

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Twentieth Century Society held  
on Saturday, 1 June 2013 at The Gallery, Swiss Cottage Central Library, 88  
Avenue Road, London NW3 3HA**

**1. Apologies**

John Latham, Barnabas Calder, John and Karen Topping

**2. Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting in Sheffield**

These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

**3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**4. President's Address**

Fiona McCarthy said that she was pleased to see that the Society had become less London oriented and less male dominated in the last year especially in terms of its Patrons and Trustee body. It was constantly in the media and had a much improved Magazine and website.

She spoke about her latest project, a biography of Walter Gropius, for which the Lawn Road ('Isokon') flats which we are seeing later today has a special resonance in modernist philosophy both as architecture and a way of living. Gropius came here to live there in 1934 as a refugee with an enormous international reputation but was here for a relatively short and quite difficult time, never getting the recognition he deserved, moving on to Harvard when he was appointed a professor there.

She welcomed the new ease of access to 20<sup>th</sup> century masterpieces including Gropius's Lincoln (Mass) house, Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House and the Tugendhat House in the Czech Republic which has re-opened after many years of restoration. This reflected an increased appreciation of such mid-century modernist buildings reminding us who and what we are both societally and as C20 Society members.

**5. Chairman's Address**

Peter Ruback said this AGM marks the end of his first year as Chair. We carried out a member's survey which had a good rate of response (over 30%) and most members said they joined primarily as the Society promoted post-1914 architecture.

He wanted to stress that we operate against a broader climate of public opinion and a Government rightly concerned with economic growth but which seemed to see conservation as a blockage to growth. Following our lobbying, damaging changes to heritage protection legislation proposed last year have been abandoned or substantially altered. However, only 12,000 post-1914 and 650 post-war buildings are listed, a very small proportion. The very tight criteria for post-war listing risks

leaving us with a few ‘museum’ type buildings showing ‘how they lived’ in the 1950’s and 1960’s, rather than a wide range as with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will thus be seeking to influence Government on this and in particular to input to the Government review of growth and conservation led by Terry Farrell.

He said he was grateful for the efforts of many people: staff, Trustees, event organisers and volunteers. He wanted to pay particular tribute to Alan Powers and Nevil Hopkins who were standing down as Trustees after many years’ involvement with the Society. Elain Harwood was also standing down but had agreed to be co-opted onto the Trustee body.

The Society’s Patrons had been reviewed in the last year and the existing Patrons were: Marcus Binney, Bevis Hillier, Simon Jenkins, Paul Finch, Alan Baxter and Michael Manser. He was pleased to announce that in addition Sir John Tusa, Lady Patty Hopkins, Lord Rogers of Riverside and David Rock had agreed to be Patrons with Paul Maynard, MP as a Parliamentary Adviser to the Society.

## **6. Director’s Address**

Catherine Croft introduced new members of staff since the last AGM: Clare Price (Conservation Adviser) replacing Christina Malathouni and who had been a surveyor and Patric Morley as Co-ordinator. The three year Business Plan 2013-2016 and Work Plan allows us to work strategically towards the Society’s long term goals, without being completely taking over by reactive work in relation to the immediate agenda. This approach had made the Office and Trustees think more about how it should increase income to support the casework primarily through increasing membership which is why the Society is increasing events with other organisations where new members might be recruited. We were involved with the RIBA’s ‘last Tuesdays’ events and the Casson and Richard Rogers exhibitions at the RA this Summer with walks led by C20 Soc for their Friends and our members.

She was closely involved in production of the re-vamped Magazine and paid tribute to the work of David Attwood as volunteer Deputy Editor and Simon Esterson as designer. She was arranging distribution to bookshops and museum outlets in and outside London. Information about events and event applications will be dealt with solely online from issue of the next Magazine (which will contain a list of events and dates) although the Office will still assist those with no access to the internet. Thus she appealed to those not receiving the Society’s E-Newsletter, where events are first advertised, to join the mailing list. She said that she was initially sceptical about social media and Flickr (for images) but was now a firm convert as a means of getting more press coverage especially of casework.

She was pleased that we were beginning to be the recipient of donations from companies, payroll and charitable giving as well as legacies.

