

THE
MONTPELIER
AND
CLIFTON HILL
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

Executive Committee

Jim Gowans, Chairman
Corinne Attwood, Honorary Secretary
Chris Jackson, Honorary Treasurer
Tony Davenport, Honorary Membership Secretary
Michael Fisher
Graham Towers
Jack Tyson (*appointed*)

Co-opted Members to the Executive Committee

Carol Dyhouse
Constance Lawrence
Gerry Lawrence
Brian Morris
Jane Osler
Ninka Willcock

Independent Examiner of Financial Statements

Arthur Collins OBE

Subscriptions

Due 1st April each year
Single - £10
Couple - £15
Corporate - £30

Executive Committee Report

Your committee has met on nine occasions since 1st April last year. Six trustees were elected at the AGM 2015 and these trustees appointed a further trustee Jack Tyson in June. Jack returns to the committee having been chairman until about ten years ago. Six members were co-opted including Gerry and Constance Lawrence who are serving for the first time, having joined the Association relatively recently. Michael Fisher has completed three years as a trustee and having decided at the outset not to seek re-election after that period is not therefore a candidate this year. We are very grateful for Michael's contribution, especially his role in monitoring the planning applications for the former ice rink site at the rear of Wykeham Terrace, and we are confident that he will continue to be a source of advice and information on an occasional basis.

The former ice rink site adjoins our conservation area and has been subject to two planning applications since 2012. The first, for a fifty six room serviced apartment hotel, was approved by the Planning Committee whilst the second, for thirty one residential units and some office use was refused. The applicant's appeal against refusal was subsequently dismissed by the secretary of state's planning inspector who stated that the proposal would be harmful to the significance of the listed church of St Nicholas, to the listed Wykeham Terrace and to the conservation area. He also stated that the proposal would be harmful to the living conditions of the residents nearby. Unfortunately the apartment hotel, which has been given permission, is more or less of the same size as the residential building which was refused and, if built, will dominate St Nicholas' church yard and Wykeham Terrace and cause harm to the conservation area as a consequence.

The other major development which has concerned us this past year is the i360 observation tower, now in the final stages of construction on the sea front near the derelict West Pier. The 531 foot high steel tower is already in place and can only be described as an appalling blight on the views from within our conservation area especially those from Powis Villas and Victoria Street. It now appears, for example, that an industrial chimney has been placed next to the spire of St Mary Magdalen Church. A letter has been sent to the three local party leaders and our member of parliament expressing our Association's dismay but acknowledging that we will have to live with this ugly structure for the foreseeable future. A letter has also been sent to the managers of CityClean deploring the state of the communal waste and recycling bins on our area's streets. Our letter suggested that the proposal to install more bins was ill conceived and that more frequent collections was a better way

forward. The inadequate repair and maintenance of these bins is a further problem whilst the various designs of the bins are simply not fit for purpose in the first place.

On a more encouraging note it can be mentioned that the local list of heritage assets was revised in 2015 and a number of buildings and structures in our area were added including the Lainson building of the Royal Alex, Temple Heights and Clifton Terrace Garden. These additions were mainly thanks to the efforts of our former chairman Mick Hamer and although local listing does not have the same importance as national listing it must be taken into account when planning applications affecting the building or structure are considered. Similarly encouraging has been the number of properties restored or improved by their owners in ways which have enhanced the character of the conservation area. The Conservation Award Plate was presented to the owners of 28 Clifton Road for the quite exceptional restoration of both the interior and exterior of this large 1860s detached house and for the very imaginative improvements made. These were carefully documented in the article our award organiser, Gabi Tubbs, produced for the July Newsletter.

The former Baptist Church site in Montpelier Place remains undeveloped for another year having last been in use in 2013. The Grace Baptist Trust Corporation has been very willing to talk to us about the future of this site but without being able to say, except in very general terms, what is likely to be proposed. This is currently the most important development site in the conservation area and whilst there can be no objection to a mix of community and residential use, the design, scale and massing of any building will need to be very carefully considered.

The Association has taken corporate membership of the Victorian Society and continues to be represented on the Conservation Advisory Group to the City Council, principally by Corinne Attwood but substituted from time to time by Jack Tyson. The Association has also maintained its programme of lectures. The AGM lecture in St Michael's Church was delivered by Malcolm Dawes of the Brighton Society whose account of the transformation of the former Royal Alex hospital site was illustrated by his own excellent photography. This was followed in October by Dr Geoffrey Mead's autumn lecture: an "armchair tour" of the area which was based on his highly successful walking tours held during the Brighton Fringe Festival. In March the spring lecture was held "off-site". It took the form of a guided tour of The Keep at Falmer by the Brighton and Hove City Archivist and was followed by a convivial lunch in Falmer House. The summer party was again kindly hosted by Pauline Messum and St Nicholas Church was the ever popular venue for the Christmas Party.

