





# 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 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.



## GET IN TOUCH AND GET INVOLVED

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

# Events

In February, some forty members and guests attended a consultation event around the **Combined Authority's Spatial Development Strategy** – How will we live work and play in the Liverpool City Region?

In the second half of June, we organised six free events for **Liverpool Architecture Festival**. Places on all these walks and visits were quickly snapped up:

## June 15

Exploring The Railway Heritage of Newton-le-Willows and Earlestown

## June 20

Southport: Reinventing the classic resort

## June 26

Sefton Park and Palm House: A People's Paradise

## June 27

Architectural Tour of The Athenaeum

## June 29

Birkenhead Park: An International Pioneer in Public Greenspace, Urban Landscape Design and Town Planning

## June 30

Saved by Hospitality

Due to our involvement with Liverpool Architecture Festival, we restricted our programme of Conservation Area Walks this year. However, we were able to organise five walks led by Blue and Green Badge Guides starting in May and continuing through to August. The five walks once again proved extremely popular attracting 87 bookings – an average of 17 per walk.

## May 21

Thornton Hough Village and its links to Port Sunlight

## May 22

Wonderful West Derby – Deer Village

## July 11

Princes Park: Philanthropy, Paxton, and a wee Donkey!

## July 16

Eastham: Meet Wirral's oldest resident

## August 15

Two Squares and a Few Circles – Abercromby and Falkner Squares

In July, we worked with Manchester Histories to promote an additional community engagement session in St George's Hall about the **Liverpool – Manchester Railway Bi-Centenary**.

In September we organised a tour of the **Williamson Tunnels** in Edge Hill, led by The Friends of the Williamson Tunnels. This quickly sold out, so we put on an extra date on November 3 which was also fully booked.

In October, we arranged a tour of the **Old Dock** (beneath Liverpool One) with the Maritime Museum. After visiting the Old Dock, MCS Council member Sarah-Jane Farr, who oversaw the archaeological investigations of the Old Dock and Liverpool One scheme (1999-2008) provided some additional insights.



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# Campaigning

## Save the Piazza Fountain

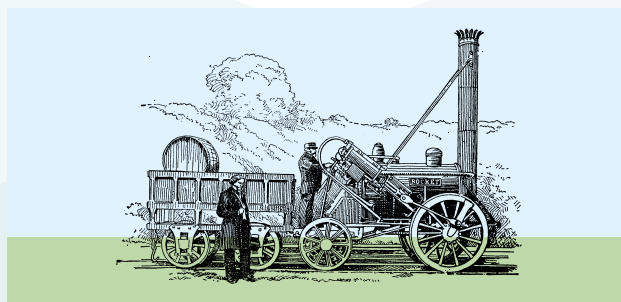
Whilst we continue to press for funding for the complete restoration of this much-loved 'bucket' fountain in Drury Lane, we are delighted to report that we are currently giving the fountain a much-needed facelift. Thanks to the generous donation of time and materials by a Beetham Plaza resident, we have been able to undertake investigative work, repair the spalling concrete on the viewing platforms and repaint them, remove rubbish from the receiving pool and give it a thorough clean. Working with Engage and the Friends of the Piazza Fountain we have also designed a Temporary Information Board which we hope to install in the Spring. More details on the MCS website:

<https://www.merseysidecivicsociety.org/campaigns/restoring-the-piazza-fountain/>

## Rocket 2030

This year has seen increased activity by the Rocket 2030 Steering Group with the appointment of Dr Paul Salveson as Chair and the start of community engagement to help shape the eventual commemoration of the bicentenary of the Liverpool-Manchester Railway in 2030. MCS met with Dr Salveson and is well represented in all discussions and on the newly formed strands groups. More details on the MCS website Rocket 2030 -

<https://www.merseysidecivicsociety.org/campaigns/rocket-2030/>



# Membership Get involved

Individual membership of the Society increased from 361 to 420 in the twelve months to October 2024 representing a 16% increase. A simple sign-up form on the website produces a steady trickle of new members; many new members are recruited by word-of mouth. We encourage new members to contribute to our activities from volunteering to support the work of the Sub Groups within the society and spreading the word about events and discussions.

See <https://www.merseysidecivicsociety.org/membership/>

We also connect Community Group members with the expertise they need from marketing to campaigning and fund raising and this year have welcomed a range of new Groups into membership:

- 8D association
- Friends of Deansgate Lane Fields Park
- Friends of Waterloo Seafront Gardens
- The Liverpool and Manchester Railway Trust
- Merseyside Polonia
- Southport Flower Show
- The Thinker Community Interest Company

We continue our 'donate what you can afford' membership scheme and actively encourage all our members to donate regularly to the Society to support our events and campaigning.

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## Merseyside Civic Design Awards

The Awards take place every 2 years and focus on high quality projects that enhance our shared experience of the places that surround us.

The framed certificates, designed by MCS Council Member, Trevor Skempton, marking the awards were presented by MCS Vice-President Roger Phillips DL last November at a reception at Liverpool Arts Bar in Hope Street.

*The winners were:*

Joint Best New Build Project

**The Lighthouse Church by shedkm**

Joint Best New Build Project

**LJMU Student Life & Sport Buildings  
by Sheppard Robson**

Best Conservation Project

**The Municipal Hotel by Falconer Chester Hall**

Highly Commended Conservation Project

**India Buildings by Falconer Chester Hall**

Best Landscape Project

**West Kirby Flood Alleviation  
Scheme by AECOM**

Best Cultural Project

**Future Yard by Architectural Emporium**

Best Small Hospitality Project

**40 Renshaw Street by SDA Architecture**

Best Large Hospitality Project

**INNSiDE Liverpool by Corstorphine & Wright**

Best Community Project

**The Old Library by OMI Architects**

Wellbeing Award

**The Spine by AHR Architects**



Organised by MCS Vice Chair and Civic Voice Trustee, Andrew Jackson, the Awards were judged by:

**Mathew Giles**

Director, MGMA Architects & Co-Director,  
Liverpool Architecture Foundation

**Martin Hamilton**

Chair, Civic Voice & Director, Leeds Civic Trust

**Professor Sally Stone**

Programme Leader for MA Architecture  
and Adaptive Reuse, Manchester School  
of Architecture

At the 2024 AGM we are revealing the final two awards in memory of former MCS Council Member and local artist Felicity Wren. – Best Public Sculpture and Best Public Mural.

Later in the month, we will announce the awards for the 2024 Rita Cheesman Heritage Interpretation Award and presenting framed certificates to the winners.



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# Merseyside Civic Society Council

The Council meets four times a year, with much of its activity now actioned through its four working groups together with the 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

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 influence 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 2024 the group has engaged with a number of topical issues:

- Commented on the Liverpool City Region Spatial Strategy
- Liverpool's Historic Environment Plan - Council officers addressed the Full Council of MCS, and we attended workshops around the scoping of the Plan
- Commented on the New Brighton Marine Promenade Master Plan
- Liverpool Waterfront Master Plan – attended workshops and exhibitions and submitted comments, which resulted in an invitation to meet with the Corporate Director of City Development and the Leader of Liverpool City Council before year end.
- Organised a special session for MCS Council members to review the revised designs for the entrance areas to both the Maritime Museum and the International Slavery Museum. Following the session, we were able to support the planning application.
- Commented on the Glider Bus proposal by the Metro Mayor
- Commented on draft Housing Strategy for Liverpool
- Supported the potential Listing designation of the Birthplaces of the Beatles
- Commented on proposed changes to National Planning Policy

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## Communications & Events

The group met twice during the year. We have communicated with our members through e-newsletters in May and November. This group also looks after the MCS website, the event programme, social media, and the production of publications such as this Annual Report.

From time to time the MCS Chair is invited to comment on various issues by the media and in February, John Belchem gave an interview to the Liverpool Post about what future there could be for once-grand buildings that are currently without a purpose. In June, the Chair appeared on BBC Radio Merseyside to comment on the Carbuncle Cup (awarded to the worst new building in Britain) won by the Liverpool Lime Street redevelopment. MCS campaigned vigorously (alas to no avail) against the project and to retain the Futurist cinema facade back in the 2000s.

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.



## Heritage Watch

This is a new sub-group formed during the year and drawing its membership from both Merseyside Civic Society Council and Merseyside Building Preservation Trust, with whom we are developing a strategic partnership. The group has met once in August and again in November. It aims:

- To identify and review Buildings at Risk in Liverpool City Region, particularly those that are Grade 1 and 2\* Listed which are falling into disrepair.
- Work with Local Authorities, building owners and other third-party interests (including partner organisations) to identify a strategy to re-purpose such buildings and to save them from further dilapidation.
- Develop relationships with the main funding bodies involved in the regeneration of the Built Environment.
- Discuss with and advise local campaign groups who are trying to save specific buildings that are important to their localities.
- Keep abreast of grants and other funding opportunities that can be channelled to the conservation of heritage buildings.

## Resources, Governance & Membership

The group met twice during the year, with additional ad hoc meetings taking place more frequently around finance and membership. It 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 introduced online banking and purchased a Sum Up machine which enables us to take card and contactless payments at our events.

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# Members of the Council 2023/24

| COUNCIL MEMBERS        | ROLE  |
|------------------------|---|
| Professor John Belchem | Chair & Lead, Resources, Governance and Membership            |
| Andrew Jackson         | Vice-Chair & Chair, MCDA                                      |
| Pam Wilsher            | Hon Secretary   |
| John Goodman           | Hon Treasurer   |
| David Massey           | Assistant Hon Treasurer and Advisor to the Council            |
| Trish Dowling          | Assistant Hon Treasurer                                       |
| 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  |
| Gavin Davenport        | Elected Council Member  |
| Eric Lybeck            | Elected Council Member  |
| Glynn Marsden          | Co-opted Council Member                                       |
| Lesley Martin Wright   | Vice President  |
| Roger Phillips         | Vice President  |
| Jo Pearce              | Elected Council Member  |
| Tony Scanlon           | Elected Council Member  |
| Trevor Skempton        | Elected Council Member  |
| Mark Smith             | Elected Council Member  |
| Adrian Swift           | Elected Council Member  |
| Anthony Spencer        | Elected Council Member  |
| Eddie Taylor           | Elected Council Member  |
| Ian Wray               | Elected Council Member  |