



FRIENDS OF ST JAMES'S PARK
& THE GREEN PARK

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

The Society's Christmas Party in December 2020 was held virtually/on-line for the first time in our history with a highly entertaining Thorney Island Quiz, bringing members together from across continents and time zones. The Committee continued to respond quickly to changing conditions during the ongoing Covid pandemic. This involved liaising with hosts and venues to either cancel or postpone visits and in other cases to recruit new speakers with expertise in the history and architecture of Thorney Island. As a result we launched a successful series of Zoom talks which attracted over 320 member registrations and 100 non-member attendees. This varied programme of talks, presented by volunteer members of the Society and other expert speakers, made a significant contribution to the Society's overall financial position, resulting in a small surplus for the 2020/21 year. We launched a new YouTube channel so that recordings of our Zoom talks could be accessed more widely. Since the channel's launch in February, viewers have collectively watched over 100 hours of recordings, and we would encourage members to subscribe to the channel to be automatically notified of future additions.

The Society adapted to changing government restrictions. Recently Committee members have been able to resume the work of consolidating the material in our archives in Old Pye Street and deciding how to store and present our resources in future. As life has opened-up, we have worked together with our partner organisations and venues to offer a mixed programme of virtual and in-person events for the 2021/22 year ahead. We hope that this approach will go some way towards overcoming the sense of loss we have all felt, unable to meet together as usual for walks, visits and parties.

The Society's day to day operations continued virtually. We have been represented at the regular on-line meetings hosted by Nickie Aiken, MP for The Cities of London and Westminster and by Cllr Rachael Robathan, Leader of Westminster City Council. The Society commented on 40 planning applications over the year and the Planning Hub which we set up in August 2020 has expanded to include 9 local residents' groups. The London Gardens Trust took over the role of spearheading the legal action against the Government's application to construct the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens. Our participation in the work of the London Forum and other groups concerned with the Government's planning legislation was a major priority during the year.

Sue Ball
Chair