## **MEET THE CANDIDATES**

# The Norwich Society Annual General Meeting 2024



Personal statements from candidates whom we currently know are standing for election at the 2024 AGM.



## STANDING FOR VICE-CHAIR and HONORARY SECRETARY

### David Taylor, re-election.

I came from Canada to the UEA for a post graduate degree over 40 years ago and like so many students made a home in Norwich. I worked in Norwich City centre for over 38 years and retired several years ago from my role as Partnership Secretary at Cozens-Hardy LLP. Norwich has a unique character which includes both its historic roots and modern developments. I joined the Norwich Society to help advocate for the protection and improvement of Norwich City centre. I am particularly interested in how we commute into Norwich for work and how we move within the city centre while enhancing its environment. I have been involved with the Strategic Planning and Transport Committee for ten years, a member of the Executive Committee for eight years, and Hon. Secretary for the last five years.

#### STANDING FOR HONORARY TREASURER

## Neil Sturgeon, re-election.

As the Society's current Treasurer, I would like to stand for re-election to this role. I have been the Society's Treasurer for the last six years. During this time, I have enjoyed working with the Executive Committee, finding out more about what the Society does and the benefits which it brings to the city. I am a qualified accountant and have spent all of my working life in finance roles – for the first 27 years of my career I worked in a regional accountancy practice progressing from trainee to manager. I then made the decision to move into a finance role in industry, and now work as the finance manager in a large farming business. I believe that the skills which have learnt so far during my career, as well as my experience of being the Society's Treasurer for the last four years, mean I am ideally suited to continue in this role.

## STANDING AS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS (Up To 8 Roles Available)

### John Howkins, re-election.

I was elected as a Trustee in 2021 and am a member of the Strategy Planning and Transport Committee. I am committed to strengthening the Society as the leading voice for the city's built environment, its historical fabric, its beauty and its day-to-day liveability. This requires raising awareness of and protecting the existing environment and ensuring all future developments enhance the city rather than detract from it. I believe the Society's work on Weston Homes' proposed development for Anglia Square greatly improved the outcome. Norwich needs the new Anglia Square to uphold rather than detract from the city's cultural, social and economic life.

I have an AA (Diploma) in Urban Planning and an MA at the Architectural Association School of Architecture. I have lived near Wymondham for 40 years in an Elizabethan house. I am life member of SPAB. I was a trustee of the Norfolk & Norwich Festival for seven years, 2012-19, and am a governor of Ormiston Victory Academy in Costessey. I am the author of 'The Creative Economy', 'Creative Ecologies' and 'Invisible Work'. I have been a board member of several companies and CIOs and have experience of strategy, fund-raising and marketing.

I want to continue to strengthen the Society as the champion of Norwich's urban environment now and in the future.

### Michael Jordan, re-election.

I am standing for re-election to the Executive Committee, having served on it since June 2020. I am currently the Chairman of the Society's Strategic Planning and Transport Committee and also a member of the Planning Appraisal Committee and Conservation Committee.

In the last couple of years I have been leading the Society's response to the latest plans for Anglia Square and have also represented the Society at the Greater Norwich Development Plan examination.

I am interested in helping to protect all that is wonderful about this fine city, but also in encouraging the sorts of new initiatives that will further enhance Norwich and enable it to recover from the shocks of the last few years. I hope that my experience of working within planning authorities will help the Society to be increasingly influential in the challenging times ahead.

## Willem Buttinger, re-election.

I moved to Norwich in 2015 from Kenley on the borders of London and Surrey. I have a brother who has lived in Norwich for 25 years. Except for one job I have worked whole life in London for a number of public and quasi-public bodies in the areas of finance and project management, including: Local Govt; NHS; Housing Corporation-funds and regulates housing associations; London Docklands Development Corporation-urban redevelopment; Post Office-setting up new parcel business; London Buses-privatisation; Housing Associations- new associations on transfer of local Authority Housing Stock; Audit Commission; Home Office-resolving one billion pounds of outstanding grant claims; and a number of non-executive directorships.

On retirement I was heavily involved in community work with: Kenley Resident's Association; Kenley Common Fun Day; Conservation-on the North Downs; Ramblers and All Saints Church. On moving to Norwich, having no immediate voluntary work commitments, my wife and I renovated our house on Park Lane, with much help from local builders. I have gradually become involved with local environmental organisations, as this has been a growing concern of mine since the 1970s with the publication of Limits to Growth by the Club of Rome.

This involvement prompted me to organise 'The Norfolk Climate Change Conference' on-line in 2020; 'A Bold Vision Of Hope For A Sustainable Future' in 2021 at the Norwich Science Festival, and in collaboration with The Norwich Society in the run up to the 2022 May elections, 'How should Norwich Adapt to the Adverse Consequences of Climate Change' held in the Norwich Castle Auditorium. All 3 events are available on YouTube. At present I am working with Norwich Friends of The Earth to organise Norfolk's Healthy Environment Day on 10th June where up to 26 organisations will have stands on the Millennium Plain and four speakers in St Peter Mancroft church. I am also working on proposals for the society to produce, online at least, a 'vision for Norwich' in time for our centenary next year.

## Alan Theobald, re-election.

I am the current chair of the Civic Environment Committee. As a member of the CEC I have been involved in bringing diverse subjects such as Clocks and Sundials and City Seating to the members attention. I have long been fascinated by the history of Norwich and enjoy researching, discovering new aspects of its past, encouraging the preservation of we have and celebrating the new that enhances our heritage.

## Karen Watling, election

I moved to Norwich last August to reside here permanently after a lifetime of working at different places in the UK and in South Africa. I was born in Kings Lynn, Norfolk, and have known and loved the city since childhood. I have a degree in archaeology, and also have an informed passion for history and architecture, but am a qualified accountant by profession working in local government: now as an interim for hire! I was however Norwich City Council's Chief Finance Officer for three years up to November 2019.

I am currently a member of the Buildings Conservation Committee and am about to be one of the Society's nominated trustees on the board of the Norwich Preservation Trust and thereby hope to contribute to the Trust's exciting work to renovate 6-9 Ninham's Court.

If elected to the Executive Committee I would bring the experiences and skills I have gained from my professional work and a willingness to proactively help the Society be a strong champion for both protecting and improving the city.