



THE COOKHAM SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 257224

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR 2020

Officers, Committee and Trustees

The Officers of the Society during the year were: Chairman: Mr Tom Denniford; Vice Chairman and Secretary: Mrs Lysette Penston; Treasurer: Mr Mark Chapman; Membership Secretary: Mr Ossie Wardell-Yerburgh.

The Trustees and Committee Members during the year were: the above and Ms Fiona Beaumont, Sir William Perry, Mrs Liz Peters, Mr Richard Scarff and Mr Barry Weare.

Objects and administration

The Society's Objects are to protect, preserve, and improve features of general public amenity and to defend sites of historic, architectural or artistic interest, or natural interest or beauty within the geographical area known as "the Cookhams" in Berkshire. The charity is neither political nor sectarian.

The Society held its Annual General Meeting on 5th March 2020, which was attended by 28 people including the officers and committee. Its Planning and Environment sub-committee met regularly to review current planning applications and to continue the work described below.

The Society's current membership at the year's end, including 2020 arrears, was 1,103 people. Our membership information is held on a dedicated data base. The Society considers it is GDPR compliant and the relevant information about compliance is set out on our website.

The Society continues to maintain a public liability insurance policy to cover its activities, mainly in relation to outside events.

Due to the restraints caused by the Covid-19 virus it became necessary for the committee and its Planning and Environment Sub-committee to meet virtually for much of the year, but this did not have a negative impact on our ability to operate.

Financial Review

At 31st December, the Society's funds stood at £53,770. A surplus was achieved during the year and this demonstrates that costs were kept under control. The outlook for 2021 appears stable, subject to any extra costs which may be incurred on planning issues. In addition, the Society holds funds of £1,364 on a trustee basis for two village interest groups which have already contributed towards professional fees incurred on specific planning issues affecting the groups concerned.

It has been gratifying that many people who have renewed their membership have also chosen to make donations to our funds.

The Society's policy is to maintain reserves at a level which will form the basis of a contingency fund should a major planning issue arise again. Recognising the current cost of professional advice, an amount of £50 - £60,000 is currently viewed as appropriate for the purpose.

Activity Report.

- Planning

One of the Society's principal preoccupation continued to be the monitoring of planning applications relating to Cookham parish. During the year our Planning and Environment sub-committee looked at 226 applications and submitted representations in respect of 29 of them. We also made representations to 1 appeal. The Examination of the new Borough Local Plan (BLP) resumed in the autumn in a virtual format. The Society made 12 appearances on a variety of topics.

The Society was invited to join the working party set up by Cookham Parish Council to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Cookham and Mr Scarff was nominated as our representative.

The committee has decided to not to make a Design Award this year.

- Environment

We continued to be actively involved in discussions about the future use of Battlemead Common, which is a crucial component in the removal of water during flood events in Cookham and we have been working to ensure this remains the case.

- Events and publicity

The Society only published two newsletters during 2020, which were distributed both by e-mail and hard copy. The website is updated regularly. Our Facebook page now attracts 438 followers.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 8th February 2021.

Tom Denniford
Chairman