## **7. Casework**

The Director gave a resumé of recent casework, with public libraries having been a particular focus, with a feature on them in the latest Magazine which is why we are meeting in one today. Other buildings in the public realm such as Fire Stations (Birmingham, Nottingham) and Police Stations (Farnham) had been casework concerns. The Murals conference in March at Morley College organised by Alan Powers had given a huge boost to the preservation of murals and more exterior murals were being listed without their buildings, for example Bill Mitchell's mural at Hatfield. We were concerned about the future of chartist murals in Newport in Wales.

On long standing cases, Battersea Power Station seemed at last secure but the developers now wanted to take down all four chimneys simultaneously (rather than one at a time and rebuilding each one) which was of concern. Birmingham Central Library was likely to be vacated soon and a use needed to be found for it to avoid demolition. At Preston Bus Station we were trying every avenue to convince the local Council to retain and refurbish it. She emphasised that a lot of casework involved inter-war classical revival buildings, often with damaging alterations proposed, for example at India Buildings in Liverpool where we propose an upgrade of its listing to II\*. On post-war commercial buildings, also a subject of a Society thematic review, EH would not recommend Seifert's NLA House in East Croydon for listing at Grade II which we might challenge.

We were flexible in our approach to possible new uses, for example at Lilian Baylis School in South London where we said it's suitable for conversion to housing which is now happening. At the South Bank Centre proposals we have put our position on the C20 Soc website in which we are saying there is scope for change to the QE Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery but questioning the scale and detail of what is proposed. Finally the Director said she and the Conservation Advisers had done a greatly increased number of TV and radio interviews in the last year including the 'World at One', the 'One Show' and the 'Today' programme.

## **8 Honorary Treasurer's Report**

Ian McInnes reported that the Society made a profit in 2012 of £23-24k overall. A substantial legacy of over £30k had been a great help. Referring to the financial accounts for 2012, he noted that there were a few differences from the previous year. On page 6, Governance costs had increased to over £6k reflecting the costs of outsourcing the accounts and salaries. Publications costs were higher in 2012 as we published a Journal (no. 10 – 'Seventies'). There will now be a Journal every year but donations and/or grants must cover at least 50% of the outlay. The cost of the Magazine is up (£25k in 2012 compared to £14k in 2011) but is a much improved publication and postage and distribution costs have been included in the 2012 figures (unlike in 2011).

The rent we pay to Alan Baxter for space and services at 70 Cowcross Street will increase in 2013 but is still reasonable, especially as we have use of the Gallery for

lectures and conferences for free (and we also keep our archive and publications at his store in Lincolnshire free of charge). Following a query from the floor, Ian McInnes confirmed that the Society was very grateful for this but added that Baxters' also appreciate our highly rated lectures programme which brings people into the building during the evenings

Ian McInnes said that he was pleased to say that Carolyn Parmeter, on election to the Trustee body, would take over as Treasurer, bringing much financial expertise to the post. This would allow him to concentrate on chairing the Casework Sub-Committee. The financial statements for 2012 were approved by a show of hands.

## **9. Honorary Secretary's Report**

Robert Drake said that he wanted to pay tribute to his predecessor Simon Wartnaby for carrying out the work of Secretary for 9 years. He wanted to inform members of the new pattern for AGMs agreed by Trustees of having alternate General Meetings outside London, with 2014's AGM planned for Liverpool (with an event in Blackpool on the Sunday). London AGMs would also generally be held on a Saturday with an associated event to attract members from further afield.

He said that his focus had been to carry through the recommendations of the Governance Review to give greater transparency to the operations of the Society. As part of this he was proposing amendments to the Society's Articles of Association and Rules to remove discrepancies between them and to clarify voting rights and issues relating to subscription renewal. The following motions were proposed:

### **a. To amend the Articles of Association as follows:**

To amend Article 4(3) from “*six months*” to “*three months*” to align the Articles with paragraph 5 of the Rules. This change was agreed by a show of hands.

