



Friends of St. James's Park and The Green Park
www.thethorneyislandsociety.org.uk Registered Charity No. 1000751

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

We are pleased to report that The Society has had another good year with ongoing involvement in our key issues of planning, community and local history.

In the last year we have commented on 77 planning applications, ranging from the New Scotland Yard site to a statue in Parliament Square of Margaret Thatcher and not forgetting the new telephone boxes in Victoria Street displaying video advertising !

Of major concern this year was the Government decision to support the building of the new National Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, the riverside park next to the House of Lords. We have worked extremely hard to bring awareness of the destructive and unpractical choice of this location and tried to persuade the Foundation to consider the grounds at The Imperial War Museum, which is creating new Holocaust and WWII galleries, and has put forward a proposal, with costs, to integrate this with a new Memorial beside their building. This would represent much better value for money for the tax-payer.

This year saw the start of a collaborative project with Chelsea School of Art. BA students in Spatial Design made preliminary visits to the Archives in Old Pye Street and were given a tour of the local area by us.

Our community links with The William Gibbs Hall on the Peabody estate progressed well with a lively series of talks on local history and several committee meetings were held in the Hall. During the year our presence on the Eventbrite website encouraged more people to register for our events including non-members. Our popular programme of local visits continued throughout the year and included St. Margaret's Church, HM Treasury, St. James the Less and the local Tree Walk. Planning is underway for the 2018 programme.

Our Twitter feed has nearly 600 followers and publicises events as well as drawing attention to neighbourhood matters. We follow many local individuals, groups and institutions and this has greatly improved and enlivened our local profile. Our website continues to be popular and is kept up to date with our events, news of local planning matters, links to media articles and history stories in Thorney Tales. We have begun work on an on-line membership payment facility.

We would like to thank Clare Annamalai for the many hours and all her great work editing our Newsletter over the last 3 years. The Newsletter has been colourful, interesting, knowledgeable and topical. She now steps down (also from the Committee) and we are looking for a new Editor.

All other Committee members are re-nominating this year and we are thrilled that Sue Ball is standing for Chair. Nominations for the Committee would be very welcome and should be made prior to or at the AGM.

Our Archives have been given an exterior makeover, thanks to money raised at last year's Gala Dinner, with new paintwork and signage and we have produced a new tri-fold leaflet to distribute locally to recruit much needed new membership.

We extend our special thanks to Grange Hotels for their generous support in hosting our Summer and Christmas drinks parties and the AGM in such welcoming surroundings.

Finally, we would like to thank our nearly 350 members, including more than 100 life members, for their continued support. We were delighted to receive a generous legacy from our Co-Founder June Stubbs. The Parks Manager, Mark Wasilewski, has planted a *Prunus padus*, a Bird Cherry tree, for her in St James's Park and a gathering of her family, parks staff and TTIS members will unveil a plaque to June in the Spring of 2018. Please contact the Secretary if you would like to attend.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE