



# Annual Review 2016-17

## THE MOSELEY SOCIETY

Caring for an historic area of Birmingham

Charity no. 512211

### Co-Chairs' Report (Helen Minovi and Geoff Rees)

The Moseley Society doesn't claim to be entirely responsible for the reputation that Moseley has for being one of the best suburban places in which to live, but we are proud of our contribution. You will see from the various sub-committee reports, we work hard, along with other local community groups, to protect the built environment and support and enhance cultural aspects of life in Moseley. This year the Planning and Licensing group has been extremely active. The Local History section has been very busy as have the gardeners at the Dovecote, those who welcome hundreds of visitors to the icehouse and the programme planners. The task of keeping an eye on membership and informing current members of what is happening belongs to the Marketing, News and Membership group and our Treasurer. We, as Co-Chairs would like to thank everyone concerned.

We wait to see how the wider political issues of the General Election, Brexit and the West Midlands Mayoral Elections affect Moseley.

In terms of the Society's well being and future sustainability, the Moseley Society Committee will again concentrate on increasing membership as we are very conscious that our profile in terms of age and diversity does not reflect the local population; please encourage your neighbours and younger family members to join and assist us to maintain the Moseley we know and love.



Photo: Brett Wilde

### Secretary's Report (Fiona Adams)

The response from Moseley to the Local Government Boundary Commission was so vociferous that the Commission went back to

the drawing-board, conducted a second consultation and when its final proposals were published they revealed a two-councillor Moseley Ward stretching from Moseley Bog to the MAC and Highbury Park to Balsall Heath Park. And when we pointed out that no one had asked for Balsall Heath Park to be included in Moseley Ward, even that line was redrawn. Assuming that the changes are implemented as planned in May 2018, by this time next year I hope we will be contemplating a very different way of organising ourselves in Moseley. Meanwhile parliamentary boundaries are under review.

I hope you will agree that, although not yet fully up to speed on social media, we do our best to keep you informed of what is going on locally. In the last year there has been little action on several anticipated items – the 20mph zones have come into effect but cycle lanes are being rethought, there has been no progress on residents' parking schemes or a new bus service to Birmingham University or the hospitals.

There are increasing numbers of homeless people begging on the streets in Moseley and, although the 'Public Spaces Protection Order' came into effect in 2016, there are fewer police officers available to implement the new powers. The Moseley Alternative Giving Campaign offers us a way to show our compassion without risking feeding drug and alcohol addiction.

The city council is still not cleaning the car park. Our stalwart volunteers face ever larger amounts of rubbish to collect. They were rewarded by being assessed as "Thriving" for the "It's Your Neighbourhood" RHS Awards.



## **Treasurer's Report (Phil Williams)**

Expenditure slightly exceeded income in the year to 31 December 2016. This was due to a number of small factors but also due to the decision to spend some money on maintaining the Dovecote gardens. This was financed by specific donations received in 2015. Other items of income received and expenditure incurred in 2016 are similar in amounts to 2015 figures.

Our reserves continue to be healthy. Unrestricted reserves in the year ended 31 December 2015 grew to £9,330 from a previous balance of £6,262. Unrestricted reserves at 31 December 2016 are £9,160.

The income and expenditure shown in the accounts for restricted funds mainly relate to the Moor Green Allotments project undertaken by the Local History group. The reserves remaining mainly relate to the Local History Archive Project and at 31 December 2016 are £1,943 (2015 - £1,894).

## **Marketing, News & Membership (Sally Wright, Mike Marlow, Helen Minovi, Geoff Rees, John Rouse, Ray Tier, Geoff Williams and Fiona Adams)**

During the year, the group has been concentrating on Membership. One of the ongoing tasks is to redesign an updated membership application form, with a possible



**THE MOSELEY SOCIETY**

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new logo for the Moseley Society.

To make things simpler, we are encouraging current members to set up standing orders with Lloyds Bank. More and more people have been doing this, but Geoff Williams, the Membership Secretary still has the task of sending out reminders to people without standing orders. It appears that in the last financial year some of these reminders went astray. Fiona Adams and Geoff Williams have been working together to rectify the problem.

Quarterly Newsletters have been produced and members have either received email copies or hard copies – sometimes both. In between the Newsletters, Fiona Adams has been emailing members with news about local events and happenings. Ray Tier has been very diligent in keeping the website up to date and the History Group is also on Facebook.

