

# Annual Report 2023





# 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 heart 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, together with community groups and societies, 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 and threats to our heritage, organise meetings and events, and make awards in support of activities which celebrate personal and institutional achievements contributing to the city region's quality of life.



## GET IN TOUCH AND GET INVOLVED

[www.merseysidecivicsociety.org](http://www.merseysidecivicsociety.org) | [chair@merseysidecivicsociety.org](mailto:chair@merseysidecivicsociety.org)

# Events

In January, MCS was pleased to welcome Bill Addy from Liverpool Business Improvement District (BID) to talk on the subject of **Striving for Excellence in Liverpool City Centre** at RIBA North.

In March, 25 members joined MCS Council Member Andrew Jackson on a tour of Liverpool's historic buildings that have been **Saved by Hospitality**.

## April 18

Hope Street: Pubs, Plays & Performing Arts

## April 25

Canning Street & The Georgian Quarter

## May 2

Port Sunlight: Life in an industrial garden village

## May 24

Bidston Village and Bidston Hill: History & Legend

## May 30

Let's Rock (Rock Park)

## June 6

A Builder, a Banker and a Brewer: the making of William Brown Street

## June 20

Wavertree: Flourishing in the shade

Our programme of **Conservation Area Walks** led by Blue and Green Badge Guides started in April and continued through to September. The walks proved to be very popular, attracting 191 bookings with at least half of the walks new for this year.

## July 4

Prescot Heritage Trail

## July 19

Bromborough Then and Now

## July 25

Sefton Park: A People's Paradise

## August 9

Thornton Hough Village and its links to Port Sunlight

## August 22

Princes Park: Philanthropy, Paxton and a wee Donkey

## August 30

John, Jeremiah, Alfred and Ed – the Fab Four on the Waterfront

## September 13

New Brighton: A Changing Landscape

In April, Andrew Jackson led a **Creative Communities walk** around New Brighton and in May, MCS repeated Two **Walks in L17 – From the Park to the River**, led by Dr Kay Flavell, author of *People of the Lane: Growing up in and around Lark Lane 1880-2020*.

In July, National Museums Liverpool led our members on a **Walk and Talk around Canning Dock to explore the Waterfront Transformation Programme**.

In October some 45 people attended our **85th Anniversary** lecture at Kuumba Imani with a talk by MCS Chair John Belchem on **Liverpool in the 1930s: Have we offended the Gods?** and community activist Ray Quarless talking about **Growing up in a Mixed Heritage Family**.

Our final event this autumn was an online seminar about the plans to celebrate the **bicentenary of the Stockton-Darlington Railway in 2025** with an eye on the forthcoming bicentenary of the **Liverpool-Manchester Railway in 2030**.

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# Campaigning

## Save the Piazza Fountain

We re-launched our major campaign from 2021 to raise funds towards the restoration of the Piazza Fountain in Drury Lane. We continue our discussions with National Heritage Lottery Fund, Liverpool City Council and the leaseholder, The Elliot Group. This year we have undertaken a Structural Survey, commissioned scale drawings of the fountain and are testing a seal to prevent the hoppers leaking. More details on the MCS website: [www.merseysidecivicsociety.org/campaigns/mcs-backs-piazza-fountain-restoration-study/](http://www.merseysidecivicsociety.org/campaigns/mcs-backs-piazza-fountain-restoration-study/)

## Rita Cheesman Award for Heritage Interpretation

To mark the tenth anniversary of this award named after former Blue Badge Guide Rita Cheesman, MCS was delighted to present two awards at a well-attended event at The Bluecoat in April. The first was to Emma Copestake for Sefton Council for Voluntary Service's "Community within communities: Our Voices to be Heard" project. The second was to former Heritage Intern at Knowsley Council, Richard MacDonald for Prescot's Red Plaques scheme.



## Merseyside Civic Design Awards

This year we launched the inaugural Merseyside Civic Design Awards (MCDA) on National Civic Day Saturday 17th June. National Civic Day is an initiative started in 2011 by Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement, of which MCS is a proud member. The Merseyside Civic Design Awards were launched to coincide with the 85th anniversary of the founding of Merseyside Civic Society in 1938 and inclusively cover the whole of Liverpool City Region – Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton and Wirral.

The Awards recognise high quality projects that enhance our shared experience of the places that surround us. They will be awarded biennially over six project categories; New Build, Conservation, Landscape, Culture, Hospitality, and, Community. There is also a Test of Time Award, presented to a project completed since the founding of Merseyside Civic Society that is deemed by the MCS Council (the Society's Trustees and others) to function as well today as it did when first designed.

Following nominations by the public on the MCS website during the summer, a panel of invited judges have now judged the awards. The winners will be announced on Tuesday November 28th at Liverpool Arts Bar on Hope Street. All Welcome.



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# Merseyside Civic Society Council

The Council meets four times a year, with much of its activity now actioned through its three working groups together with a new Merseyside Civic Design Awards Steering Group and the Piazza Fountain Working Group.

