

Chairman's report for year ending 30th September 2022.

One memory of this year was the extremely hot weather in August. One concern for me was the survival of two trees planted in memory of Dudley Brook. One is a Tulip Tree (the flower looks like a tulip) planted in Rose Bank Gardens and the other is a Mountain Ash planted in the grounds of the Chase School where Dudley had been a governor. Dudley's family were present for the 'unveiling' of the Tulip tree and a nearby bench & plaque in April. Happily the trees are alive.

One aim is to raise the visibility of the Society in the Malvern community. Midsummer Malvern 2022 took place in June with a programme of walks, talks and exhibitions. The Heritage Open Days (HODs) programme took place in September. The Society has supported the following projects in Malvern. The Friends of Malvern Railways have advised on the original colour scheme and lighting in the current refurbishment of Great Malvern Station. At the monthly working parties, The Friends of Malvern Cemeteries continue to clear brambles & ivy from the graves in the Victorian cemetery. The excitement is that some of these rediscovered graves are of eminent Victorians. We also committed £5,000 towards the cost of the restoration of the last existing donkey shed at the bottom of Happy Valley. The work has now been completed. Do go and have a look. We also sponsored the collection of photographs taken on 31 July 1971 which were displayed in the Waitrose Walk in July.

Quarterly meetings have been established with John Raine, the MHDC 'heritage champion'. These meetings are welcomed because it is an opportunity for a face to face meeting with decision makers. One issue discussed is whether MHDC provide a guide to living in a conservation area. If there is no guide, the Civic Society plan to produce a guide.

In July the executive committee decided to increase the annual subscription from £10 per person to £15 per person with effect from 1 January 2023. This was not an easy decision. The reasons for the increase were set out in my letter in the September e-newsletter. Although, we do have significant cash reserves of around £37,850 – about 85% of this money is classed as 'restricted'. An example is the Ernie Kay bequest to the Society of £20,000, I was told by his solicitor that the money should NOT be used for the running costs of the Society. This raises another issue, that we do need to look for opportunities to spend our 'restricted' cash assets.

There were 378 members of the Society in September. 25 new members have joined the Society since October 1st 2021. Jackie Oakey, our treasurer, was co-opted onto the Executive committee in January and Ed Davies resigned as a trustee in July.

Many thanks to everyone who has made a contribution to all that has been achieved this year. In particular, I want to thank John Dixon who has been a stalwart of the Society for more than 20 years. He has been the organiser of the Civic Award Scheme for many years as well as a familiar face of welcome at the monthly meetings. John was the person who started 'Bandstand' and was the first editor. I also want to thank Clive Rayment, the Country Walks co-ordinator, who is standing down. I welcome Felicity Ebsworth who is now running the Civic Award Scheme and Chris Barnett who will be running the Country Walks next year.

The final word must go to our President, Dr John Harcup on his 90th birthday in August. We celebrated with a party in his honour at our September meeting. On behalf of the Society, I presented him with a Dartington bowl engraved with our 'Bandstand' logo, a reminder of our achievements and of friendship.

Andrew Huntley, Chairman