



# Annual Review 2020-21

## THE MOSELEY SOCIETY

Caring for an historic area of Birmingham

Charity no. 512211

### Co-Chairs' Report

**Helen Minovi and Geoff Rees**

This report covers an extraordinary year and sets out how the Society has responded. Faced with so many uncertainties in the spring of 2020 we decided not to try to hold an AGM. Uncertainty still prevails and we have taken a decision to hold the formal AGM of the Moseley Society in cyber space on 17 June 2021. The good news is that when the current restrictions are well and truly over and we can all intermingle, as people once used to do, we intend to hold an event to celebrate the regeneration of community life and consider the future of The Society. During the lockdowns the people of Moseley have been very fortunate that the strong community cohesion that existed before the pandemic led to volunteers across the area being active in so many ways; from safeguarding the elderly and vulnerable, the making of PPE, assistance at vaccination centres and keeping the area clean and tidy to name but a few. Society members have played their full part in all of this, but we would like to pay tribute to the Moseley Society Committee members that kept the Society functioning throughout the pandemic through the medium of email and Zoom. The Annual Review gives details of how the sub committees have carried out their work. In the wider world the really good news is that railway services from Moseley Station, halted in 1941, are due to restart in December 2023.

In response to the pandemic the Society has added a Memorial Page to its website, and we are grateful to Ray Tier for managing this for us. In the absence of the usual floral decorations organised by Moseley in Bloom, we decided to increase our usual contribution to Moseley in Lights. Many of the businesses have been closed for the majority of the year and could not afford their normal contributions.

Although the music festivals in Moseley Park were cancelled and the icehouse has been closed all year, the Park has been open each Wednesday to encourage walking and wellness, and in December we were glad to decorate one of the Christmas trees with a Moseley Society theme, celebrating the dovecote and icehouse.



### Secretary's Report

**Fiona Adams**

The value of having a Moseley Society with an active and committed membership connected by email was proved early in the pandemic. On 20 March, as Moseley Community Development Trust (CDT), our Ward Councillors and other active local citizens were setting up 'Moseley Together' I was able to send out the first email message and request for help to members. Responses poured in, and in no time the word had gone round. News, tips and words of encouragement were shared, and for the first few weeks, daily messages were needed to cope with the volume of information. In November the staff at Moseley CDT took over producing 'Local News'. Ray Tier continues to post all the information on the Moseley Together website in addition to maintaining the Society website.

Many members sent in helpful ideas and it's impossible to thank them all individually, but special mention should be made of the news about Morrisons telephone ordering system passed on by Jan and Mike Berry because that was circulated to friends and relations all over the UK.

Being members of Civic Voice has helped us deal with responses to changes in the planning system reported elsewhere. We also continue as members of Birmingham Heritage Forum and have benefitted from advice shared by its members.

We have not sent in any responses on behalf of the Society about the modal filters and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. These have proved to be divisive issues and Committee members have a variety of views. We are grateful to Moseley Forum and to the network of street representatives who have been co-ordinating responses and ideas.

## **Treasurer's Report**

### **Phil Williams**

The report and accounts to 31 December 2020 were approved and signed by the Trustees on 8 March and the Annual Return to the Charity Commission completed. The accounts are available on the website and can be sent on request to any member by post.

### **Income and expenditure**

Income for the year is less than in 2019 mainly due to the reduction in receipts at our meetings and other events – namely donations received and sales of posters and books. This is more than compensated by the reduction in expenditure on meetings, events, management and administration.

The net result of our activities is a surplus of income over expenditure of £1,039 for the year. In 2019 there was a deficit of £518.

### **Balance sheet**

Total funds have increased from £11,635 to £12,674 which is mainly represented by our bank deposits.

## **Marketing, News and Membership**

### **Fiona Adams, Mike Marlow, Helen Minovi, Geoff Rees, John Rouse, Ray Tier, Geoff Williams, Sally Wright**

We produced two newsletters over the past year, using the 'Local News' platform instead to keep you up to date. We recruited some new members during the first lockdown, but would still like you to encourage friends and neighbours to join us.

