



THE
NORWICH
SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR 2019 – SUMMER 2021



INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

This has certainly been one of the most challenging periods for The Norwich Society in its long and successful history. Many things have changed during my first period as Acting Chair. Rachel Kirk left us, but not before she almost single-handedly relocated the Society office to St Martin-At-Palace Plain. I am extremely grateful for all Rachel's hard work on behalf of the Society and wish her well for the future. The Society seems to have a knack of always latching on to just the right person for its Coordinator and I am pleased to say that talent did not let us down. I was delighted to welcome Laura Davey into the role. Laura had

previously been involved with the work of the Society and seamlessly slotted in as our new Coordinator.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a number of operational issues for the Society but it also created opportunities which we were not slow to exploit. Executive and Sub-Committee business moved online and, as you will see throughout this Annual Review, it was business as usual. Understandably the pandemic curtailed much of the social side of the Society with the cancellation of our excellent events programme. However, our well supported Facebook page and the creation of our YouTube Channel has enabled us to continue to keep in touch with you the members and the wider public, stimulating a deeper public understanding and appreciation of the history, character and beauty of this Fine City and for the work of the Society. The Society's Publications Working Group continued to turn out the high quality and much admired *Aspects of Norwich* as well as the annual single-subject publication. It is a testament to all this hard work that our membership has remained almost unchanged throughout this difficult period. Thank you all for your continued support.

Looking to the future, as we finally move out of this tough time, the Society is in good heart. We have substantial work ahead of us with both Anglia Square and the East Norwich redevelopment, but we are hoping to do this in a new era of engagement with both the City Council and other interested parties. We will be seeking to improve our communication with the wider world so that they can readily see what we stand for and what we aim to achieve. From this we aim to grow our membership, and our income, so the Society continues to be well placed to continue the work it has successfully undertaken for the past 98 years.

Thanks are also due to my fellow members of the Executive, past and present, the Chairs of the various committees and their members, and to the volunteers who have supported our online events programme. Without all that expertise and time commitment the Society could not function. We are also indebted to many sponsors and financial supporters whose support enables us to undertake much more work and to a higher standard than would otherwise be possible.

Barry Howell, Acting Chair

THE SOCIETY AND CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES

The Norwich Society acts as a passionate custodian and champion of the built environment and public spaces in Norwich and its surroundings. We help preserve historic built heritage as well as supporting excellence in new design which will become legacies for the future. We also encourage people to explore and enjoy Norwich and shine a spotlight on little-known aspects of Norwich's history for enjoyment and education.

The Society was founded in 1923 and registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in May 2020 (registration number 1189593). It is primarily a voluntary organisation, but it also engages a contractor to provide administrative and support services. It rents an office at St Martin at Palace Church in Norwich.

Note: Due to coronavirus, the 2020 AGM was cancelled and the regular scheduled date for the AGM in April 2021 was postponed. This report therefore covers the period 2019 – mid 2021 as a round-up of activities since the last report was published.

OUR CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES

To encourage public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of Norwich and its surroundings.

To encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic interest in Norwich and its surroundings.

To encourage high standards of Architecture and Town Planning in Norwich and its surroundings.

ENCOURAGING THE PRESERVATION, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF FEATURES OF GENERAL PUBLIC AMENITY OR HISTORIC INTEREST IN NORWICH AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

THE LOCAL LIST

The Local List records properties which are of interest, often in conservation areas, but which fall outside Historic England's listings scheme. The Conservation and Development Committee (CDC) members and volunteers have continued work to extend the scope of the Local List to include areas from the outer Ring Road to the city boundary. Inspections to inform the list were delayed due to Covid, but preliminary work has begun in Lakenham and Eaton.

PUBLIC SEATING REPORT

In the first half of 2019 the Norwich Society's Civic Environment Committee (CEC) conducted a survey of public seating in Norwich city centre. Their findings were presented in a report available on the Society's website,

alongside an atlas showing the location, nature and capacity of the seating.



Seating at Elm Hill



Seating at Hay Hill

MORAY SMITH MURALS

The Society has helped ensure pub-artist Moray Smith's work can continue to be enjoyed, having supported the Bracondale Residents Association to fundraise for the restoration of the panel on the Ber Street pub and agreed a condition with the City Council that the panel on the former Prince of Denmark

pub is not damaged should a change of use application be submitted. In 2019, the Society also rehoused Moray Smith's Panorama of Norwich which is now on permanent display in the entrance to the restaurant at the Maids Head Hotel.

PRESERVATION AND HERITAGE AT RISK

The Society has continued to attend Heritage at Risk meetings which have been sparsely held during the pandemic. The Heritage at Risk meetings review the condition of critical buildings in the city and monitor the relevance of maintenance to their continued use and existence in the city. The meetings are chaired by the City Council and have representatives from the Norwich Society and others concerned with the heritage of the city.