Following the example set by Mick Hamer a newsletter has been produced three times by the new editorial team. Your chairman is particularly grateful to the help he has received from our member Stephanie Pain as our main photographer and to

Tony Davenport, who in addition to his duties as membership secretary, has been responsible for the technical aspects of the layout, thus saving the Association significant costs. Tony has also made important improvements to our IT systems, introducing, for example, online payments. Interestingly one third of the summer party tickets were sold using this system. The web site was updated after the AGM but since then the monthly updates have not been regularly maintained although the newsletter and email have provided an effective means of communication with members and the wider community.

Membership subscriptions remain at a very modest level and for the time being no increases are envisaged. The income is currently sufficient to cover the main item of expenditure which is the printing of the newsletter. Thanks to volunteers who hand deliver most of these locally, postage costs to those members now living outside the area are manageable. The summer and Christmas parties are intended to offer members and their guests events which are run at cost, again depending on the help of volunteers, and which are not advertised to the public, unlike the lectures which are free to members and public alike. These social events play an important role in facilitating contact between the committee and members and between members themselves and this in turn allows us as an association to pursue more effectively our charitable aims of promoting high standards of planning and design and of preserving our area's historic character.

Jim Gowans, *Chairman*, May 2016

Treasurer's Report

The next two pages provide the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2016.

At the time of writing and since the beginning of the new Association year Gift Aid claims for three years have been submitted to HMRC. Whilst our position at the bank continues to be healthy the further fall in subscription income is noted. However, some of this is due to the delay in the payment of standing new standing orders. The increased use of email and hand delivery of newsletters together with the help of in-house technical expertise has kept costs down to a minimum. Further savings will be made with the switch to new insurers next year.

Chris Jackson, *Honorary Treasurer*, May 2016

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have examined the Financial Statements on pp. 6 & 7, without carrying out an audit, and confirm that they are in accordance with the records, information and explanations provided to me.

Arthur Collins, *Independent Examiner*, May 2016

Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st March 2016

	Notes			2014-15	
Fixed Assets					
Wootton Print	1	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
Current Assets					
Debtors	2	5.41		5.41	
Conservation Plates	3	280.00		320.00	
Room Hire Deposit	4	100.00		100.00	
Cash at Bank (Current Account)		2,880.40	3,265.81	3,199.76	3,625.17
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities	5	30.00	30.00	140.00	140.00
Total Assets less Total Liabilities			<u>3,360.81</u>	<u>3,610.17</u>	
Reserves					
Opening Reserves		3,504.17		3,669.06	
Deficit for Year		-389.36	<u>3,114.81</u>	-164.89	<u>3,504.17</u>

Notes

- 1 The Wootton Print is in the Committee's possession.
- 2 £5.41 carried over from 2012-13 and relates to claims/counterclaims made against the Association by Roger Amerena. Please refer to the Association's 2012-13 Annual Report for further details.
- 3 Represents seven Conservation Plates. The 2014-15 plate has been awarded.
- 4 Held by Brighton & Hove High School on account as a deposit relating to room hire.
- 5 Receipts of subscriptions in the period January - March 2016 which will be counted in the Financial Year 2016-17.

Approved by the Executive Committee on 31 May 2016.

Chris Jackson
Honorary Treasurer

Corinne Attwood
Honorary Secretary

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2016

	Notes			2014-15	
Income					
Subscriptions		1,216.00		1,331.00	
Donations		27.00		80.00	
Events		924.51		1,058.00	
Gift Aid	1	0.00	2,167.51	0.00	2,469.00
Expenditure					
Events		400.35		744.79	
Meetings		550.90		240.31	
Leaflets/Stationery		185.74		176.15	
Admin	2	0.00		42.50	
Memberships		281.90		281.90	
Newsletters		1,068.00		1,057.25	
Gifts/Donations		29.98		10.99	
Use of Conservation Plates		40.00	2,556.87	80.00	2,633.89
Excess of Expenditure over Income			<u>-389.36</u>		<u>-164.89</u>

Notes

- 1 Gift Aid claims for 2013-14, 2014-15 & 2015-16 to be made.
- 2 Expenses in the Admin category have decreased this year due to increased electronic communication.

The Report Cover is in the same colour as that originally used for the exterior of buildings in the conservation area.

The Logo of the Association is inspired by the Victorian cast iron and china street signs.