THE THORNEY ISLAND SOCIETY

FRIENDS OF ST JAMES'S PARK & THE GREEN PARK

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2025

GOVERNANCE

Constitution: The Thorney Island Society is an unincorporated association that was founded in 1985 and registered as a charity in 1990. The Society is governed by a constitution adopted by its members in 1990 and last revised in 2017. It is recognised by HMRC as a charity for Gift Aid.

Aims: The aims of the Society as a conservation and amenity group are to monitor planning applications and protect public spaces and buildings of significant heritage in the 'village' of ancient Westminster (originally known as 'Thorney Island'). In 1994 the Society adopted the activities of the Friends of St James's Park and The Green Park.

Objects: The objects of the Society are:

(i) To protect and promote the buildings and open spaces of the historic area through high standards of planning and design.
(ii) To uphold our role as a Westminster City Council official planning consultee.
(iii) To educate and encourage interest in the architecture, history and natural history of the area through visits, talks and social media.
(iv) To build and empower the local community and to encourage pride in the area.

Management: The Society is managed by an Executive Committee of four officers and up to eight other members, who are Trustees for the purposes of charity law and are elected at the Society's Annual General Meeting. The Committee meets every two months either online or at the Society's Archives in Old Pye Street.

The Trustees who served during the year ended 30th September 2025 were:

Glenn Murphy (Chair)
Robert Timms (Hon Treasurer)
Julia Stepanian (Hon Secretary)
Suzanna Nicola (Hon Membership Secretary)
Hari Kitching
Agapi Fylaktou
Victor Keegan
Lucy Peck
Clare Annamalai

Review of the Year: The Society made a very positive impact during this special 40th anniversary year, with excellent outcomes in all its main areas of activity, as detailed below. The Society's finances are in a strong position, as reported last year. Membership fees have increased for the first time since 2018 due to the increase in supplier costs. The new membership fees are updated on our website. The society has adequate reserves to meet its short- and medium-term costs in the event of unforeseen difficulties. We are grateful to a number of members who have made sizable donations over the past year. Membership numbers are increasing.

The Trustees plan to continue the main areas of activity over the coming year. We also intend to review the success of our area wide membership drive and consider similar methods to promote the Society beyond its membership. A break-even budget has been reviewed by the Trustees.

The future success of the Society is dependent on the support of Members in serving as Trustees and in delivering the Society's activities. Members are encouraged to speak to members of the Committee if they have an interest in supporting the Society at any level. We would particularly like to hear from members that may like to be involved in project co-ordination activity, planning application reviews, member administration and supporting events. The Trustees continue to have regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Finance: The Society recorded a deficit of £2,100.48 on its ordinary activities for the 2024–25 financial year (last year we recorded a very modest surplus). This deficit does not affect our ability to continue our activities, due to strong reserves. The Committee is especially grateful for the various donations generously contributed to the Society. While the Society has raised its membership fees this year, to account for increased external costs, the Committee does not expect the membership fees to change next year. We are always keen to increase membership numbers, for financial stability as well as for involving as wide a community as possible and representing a stronger voice as an amenity society. The Society's reserves remain above our policy of 12 months' typical expenditure plus provision for

unforeseen expenses. During the course of the year we have utilised some reserves to cover one-off costs associated with the refurbishment of the Archives, but the bulk of this refurbishment (and therefore cost) is now expected to take place during the 2025–26 financial year, as this has been dependent on a now-completed Archives tidy-up and the need for the Archives working group to obtain quotes before we proceed.

Membership: Unlike last year where the membership was stable, this year our membership numbers have increased, and we now have over 380 members, including our three corporate supporters, although we note with sadness that we have lost some of our Members. Our new Members come from various sources, often joining after one of our events or after seeing one of our posters in our Royal Parks or encouraged by fellow Members – do you know anyone who would like to join the Society? We are also seeking to widen our number of corporate members. We are also pleased to offer a year's honorary membership to our event speakers to thank them for their contribution, and we hope that they will choose to stay with us when that lapses. Our reach extends beyond our membership as we continue to keep local councillors, other elected representatives and Westminster City Council planners abreast of our work.

Planning: The Society was consulted by WCC on about 40 planning applications during the year, and met with developers to discuss a few projects, the most significant being 1 Victoria Street and St John's Smith Square. Our responses to the more significant applications are published at https://tinyurl.com/TTIS-Planning. We continued to support the campaign to Save Victoria Tower Gardens.

Events: We had an active year, with 30 well-attended events across a diverse programme. The highlight was our 40th Anniversary Celebration, held in the Lord Mayor's Parlour, with the Lord Mayor himself in attendance and a performance by The Sinfonia Smith Square musicians. The publicity around this special occasion enabled TTIS to reach a wider audience and sparked fresh interest in the Society. Among the most popular events were the Purcell Musical Tour, the Government Art Collection, Bridgewater House, Europe House, Historic St James's Square, Whitehall Walk, Towers and Gardens Walk and the talk at Grey Coat Hospital. We also enjoyed several collaborations on Thorney Island, including talks at The Onion Garden, a series of events with Westminster City Archives, and a guided walk with the Royal Parks. In September, we took part in our third Open House weekend, welcoming visitors from across London and beyond. We were pleased to host our third Silver Sunday talk in the Old Westminster Library—an especially poignant location, as it marks the beginning of our story. A special thanks to Blue Orchid Hotels for their continued support of TTIS, especially for hosting both our AGM and Christmas Party.

Friends of St James's Park and The Green Park: The two Parks had a record number of visitors as the effects of Covid faded and overseas visitors returned. We liaised regularly with the leadership of the Royal Parks, the manager of St James's Park and local stakeholders. We chaired the Royal Parks' Safer Parks Committee and supported the work of volunteers on Duck Island. We actively lobbied for maintaining the existing levels of policing in the parks, especially our dedicated police officer at a time when the numbers were being reduced. Cycling in the parks continues to be a problem but has been significantly reduced by improved No Cycling signage and the increased footfall which has made it more difficult to cycle. We have been in discussions with the Cabinet office to ensure that the welcome memorial to Queen Elizabeth ll fits in with the heritage of the park.

Archives: Volunteers helped throughout the year in sorting the large number of irrelevant files and unwanted paperwork to progress the 'sort-out' project. The Archives were used for all Committee meetings during the year and whilst we will decant to allow for refurbishments to take place, we look forward to utilising it again upon completion. We also opened our doors for Open House weekend in September, which attracted over many visitors.

Communications: We continued to engage with members via a range of channels. During the year we sent out two printed newsletters including features on local history, local amenities and planning. Past newsletters can all be read on the Thorney Island Society website. We are always grateful to Members who contribute articles for the newsletter. We also sent a number of e-newsletters, to highlight upcoming events, and posted regular local updates on Instagram and X. The website was regularly updated with events and the Society's responses to local planning applications.

Engagement: In furtherance of our general aims, the Society has engaged regularly during the year with local councillors, Westminster City Council officers, Rachel Blake MP, the Victoria Neighbourhood Forum, the Westminster Amenity Societies Forum and the Royal Parks.

The Committee is very grateful for the continuing support of our corporate supporters, our growing band of volunteers and all Members.

Approved by the Executive Committee on 1st October 2025