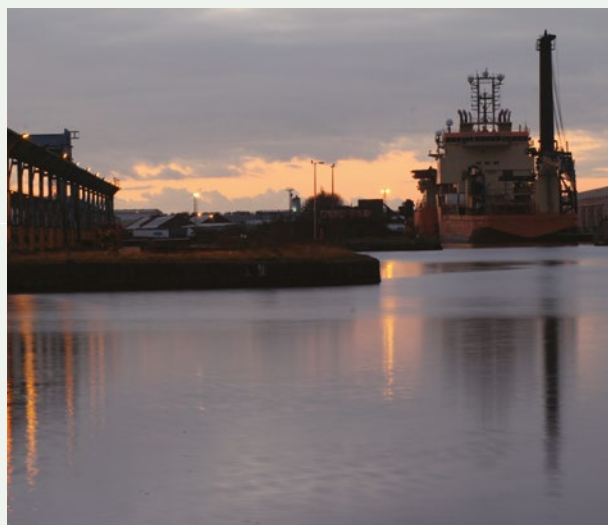
## How we work

Merseyside Civic Society is organised into a number of working groups which focus on distinct aspects of the Society's business. These meet 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](mailto:secretary@merseysidecivicsociety.org)**

### Planning, Campaigns & Policy Group

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 discussions that have an effect on the quality of life for us all. The Planning, Campaigns & Policy Group has met three times this year and brings together professional experience and community engagement.



During 2023 the group has engaged with a number of topical issues:

- Commented on the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and proposed reforms to Planning Policy
- Commented on planning applications for new housing by Leverhulme estates.
- Met with consultants undertaking a Scoping Study for the 2030 Liverpool & Manchester Railway bicentenary.
- Met with National Museums Liverpool to discuss their Waterfront Transformation Project which includes the remodelling of the Martin Luther King Junior Building for the International Slavery Museum and the opening up of Canning Graving Dock to visitors.
- Supported the Scotts Quay development, Birkenhead.
- Met with and commented on Tate Liverpool's plans to redevelop the gallery.
- Submitted comments in response to the public consultation on the City Region Bus Strategy
- Wrote to the Metro Mayor about the Liverpool Futures Panel and attended one of their consultative workshops.
- Objected to the proposed demolition of Calder Lodge, Calderstones
- Objected to the proposed delisting of 91 Edge Lane
- Met with Bill Addy, Chief Executive of Liverpool BID Company on a variety of matters including the waterfront and maintenance of public art.
- Commented extensively on the draft Waterfront Positioning Paper produced on behalf of the BID.
- Held introductory session with new Place Making Team at Liverpool City Council
- Provided advice to Garston Futures on getting Listed Status for the Garston Empire
- Commented on application for a Certificate of Immunity for Carnatic Halls of Residence, Mossley Hill

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### Communications & Events Group

This group looks after the MCS website, the event programme, social media and the production of publications such as this Annual Report. We have communicated with our members through 2 e-newsletters in February and July with a further one planned for early December and issued one media release announcing the Merseyside Civic Design Awards (MCDA).

MCS once again participated in the Wirral History and Heritage Fair held in Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight in March. This participation

provides the opportunity to promote the Society and its activities and to meet and exchange views with representatives of local conservation, amenity and heritage groups from across Wirral.

### Resources, Governance & Membership Group

The group met four 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 held preliminary discussion with Merseyside Building Preservation Trust around closer collaboration.

## Membership

### Get involved.

We have seen a 25% increase in our membership this year with membership numbers now at 361. There is a simple sign-up form on the website which is seeing a steady trickle of new 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. See <https://www.merseysidecivicsociety.org/membership/>

We also connect groups with the expertise they need from marketing to campaigning and fund raising.

This year we have welcome the following new community groups into membership:

The Arts Society, Liverpool

Everton Together

Friends of Princes Park

Garston Futures

West Everton Residents Group

We continue our donation-based membership scheme and actively encourage all our members to donate regularly to the Society in order to support our events and campaigning.



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## Members of the Council 2022/23

COUNCIL MEMBERS	ROLE
Professor John Belchem	Chair & Lead, Resources, Governance and Membership
Gavin Davenport	Vice-Chair
Pam Wilsher	Hon Secretary
Trish Dowling	Hon Treasurer
David Massey	Assistant Hon Treasurer and Advisor to the Council
Ann Lees	Membership Secretary
Victoria Alderton	Co-opted Council Member
Daniel Bimpson	Elected Council Member
Peter Brown	Vice President
Chia-Lin Chen	Elected Council Member
Dave Chetwyn	Elected Council Member
Sebastian Dembski	Elected Council Member & Lead, Planning, Campaigns and Policy
Lord Derby	President
Peter Elson	Elected Council Member & Lead, Communications & Events
Sarah-Jane Farr	Elected Council Member
Steven Garnett	Elected Council Member
Jean Grant	Vice President
Dai Gwynne	Elected Council Member
Andrew Jackson	Elected Council Member & Chair, Merseyside Civic Design Awards
Eric Lybeck	Elected Council Member
Glynn Marsden	Co-opted Council Member
Jo Pearce	Elected Council Member
Roger Phillips	Vice President
Tony Scanlon	Elected Council Member
Trevor Skempton	Elected Council Member
Adrian Swift	Elected Council Member
Mark Smith	Elected Council Member
Anthony Spencer	Elected Council Member
Eddie Taylor	Elected Council Member
Ian Wray	Elected Council Member





Merseyside  
Civic  
Society