The Society has also continued to work with the Norwich Preservation Trust, bringing forward properties in the city for renovation and improvement. In the past two years this has covered the renovation of 16 Elm Hill and preparatory research work on Ninhams Court. It is hoped that Ninhams Court can be the next project to be physically progressed by the Norwich Preservation Trust.

VIEWS REPORT

In 2020, The CEC created a report assessing views from River Wensum bridges and strategic views of the city centre with the intention to encourage the City Council to protect them. Views were documented in both summer and winter as a matter of record, and the report can be read on the Society's website.



Fye Bridge, downstream summer



Whitefriars bridge, downstream summer

ENCOURAGING HIGH STANDARDS OF ARCHITECTURE AND TOWN PLANNING IN NORWICH AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

DESIGN AND CRAFTSMANSHIP AWARDS

Following the decision to link the Society's awards scheme with that of the Norfolk Association of Architects and Civic Voice, the inaugural Design and Craftsmanship Awards were held in autumn 2019. The DCA awards aim to celebrate building projects throughout Norfolk which positively affect our built environment, with categories including both new-build projects and conservation work.



The Sir Bernard Feilden Conservation Architecture Award

The winner of the Norwich Society's Sir Bernard Feilden Conservation Architecture Award was Earlham Hall, with other notable Norwich winners and commendations going to Kett's Heights, Pablo Fanque House and Goldsmith Street. The next DCA awards are planned for October 2021.



Kett's Heights received a Commendation in the Civic and Community category

ANGLIA SQUARE

At the request of the Norwich Society and others, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government called-in in the Weston Homes planning application for the Anglia Square site, which comprised 1,200 homes as well as a hotel, retail and commercial premises. The Society registered as a Rule 6 party to enable it to take a full part in the public inquiry and also set up a working group to prepare its case, with the two main

objections being the extremely high density of the proposal and its poor architectural design. In January 2020 a public debate was held at The Forum in collaboration with Historic England, Save Britain's Heritage and The Cathedral Magdalen & St Augustine's Forum to discuss the future of Anglia Square ahead of the public inquiry.

In November 2020, the Secretary of State rejected the developer's plans and Weston Homes decided to withdraw a High Court challenge to the decision in April 2021. In response, The Norwich Society publicly welcomed the opportunity for meaningful engagement going forward in a press release circulated to the EDP. The society has re-convened the Anglia Square working group to continue to assess the situation and actively look into how we can make best use of this restart to ensure that future plans meet the needs of the city and make a positive contribution to the future of Norwich's built environment.

TOWN PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

The Greater Norwich Local Plan is being prepared by Norwich City Council and its partner authorities and will help shape the

future of the city for the next 15 years. It is the position of the Society that it is very much in Norwich's interest that a new local plan is agreed and in place at the earliest opportunity. A detailed response was submitted by the Strategic Planning and Transport Committee (SP&T) in March 2021 and this committee will continue to monitor the Plan's ongoing production until it is finalised and adopted next year.

The Society is now also participating as a stakeholder in the East Norwich Masterplan, which will cover the redevelopment of a large area which includes the Colman's site, the Deal Ground and Utilities site.

TRANSPORT, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAYS ISSUES

As part of the Society's wish to contribute constructively to building back better, stronger and greener, representations have been made by the SP&T on a large number of issues including measures intended to improve bus and cycle movement around the city. A press release in May 2020 called for the implementation of immediate measures to support cycling and walking as an essential part of a sustainable transport

policy for Norwich. Another press release in June 2021 expressed concern that plans to weld Carrow Bridge shut could become a permanent solution, thus ending the city's centuries-old history as a port connected by river to the North Sea.

PLANNING APPRAISAL PROCESS

In 2019, The Planning Appraisal Committee (PAC) changed its mode of operation to a weekly comment arrangement as comments under the previous monthly arrangement were not reaching the City Council planning committee in time to be properly considered. While more complicated, this is felt to have increased the impact that the Society was having on the consideration of applications.

PLANNING REFORMS

In the last year, SP&T has been leading on the Society's response to the Government's proposed planning reforms. Joining with many others, including civic societies across the country, the Society has condemned the present proposals as severely affecting the community's ability to affect development proposals in their area. The Society will continue to lobby to have these proposals withdrawn.

CLIMATE CHANGE INTERNSHIP

The Society set up a climate change working group, one aim being to raise money to fund an intern to assess possible actions. Donations totalling £800 were received from Mills & Reeve, The Goodman Trust, Larking Gowen and Taxassist. The intern worked with local businesses from the Norwich Business Improvement District (Norwich BID) office in the spring of 2020, resulting in reports on 'Community Renewables', 'Identification of Circular Processes, Products, and Solutions' and 'Zero Waste Schools'.