Last year's successful petition to the Local Government Boundary Commission showed the

importance of having a strong voice in the community.

## **Dovecote & Icehouse (Helen Minovi, Roy Cockel and Paul Lindley)**

The nature of gardening means there is always work in progress. Regular pruning, weeding and hoeing go on, and recently the focus has been on clearing the overgrown area to the left of the gate. All this work produces plenty of material for our compost bins (with their "black gold"), and the shredder is always busy. Some things, like our knees, are wearing out over time. We've replaced some roses and lavenders, and we need new paths. Sadly the Newton Wonder apple tree was broken in half – probably fatally – by Storm Doris. The honeysuckle may yet survive.



A small loyal band of volunteers make an invaluable contribution to the upkeep and development of the garden. In 2016 we took part in the RHS "It's your Neighbourhood" scheme and achieved Level 5 "Outstanding" and also received a Special Achievement Award from Moseley in Bloom.

We open to visitors each month from April to September, and are frequently visited by staff, patients and families from Moseley Hall Hospital. We also took part in Open Gardens, and Heritage Open Day.

The icehouse continues to delight visitors and we are grateful to Kate Booth and her team of guides who give up so much time to welcome visitors and tell them about the history of the building. During the festivals in the park so many people visited that the clicker-counter wore out and had to be replaced. This year the icehouse was featured in the music festival programmes, resulting in a significant increase in visitor numbers.

## **Programme (Helen Minovi, Robert Orme, John Underwood, Ray Tier)**

Our programme began in September with Heritage Open Day and finishes with the AGM, with a series of rich and varied programme of talks and the Quiz along the way. There were

locally-based themes such as Sarehole Mill and its water supply; and Moor Green Allotments; several set in Birmingham: the REP; the Back to Backs; Birmingham Statues; and more. We also heard about Victorian cemeteries; the first day of the battle of the Somme; and the Dissenters.

We continue to review which topics to include in future programmes, how best to publicise our events and when to meet. We are considering occasional daytime events.

We are very grateful to all our excellent speakers who help to make our talks so inspiring and enjoyable and to our members for their encouraging attendance and support.

## **Planning & Licensing**

**(Fiona Adams, Ray Cocks, John Dring, Bob Edmonds, Carolyn Hicks, Gill McGillivray, Robert Orme and David Sandison)**

Our group, which includes representatives from St Agnes, Russell, Reddings and Amesbury Road residents' associations, continues to meet every three to four weeks to consider new planning applications and to respond, if we think it necessary, in accordance with our published policy. We said goodbye to Ray Cocks when he moved away from Moseley, and are grateful for the detailed interest he took in planning matters while he lived here. We appreciated his specialist legal knowledge.

The last bank in Moseley, Lloyds, closed in the summer of 2016. ATMs have been installed at the Post Office, Co-op and Sainsbury and, most recently and controversially, a free standing ATM/phone kiosk has appeared, without planning permission, on the site of a former phone box. We have objected to its inappropriate visual appearance and the vulnerability of its position, so close to the road.



Also without permission, Prezzo installed a raised terraced area in front of its premises, and its retrospective planning application was refused and turned down on appeal.

The City's Licensing Committee has been asked to consider more applications for our area than for some time – permission for the new owners of the Texaco garage to extend the off-licence hours was refused after concerted pressure from residents living around the site, supported by The Society. New licences were

granted for Zindiya restaurant in Woodbridge Road and for an off-licence at Village News. Licences have also been granted for the new M&S Food Court and for Dares, the bar and small hotel proposed for the former HSBC premises. One application the Licensing Committee did not have to consider was for increased hours at the Elizabeth of York pub because those are controlled by a planning condition, and planning permission for their extension was refused. People living around the car park have also intervened to prevent extension of the hours of trading at the Bohemian.

During the year our Group has considered around 177 cases, either new applications or appeals. We submitted comments, positive and negative, on 109, a similar proportion to last year. Over 100 of the plans considered were 'householder' applications and nearly half of these were for very large extensions – often expanding houses in all directions. An increasing trend is for large free-standing buildings in gardens, often to be used as play rooms or gyms. Only the larger ones of these attract the attention of the planners, but anyone can use Google Earth to see just how many are appearing all over Moseley.

