

MEDIA RELEASE FROM MERSEYSIDE CIVIC SOCIETY

March 9, 2026

Merseyside Civic Society appoints new Chair and Members to the Society's Council.

Merseyside Civic Society (MCS) is pleased to announce the appointment of a new Chair, Andrew Jackson and five new Council Members.

Andrew Jackson takes on the role of Chair, replacing Professor John Belchem who has very successfully led the Council for the last 3 years.

Andrew studied at Liverpool School of Architecture and the University of Liverpool's Department of Civic Design and has a particular interest in urbanism. He was a member of the MCS Council 2009-2014 and re-joined in 2022 after a number of years living in Yorkshire. He is a former Trustee of The Twentieth Century Society and a Trustee and Co-Chair of the national representative body for civic societies - Civic Voice. Andrew chairs the Merseyside Civic Design Awards and the Felicity Wren awards for MCS and following the successful New Year quiz is our official Quizmaster!

Donna Pearson is MCS's new Secretary and lead on the Rita Cheesman Heritage Interpretation Award.

Donna grew up in Lincolnshire, before undertaking her History degree at the University of Lancaster as a mature student. She went on to complete a Masters in Local & Regional History in 2004.

She is a qualified genealogist, with a degree in the subject from the Institute of Heraldic & Genealogical Studies in Canterbury, and in 2025 completed an eighteen-month course with the Institute of Tourist Guiding to become a fully qualified Blue Badge Guide for the Liverpool City Region.

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Peter Mearns joins the Council as Chair of the Communications and Events Group.

Peter is originally from Surrey. He started his career with BBC TV Manchester. Between 1999-2010 he was an Executive Director of the Northwest Development Agency responsible for significant physical and social regeneration projects including many in Merseyside. He was a key player in Liverpool's success as European Capital of Culture.

Peter is a marketing & communications professional and is currently Chair of Unity Theatre, Co-Chair of Cheshire Dance, Trustee of Shakespeare North Playhouse, Deputy Chair of Marketing Cheshire and a director of Bluecoat Trading. He recently stood down as Chair of Bluecoat after nine years.

Jane Ardrey is leading MCS's engagement with Heritage Plaques.

Jane is a social scientist and history graduate interested in the intricate connections between people and place in the Liverpool City Region. This includes a recognition of the role of history in our built and social environment, and of the importance of embedding inclusivity and equity into future civic initiatives. Jane is working with local communities and organisations to review and map heritage plaques in the Liverpool City Region with the ultimate aim of identifying any potential gaps in coverage.

Fran D'Arcy is our new lead on social media and our e-newsletter.

Fran has always lived in Liverpool, and has worked in the third sector in a variety of fundraising, community engagement, project management and communications roles, as well as currently working on the Faith in the City 40th anniversary project. Fran studied History and completed an MA in International Slavery Studies at the University of Liverpool.

Her passion for supporting charitable causes began at a young age. By 18, Fran had raised £60,000 for organisations such as Claire House Children's Hospice, Marie Curie Cancer Care, and Zoe's Place. She was awarded the Diana Award at 15 for her fundraising efforts and returned as a judge for the award in 2024 to recognise young people's achievements in social action and humanitarian work.

Fran completed an eighteen-month course with the Institute of Tourist Guiding to become a fully qualified Blue Badge Tourist Guide for the Liverpool City Region in 2025.

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Kath Lynch is spearheading our Liverpool North Event which is scheduled for this Spring.

Kath is a museum and heritage professional with nearly 30 years' experience. She began her career at Tyne & Wear Museums and Archives and has also held positions at the National Maritime Museum Cornwall and The Tank Museum in Dorset. Kath currently works for Port Sunlight Village Trust as Director of Projects. She has been with the organisation since 2008 and was previously Director of Heritage before taking a period of Adoption Leave. In 2025, Kath qualified as a Blue Badge Tourist Guide for the Liverpool City Region

Chair, Andrew Jackson said:

'I am delighted to take on the role of Chair at this interesting time in the Society's life. I would like to thank Professor John Belchem for ably steering the organisation over the last three years and look forward to taking things forward on many different fronts.'

'We are also thrilled to be strengthening the Merseyside Civic Society Team through these new volunteers. MCS has grown its membership and range of activities in recent years and we welcome these new additions to our Council all of whom bring a wealth of talent and experience to enhance what we can achieve. Alongside our existing Council members, our vice presidents and members we are committed to making Liverpool City Region a better place by preserving our heritage, shaping the future and promoting civic pride.'

ENDS

Meet the Full Council of Merseyside Civic Society [HERE](#)

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Photo: Merseyside Civic Society Council – February 2026