus	<u>£2,163-04 DR</u>	<u>£233-54 CR</u>

GENERAL RESERVE	
Brought Forward (1.1.2015)	£12,432-97
Surplus	233-54
Carried Forward (31.12.2015)	<u>£12,666-51</u>

Represented by:	2014	2015
Virgin Money 100-day Deposit A/c	10,000-00	10,000-
Virgin Money Deposit A/c	2,394-21	002,592-12
Barclays Bank Current A/c	38-76	74-39
	<u>£12,432-97</u>	<u>£ 12,666-51</u>

7. Independent Examiner's report to the Trustees of Merseyside Civic Society

I report on the accounts of the Society for the year ended 31 December 2015.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts.

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes

consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

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:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Dr J R S Wrightson
19 Vaughan Road, Wallasey,
Merseyside, CH45 1LJ
3 November 2014

8. Selected examples of MCS media representation



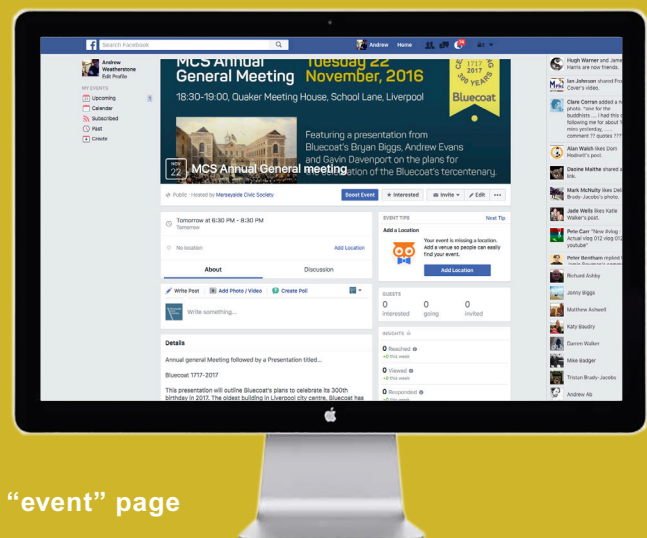
New website home page



News landing page



Events landing page

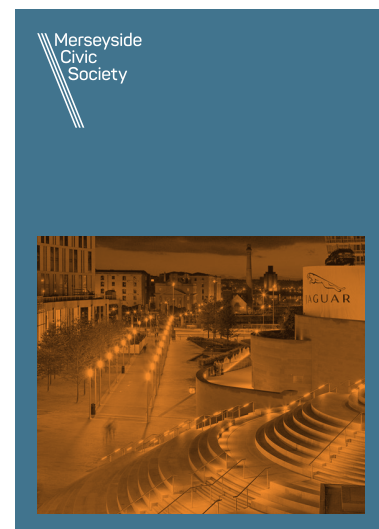




twitter landing page



New logo and publicity materials



Merseyside Civic Society needs your support

As a charitable organisation, we depend upon subscriptions. For a modest annual payment, you can become a member. Since 1938 we have helped to preserve the best of the past, like the Albert Dock and the Lyceum, as well as demanding design quality for the future. Although we admire many of its achievements, we do not live in the past. We believe Liverpool has a splendid future and we want to contribute to making it all the more splendid. 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.



To stimulate public interest in the enhancement of the quality of life the city region



To engage in debate and discussion and conduct research in support of this aim



To promote high standards of town planning, architecture and design in the area



To ensure the preservation, conservation, development, improvement and careful stewardship of features of general public amenity



To seek to safeguard areas and structures of historic and/or public interest



To strengthen links between interested bodies, such as Civic Voice (nationally), and local civic and amenity societies in the city region.

When it comes to
the place we live in,
we should be more
than just bystanders

Join Us.



MerseyCivic

www.merseysidecivicsociety.org