## **Programme**

### **Helen Minovi, Robert Orme, John Underwood, Ray Tier**

Last year we had preparations for the 2020/2021 programme well in hand, but as was the case for so many events everywhere, our plans were scuppered, and the programme postponed. However, thanks to members of the History Group, we enjoyed an excellent Zoom event in January. Over forty households watched a fascinating, erudite presentation by Ian Binnie and Edwina Rees.

One of our programmed events was able to go ahead in a relatively normal way in September as part of Heritage Open Days / Birmingham Heritage Week.



We welcomed over 170 visitors to the dovecote gardens and more in Moseley Park. Thanks to our many volunteers we were able to keep to the guidelines allowing people to appreciate the park and gardens in the sunshine, even though they couldn't visit the dovecote, cowhouse or icehouse.

## **Dovecote & Icehouse**

### **Helen Minovi, Eden Berry, Roy Cockel, Andrew Devey, Paul Lindley, Gill McGillivray and Joseph Simo.**

It is always a pleasure to spend time in the tranquility of the dovecote garden but during the last year it has been a real boon. Outdoors and socially distanced, we have been able to work safely, enjoy the lovely surroundings, the wildlife, fresh air and the company of our fellow gardeners.

Much of our regular gardening work is maintenance: weeding, hoeing, pruning, tidying, but our regular attendance at the garden has meant we have been able to tackle bigger jobs. In the sensory bed, the sedges - four not very attractive monsters - had spread and grown over the years, swamping other plants and being neither use nor ornament. They have been removed, thanks to the Herculean efforts of one of our volunteers (he broke the spade!). Wildlife flourishes throughout the garden. Wildflowers are becoming more established in the meadow, and this spring there were cowslips everywhere. In the kitchen garden we had good crops of soft fruit and an impressive quince harvest.

The buildings and hard landscaping also need maintaining. We are very fortunate to have Paul Lindley in the team, with his expertise and dedication. Paul and Roy Cockel also liaise with

Moseley Hall Hospital. We are glad that the garden has been a refuge for staff during this difficult year and look forward to welcoming back patients and their families as visiting resumes.

With help from Moseley in Bloom we planted up the barrier boxes on the railings and have managed to keep them blooming.



### **Planning & Licensing**

**Fiona Adams, John Dring, Bob Edmonds, Carolyn Hicks, Izzy Knowles, Carole McKeown, Gill McGillivray, Robert Orme and Stephen Sandys.**

While many of the more public aspects of the Society have not taken place this year, our responses to changes in the planning system and to applications affecting Moseley have continued unabated. Special thanks are due to Gill McGillivray who has continued to keep the record of local applications up to date and to co-ordinate the comments members of the group have made by email before the letters are submitted via the 'Planning online' system.

The number of applications increased and changes to Permitted Development Rights (PDR) and Use Class Orders have already had a significant effect on Moseley. The Planning White Paper, and the Planning Bill soon to be put before Parliament, promise the most fundamental changes to the system since the Town and Country Planning Act of 1948.

This year we looked at 248 applications (215 last year) and sent in 134 responses. 120 of the applications were for extensions to domestic properties. While many are for small, well-thought-out changes, we are seeing an increasing number of applications that will cause what reports after road accidents describe as 'life-changing injuries' to the property. An increasing number of extensions are being notified using PDR with a note of the dimensions and little else and with very limited grounds on which to comment. One of the first uses of the extended PDR was to add another storey to one of the Arts and Crafts style houses on Boundary Drive. Meanwhile at one of the Moor Green Lane houses nearby, an application for major changes assumed that the large single storey

extensions already underway could be taken as built, using PDR. Both applications were approved despite many objections.

Some of the trends we notice are the many applications for so called 'dormer windows' which are in fact flat-roofed extensions to the rear of properties. Balconies have also become increasingly fashionable – Juliet will be overlooking many neighbouring gardens all over Moseley. Bi-fold doors are replacing walls and windows in many extensions.