There were 8 applications to build new houses, including approval for a reapplication to build a new Alcester Road house, balanced atop the precipitous bank by the railway line. It will add another property to the terrace between Manjits and Ambler Funeral Service. Permission exists to squeeze six new houses facing Mary Street onto the site of the former garage, where flats have already been created in the old car wash building. Permission was given to demolish 5 Dyott Road and replace it with a much larger house and to convert Harris House, the former Barnardo's project in St Agnes Road, to apartments. Permission has also been given to replace the former farm house at 11 Holders Lane with apartments. There is an application in for apartments to be built on the site of the former window business in School Road. We will watch with interest to see what is decided.

Several large sites give cause for concern – the former Sorrento Hospital outpatient buildings on Anderton Park Road and the now closed care home in Oaklands Road – although the rear gardens have been cleared and the neighbours told that there will be new homes built there. Work on the Meteor site has been in progress for most of the year, and we expect the M&S Food Court to be open in the summer of 2017. However no NHS use has yet been found for the medical wing and its fate hangs in the balance.

One case this year reveals the value of having an active planning group. In May 2016 Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust put in an application for a 5.2m metal mesh fence to be placed around the rear of the Juniper Unit at Moseley Hall Hospital. The Moseley Society, as the 'amenity society' for the area was consulted – but few others were, not even the Community Health Trust that manages the rest of the Moseley Hall Estate. We were able to arrange a meeting with all interested parties and the result was a revised application for a much less prison-like fence that will help protect vulnerable patients who might otherwise wander, but be much less visually intrusive.

**Moseley History Group Report  
(Janet Berry, Roy Cockel, Frank Gresham,  
Jim Hone, Edwina Rees, Ray Tier, Josie  
Wall)**

Last year the local history group had to say goodbye to one of its dedicated members -



Verity Montague-Smith. She grew up and lived in Moseley but has moved to be with family in Essex. She is greatly missed for her personal stories and work with the archives.

The group has a very extensive and well-catalogued collection and an active and enthusiastic team meeting every Thursday morning at the welcoming and helpful All Services Club, to respond to enquiries from local residents and from as far away as Australia. They are very keen to attract more volunteers to help in any capacity with their very interesting and rewarding work.

This year the group has been involved in two major projects. Research has continued into Moseley men killed in World War 1, including those commemorated on the St Mary's War Memorial and others with no memorial. The Moor Green Allotments Association celebrated their 40th anniversary and we investigated the history not only of those allotments but also of former landowners in the Moor Green area, and the development of allotments generally. The group gratefully received a donation of Britannic Assurance house magazines from 1930 to 1997 which give an interesting insight into the history of the company on that site

and the lives and working conditions of people employed there.

As part of the Programme of events, the group has been active in helping to organise local history themed talks and a guided walk on Moseley Businesses and Ghost Signs which was part of the Moseley Festival Street Fair.

Sadly we have to report that in October Rachel Tier, who acted as secretary to the group and helped run the guided walks and evening talks, died after a very sudden and unexpected onset of cancer.



Rachel and Ray Tier at the Street Fair 2016

**Committee in 2016-17**

- Helen Minovi & Geoff Rees, Co-chairs
- Phil Williams, Treasurer
- Fiona Adams, Secretary
- Roy Cockel                                 John Dring
- Jean Gilkison                                 Paul Lindley
- Mike Marlow                                 Robert Orme
- Ray Tier   John Underwood
- Sally Wright

**AGENDA FOR THE AGM  
To be held on Thursday 18 May  
7.30pm at Moseley Exchange**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM held 26.5.2016
3. Presentation of the reports
4. Adoption of Report & Accounts to 31.12.16
5. Election of Trustees
6. Any other business

Following the meeting homelessness, begging and the Moseley Alternative Giving Campaign will be the main topic for discussion.

**The Moseley Society  
Registered charity 512211**

The Society can be contacted via the Secretary at 36 Grove Avenue, Moseley, B13 9RY. Subscriptions and letters may be handed in at Moseley Travel, 172 Alcester Road, near the public car park entrance in Moseley, while information about the Society is available next door at Domestica, or across the road at Moseley Exchange.

[www.moseley-society.org.uk](http://www.moseley-society.org.uk)