ENCOURAGING PUBLIC INTEREST IN AND CARE FOR THE BEAUTY, HISTORY AND CHARACTER OF NORWICH AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

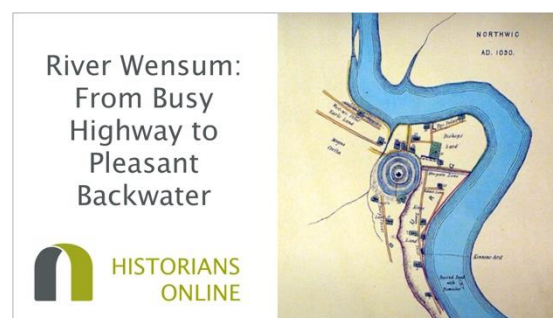
TALKS AND EVENTS

In 2019 the Publicity and Events Committee (PEC) moved its evening lecture and day-time talk series to the auditorium at The Forum to meet capacity demand and due to the excellent visual facilities and technical support available. To cover the additional cost, a charge of £1 was introduced for members.

In 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, all in-person events were cancelled. The Society instead moved to online events and launched a YouTube channel (youtube.com/c/TheNorwichSociety), including a pre-recorded video about the history of the River Wensum to coincide with Heritage Open Days, and later covering topics such as Norwich's undercrofts, places of education and the Guildhall.

In April 2021, live online talks were introduced via the Zoom webinar platform, and these have covered the topics of the 18th century anti-slavery

movement and Miriam Pratt who was a Norwich suffragette. As of June 2021, the Society's videos have been watched over 9,000 times and overall feedback to the live talks was very positive.



Our videos can be watched on YouTube

PUBLICATIONS

The Society's Publications Working Group (PWG) has continued to publish its twice-annual *Aspects of Norwich* book which includes illustrated articles across a variety of topics about Norwich's history and the influences making today's city. The Society also aims to produce a single-subject publication each year, looking at a specific topic in detail. *Norwich Leading the Way: Social Housing* was released in autumn 2019 and *The Architects of Norwich: Norwich in the Twenty-First Century* was published in spring 2021.

Publications are provided to members for free and are additionally available for the



THE ARCHITECTS OF NORWICH
NORWICH IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
THE NORWICH SOCIETY JON BOON RIBA

*Front cover of our 21st Century
Architecture publication*

general public to buy at Jarrold and City Bookshop. Both member and wider community feedback continues to be very complimentary about the Society's publications.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The Society has continued to grow its social media presence. As of June 2021, the Norwich Society Facebook page (@TheNorwichSociety) had nearly 6,000 followers. A separate page for the Norwich Society Historians, which encourages followers to post queries and share expertise, had nearly 1,000 members. The Twitter account (@NorwichSociety), which offers more instantaneous news, had over 1,200 followers; a 'live' day-by-day account of

Kett's Rebellion in 2019 and a series looking at Norwich's architectural features running across 2020 were particularly well received.

The Norwich Society @NorwichSociety · 8 Jul 2019
On this day 1549, after Wymondham's annual feast weekend, rebels start protesting land enclosures, destroying hedges and fences. Follow the next 8 weeks, as we uncover what happened day-by-day, as our account has a Kett's Rebellion takeover! #OTD #NorwichHistory #KettsRebellion



Norfolk Historic Buildings and 3 others

3 22 52

The Norwich Society @NorwichSociety · 22 Jul 2019
Thousands of rebels charge from Mousehold, swimming across the River Wensum between Cow Tower and Bishops Gate. A truce is discussed but fails, and as the Herald flees, Kett captures the city. #OTD #NorwichHistory #KettsRebellion



1 4 11

The Norwich Society @NorwichSociety · 6 Aug 2019
With Kett continuing to hold Norwich, let's look at some of his demands! Demand 1 asks to stop the enclosure of land - the exception made for growing saffron indicates the grievance is focused on grazing land rather than agriculture. #NorwichHistory #KettsRebellion



2 3 8

Part of the Kett's Rebellion Twitter series

ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

OFFICE CHANGES

In spring 2020, the Society was asked to vacate the Assembly House premise, and a new office was found at St. Martin at Palace Plain owned by the Norwich Historic Churches Trust. The current office address is now St Martin at Palace Church, 15 St Martin-at-Palace Plain, Norwich, NR3 1RW.