Other features of the year include 25 applications concerning Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) or other institutions, including privately run children's homes. Concerned by the ever-increasing number and concentration of HMOs, Birmingham City Council approved a city-wide Article 4 Direction. Most of the 25 are retrospective applications made since the new rule came into effect in June 2020. It is not clear from the applications we see whether an HMO is offering 'supported housing' even though the lack of regulation in place for such properties often leads to severe problems for neighbours. We are also very concerned about occasional applications for change of use of domestic houses to children's homes. These days the names of applicants are all redacted, but even if the names of the owners were known, there appears to be no system of regulation and so nowhere for neighbours to report concerns about the welfare of the children. However, this will be better regulated in the two new nursery schools that have been given permission during the year – one on the corner of Ascot/Oxford Roads and the other at the corner of Wake Green/Anderton Park Roads. In both cases, it is the concern about traffic and parking that have been to the fore.

Another notable trend is the vogue for large outbuildings in gardens. Some of these are to be home-offices and we anticipate that trend will continue.

After many attempts, a plan to build 4 large houses on the long-vacant Sorrento Hospital site in Anderton Park Road has been approved, despite the design including Juliet balconies for ensuite bathrooms!

The other literally outstanding trend has been applications concerning 20m masts to host the 5G network. 19 applications we looked at during the year have concerned masts, although at present very few of the proposed sites have been given permission.

The most outstanding permission of the year award must go to Moseley Station – even though the first passenger trains are not likely to stop there until late in 2023.

In contrast to previous years there have been few applications concerning the shopping

centre. In part that must be due to the effects of the lockdown, but it is more likely to be the effect of the new 'Use Class E' introduced by Statutory Instrument in July 2020. Gone are the distinctions between retail shop, office, restaurant or café – all are now included in Use Class E. Planning permission is no longer needed to convert a shop or office to a café. Moseley still has its special licensing 'Cumulative Impact' policy and new pubs and take-away food businesses still need specific planning permission, but the '50% non-retail' policy no longer has any effect.

We are able to end our report on a more positive note because on 12 April 2021 the public consultation on the St Agnes Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan began. Dr Terry Slater, Bob Edmonds and Robert Orme have spent much skill and time perfecting and promoting the Plan and we hope that by next year we can report that it has been ratified and become part of the City's planning policy.

### **Moseley History Group Report**

**Ray Tier, Janet Berry, Ian Binnie, Roy Cockel, Frank Gresham, Jim Hone, Edwina Rees**

During the lockdown, members of the History Group have been actively pursuing their research from home, supplemented by occasional online meetings using Zoom.

Regular monthly articles have been produced for B13 Magazine and fuller versions of those have been added to the website. The closure of Boots the Chemist in Moseley after more than 100 years was marked by an article on its history and that of the previous occupant of the site, corn dealer Frederick Hallam.

An article on Messrs. Matthias Watts, an Art Dealer who manufactured "Moseley Ware", chromium-plated mirrors and picture frames, was prompted by a correspondent from Latvia, who discovered us through the website.



A story on Moseley Quoits and Bowls Club was instigated by an enquirer from Ireland who sent us a photograph of the 1890 Quoits Handicap Cup in his possession.

Research into stained glass has continued with the publication of a substantial article on Victorian stained glass and the local craftsmen who produced it. A sizeable collection of photographs of local stained-glass windows kindly sent in by local residents is in the process of being sorted and categorised. Work is also nearing completion on a major publication on the history of Wintersloe School in collaboration with a descendant of the headmaster's family.

Work has continued to research the history and write articles about Moseley men killed in World War 1. One member has completed and published a substantial piece of research into more than 35 Moseley men who died in the war but are not commemorated on any local memorial.

A donation of a very substantial archive of papers and correspondence was received relating to Lilian Daisy Murcott, a prominent local businesswoman who took over her father's Victorian import export business and, enjoyed a highly successful and interesting career. The collection has been catalogued and is in the process of being summarised with a view to inviting further detailed research.

### **Committee in 2020-21**

Helen Minovi & Geoff Rees, Co-chairs

Phil Williams, Treasurer

Fiona Adams, Secretary

Roy Cockel (Co-opted) John Dring

Jean Gilkison (Co-opted) Paul Lindley

Robert Orme Ray Tier

John Underwood Sally Wright

### **AGENDA FOR THE AGM**

**To be held on Thursday 17 June  
7.30pm as a meeting online**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM held 16.5.2019
3. Presentation of the reports
4. Adoption of Report & Accounts to 31.12.2020
5. Election of Trustees
6. Any other business

### **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)