### **b. To amend the Society's Rules as follows:**

- (i) To add at the end of paragraph 3 of the Society's Rules the following wording:  
*“For the purposes of voting under Article 16(1)(b) of the Articles of Association, ‘two votes for organisations’ applies to organisations in category (3), affiliate membership (non-profit making), and category (4), affiliate membership (corporate) above”.*

This amendment would clarify the voting rights which apply to the different categories of corporate membership listed in paragraph 3 of the Rules.

- (ii) To add at the end of paragraph 4 of the Rules the following wording: *“At Trustees discretion, deductions to contribution rates, for example to facilitate payment by direct debit, may be made”.*

This amendment would confirm that Trustees can, for example, introduce a discount on subscription levels when members elect to change paying their subscriptions by direct debit rather than renewing annually.

(iii) To amend “31 August” to “30 September” in paragraph 6 of the Rules.

This would reduce the period in the previous year from which a subscription for the next year applies.

These changes to the Rules were agreed by a show of hands.

c. **Re-appointment of auditors** - Nigel Wordingham Ltd were re-appointed auditors by a show of hands.

d. **Election of Directors** - Under paragraph 24 of the Articles of Association one-third of the Directors must retire from office each year at the AGM. Under Article 27 (1) Peter Ruback and Robert Drake were coming to end of their terms and were recommended by Directors for re-election. They were re-elected by a show of hands. Four nominations for new Directors were received under Article 27(2): Barnabas Calder, Carolyn Parmeter, Jane Rosier and Simon van Heyningen and were recommended by Directors for election. They were elected by a show of hands.

## **10. Honorary Membership Secretary's report**

Daren Briggs said that there was now a better membership offer in terms of a top quality Magazine issued three times a year, an annual Journal and regular E-Newsletters. Membership numbers remain solid with income increasing from subscriptions from £81k to £86k, without an increase in subscription rates.

The membership database had been overhauled to obtain a better perspective membership levels, types and payment methods. This year members were informed individually if they had not renewed with the first Magazine of the year and this had resulted in over 300 renewing very quickly. He was pleased to say that Jane Rosier would be taking over from him as Hon Membership Secretary.

## **11 Honorary Events Secretary's Report**

Nevil Hopkins said that he was standing down after five years in the role, having raised over £120k in that period. He was pleased to say that Simon van Heyningen would replace him at the end of the year and he would support Simon in the interim, with Rachel Lonsdale continuing to provide administrative support on events.

There had been a wide range of events, with one almost every all undertaken with volunteer effort. Popular events had been repeated with a new members event each year. Booking mostly through the website rather than paper forms helps to advertise and fill places on events at the last minute. Prices were being kept broadly at their current levels, a basic £35 for an all-day coach event without meals which was well way below other comparable Societies. However, there was a shortage of people to run events for which we have plenty of ideas but need more volunteers to lead.

## **12. Regional Group Co-ordinator's Report**

Nicola Rutt said she had taken on this role after becoming a Trustee last year. Following a meeting of regional leads in Birmingham in February, several new Groups were being set up by enthusiastic members in the West Midlands and North East (where a meeting today is being held at the Baltic Centre with prospective members of a NE Group). The Survey of members had been helpful in identifying where an interest in having a regional group lay, particularly in Scotland, the East Midlands, East Anglia and she would be in touch with those members.

Regional groups are important as the ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’ of the Society around the country able to identify casework, make links with local architects, conservation groups and cultural institutions. The Groups should be fun, sociable and fuel our goals. The C20 Soc website would be expanded to have pages for the regional groups and casework.

### **13. North West Group**

Aidan Turner-Bishop, NW group Chair reported that the Group continued to meet alternately in Manchester and Liverpool and had sufficient funds to pay for event expenses. Members were good at getting themselves onto local conservation bodies with the re-development of St Peter’s Square in Manchester continuing to cause concern. The unfortunate de-listing of St John’s RC Church in Timperley (Trafford) by Reynolds and Scott had led to its rapid demolition.

### **14. Any Other Business**

Stella Jundul said that as she did not have a computer, she only found out about the AGM through being a volunteer. Daren Briggs emphasised said that the Society wanted to engage with all members whether or not they had access to email. Peter Ruback said that this delay arose in part from the printing cycle of the Magazine, the recent one having been delayed by over a week and apologised for that.

Robert Drake

Honorary Secretary

June 2013