The new office at St, Martin at Palace Plain

The Society has also seen a change in Coordinator, with Rachel Kirk moving on to a new role elsewhere. The new appointee, Laura Davey, started in March 2020. Laura has been volunteering with the Norwich Society since 2019, and in her part-time role as the Coordinator, she manages the day-to-day operations and

provides administrative support to the Trustees, committees and Society members. She can be contacted via the same details as before, by emailing admin@thenorwichsociety.org.uk or calling 07503 951195.

GOVERNANCE

At the 2019 AGM, members approved the Society to start proceedings to convert from a Charitable Trust to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. CIO status is a form of legal entity designed for non-profit organisations in the United Kingdom; the main benefits are that the new entity has legal personality, the ability to conduct business in its own name, and limited liability so that its members and trustees will not have to contribute in the event of financial loss.

The Norwich Society became a CIO in May 2020 under the Charity Number 1189593. The Society's current constitution can be found at thenorwichsociety.org.uk/about/who-we-are.

The Society's governing constitution provides for the management of the Society to be in the hands of an Executive Committee, who are also the Trustees. The Executive Committee consists of four

Officers - Chair, Vice-Chair, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary - and up to eight other members, to a maximum of twelve in total.

Due to the restrictions of the coronavirus pandemic the AGM scheduled for April 2020 was cancelled, but as the Society's constitution restricts the length of time a member can hold office, it was necessary to make new officer appointments to the Executive Committee. Under the new CIO Constitution all offices and Executive Committee member roles are open for election at the AGM 2021.

Current Officers

Acting Chair - Barry Howell
Acting Vice Chair - Jon Boon
Acting Honorary Secretary - David Taylor
Acting Honorary Treasurer - Neil Sturgeon

Current Executive Members

Paul Watson
Kate Nash
Michael Jordan
Simeon Jackson

MEMBERSHIP

After the 2021 renewals process, The Norwich Society had 732 individual members, largely stable across the past year (736 in 2020) although somewhat down from a peak in 2018 of 812. Over this same period, life membership has risen slightly, but since 2020 has plateaued and currently stands at 133 members.

Although the Society continues to be supported by 14 corporate and not for profit memberships, this has fallen from 27 organisations at the end of 2018.

Gift membership was introduced at the end of 2019 as a scheme for members looking for presents to give to friends and relatives, resulting in a number of new members. The switch to online membership has also been well received, and online members now comprise the majority, with 468 online members compared to 264 with postal records as of June 2021.

FINANCE

Year ended 31st December 2019

The Society's total income for the year ended 31st December 2019 was £26,563 compared to £27,248 in the previous year, with the decrease mainly being due to a fall in income from corporate memberships. The main sources of income continued to be membership, events and sales of publications. Total expenditure was £40,592 compared to £35,826 in 2018, with the increase mainly being due to 2019 including the first amortisation charge of the website and rebranding costs. Apart from this, the main expenses continued to be staff costs and office rent, all of which were in line with the previous year.

The slight reduction in total income, combined with the amortisation charge, meant the Society incurred a deficit in 2019 of £14,029 and therefore needed to draw on our reserves. At 31st December 2019, the Society's total reserves amounted to £82,556.

Year ended 31st December 2020

For the year ended 31st December 2020, the Society's total income was £33,633. However, this included generous legacies totalling £15,000 – excluding these, total

income was £18,633 therefore approximately £8,000 lower than in 2019. This reduction was mainly due to the impact of Covid-19. Total expenditure for 2020 was £46,763, which included a rent settlement payment of £8,000 to The Assembly House.

A deficit of £13,130 was incurred in 2020, which meant that we needed to draw on our reserves again. At 31st December 2020, the Society's total reserves amounted to £69,426.

Six months to 30th June 2021

In the first half of 2021, the Society's total income was £14,164 compared to £24,517 in the same period of 2020. However, last year's total includes legacy income of £10,000 – excluding this, total income in the first half of 2021 was virtually the same as in 2020. Total expenditure in the first six months of 2021 amounted to £16,630, compared to £20,521 in 2020.

A deficit of £2,466 was incurred in the first six months of 2021. At 30th June 2021, the Society's total reserves amounted to £66,960.

SPONSORSHIP AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

The Society would like to thank its corporate members for their ongoing support.

The Executives would also like to extend a special thank you to the following organisations for their generosity in providing the following assistance:

Postage administration and costs:
Cozens-Hardy and Larking Gowen

Publication printing costs:
The Paul Bassham Trust

Publication advertising:
Cozens-Hardy and City Bookshop

Design and Craftsmanship Awards sponsorship:
Taylor Maxwell, Loveday & Partners, King + Co, Modern Method Construction and Hussey Knights

Climate change intern funding:
Mills & Reeve, The Goodman Trust, Larking Gowen and Taxassist

CONTACT US

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