

The City of Rochester Society

The City of Rochester Society is unable to hold an Annual General Meeting this year. We look forward to resuming normal procedures as soon as possible.

**Members are requested to peruse this booklet and return the separate questionnaire before
30 SEPTEMBER 2020**

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 53rd Annual General Meeting of the City of Rochester Society has been cancelled. This is an unprecedented course of action but the restrictions posed by the Coronavirus pandemic make it inevitable. Members are requested to reply to the questionnaire enclosed with this booklet. The Executive Committee wishes to obtain the approval of as many members as possible to their proposals, which are set out below.

ITEMS FOR APPROVAL BY MEMBERS

The Trustees and Executive Committee propose the following to Society members:

1. That the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 12 June 2019 are approved and may be signed by the Chairman on or after 30 September 2020. A copy of the minutes accompanies this notice (see page 3).
2. That the report of the Executive Committee for the year 2019-20, a copy of which also accompanies this notice (see page 6), is approved.
3. That the accounts for the financial year 2019-20 are approved (see page 16).
Note: *Copies of the final accounts may be obtained after 1st August 2020 from the Hon Treasurer, Jean Skilling at the address given in the Society's Newsletter or by e-mail: treasurer@city-of-rochester.org.uk.*

4. That the Sinden Thackeray Partnership should be reappointed as independent examiners for the Society.

Under the circumstances, it is not possible for formal elections to take place at present. It is hoped that Society members will accept the following committee changes with the assurance that formal elections will take place as soon as meeting arrangements are permitted.

5. That Alan Moss should remain in office as President of the Society for the year 2020/21.
6. We are sorry to announce that Pam Gibbon wishes to stand down as Chairman. Rob Flood has agreed, at the request of the Trustees and with the approval of the Executive Committee, to be appointed Acting Chairman.
7. Paul Anderson has agreed, again at the request of the Trustees and with the approval of the Executive Committee, to be appointed Acting Vice Chairman, the former role of Rob Flood.
8. That the Society officers and Executive Committee members, as listed below, should remain in office for a further year:

Jean Skilling (Honorary Treasurer), Christine Furminger (Honorary Secretary), Odette Buchanan, Martin Dodsworth, John Liddiard and Ian Smith.

We are sorry to report that Philip Dodd does not wish to remain in office.

**Minutes of the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the City of Rochester Society
held in the Court Room of the Guildhall Museum, High Street, Rochester
at 8.00 p.m. on Wednesday 12 June 2019**

The number present at the meeting was 50.

The President and the Chairman were pleased to welcome our invited guests Cllr Stuart Trantor, Councillor for Rochester West Ward, and Cllr Nick Bowler, Councillor for Rochester East Ward.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the Mayor of Medway Cllr Habib Tejan, the Deputy Mayor of Medway Cllr Steve Illes and Kelly Tolhurst MP.

The following members sent their apologies:

Odette Buchanan, Chris Clemence, Philip Dodd, L Feist, Cherry Foreman, Joan Harries, John Hill, Peter Homewood, June Kent, Diane Law, Margaret McDonald, Lawrence McVeigh, Heather Sinclair, Neville Taylor, Angela Watson, Barbara Wells, Patrick White, A Whiteley and J Whiteley.

2. Minutes of the 51st Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2018 had been distributed with the May issue of the *Newsletter*. The minutes were agreed as a true record, formally proposed by Ian Smith, seconded by Rosemary Clemence and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Annual Report of the Executive Committee

The annual report had been distributed with the May *Newsletter*. It was adopted on a proposal by Pam Moss, seconded by Elaine Gardner and endorsed by members present.

5. Finance

The Treasurer presented the financial report, highlighting the hard work of Ian Smith and John Allison in organising the profitable craft fairs. Only one request for a grant had been received during the year and members were reminded that the Society was in a position to provide assistance for projects which met the Society's objectives. The adoption of the report was proposed by Christine Furminger, seconded by Alan Moss and endorsed by members present.

The Society's accountants and independent examiners, the Sinden Thackeray Partnership, were thanked for their continued support and were duly reappointed.

6. Election of President

Due to the sad death of Bob Ratcliffe, a new President to the Society was required. A proposal was made by Andrew Ratcliffe for the election of Alan Moss. The proposal was seconded by Margaret Ratcliffe and unanimously agreed by those present. Alan Moss gave a speech of thanks.

7. Election of Officers of the Society

The following members were proposed and seconded prior to the AGM, and duly elected:

Chairman: Pam Gibbon
Vice Chairman: Robert Flood
Treasurer: Jean Skilling
Secretary: Christine Furminger

8. Election of the Executive Committee

Six members had been proposed and seconded prior to the AGM to serve on the Executive Committee for the coming year. The following members were duly elected:

Paul Anderson
Odette Buchanan
Philip Dodd
Martin Dodsworth
John Liddiard
Ian Smith

9. Any other business

(i) Family Day and Beer Festival – 29 June 2019

Nick Bowler advertised the Family Day and Beer Festival to be held at St Peter's Parish Centre on 29 June to raise funds for a new Church Hall.

(ii) Society Outing – 20 July 2019

Alan Moss reported that tickets were available for the Society's summer outing to Peterborough.

(iii) Society Events and Tours

John Bradshaw gave details of special events and Dickens tours being organised by the Society in 2020.

(iv) Presentation

A presentation was made to Bob Howe, who had stepped down from the Executive Committee after many years of service as Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Bob gave a speech of thanks.

(v) Further Events

Rob Flood gave details of a talk to be held by Christoph Bull on 14 June 2019 for the Friends of Medway Archives. The Medway Open Studios was being sponsored by the Society between 6 July and 14 July 2019. Members were also advised that Bob Ratcliffe's book, *Railways of Rochester*, was almost ready for the printer.

Rob Flood then showed members a new audio-visual presentation about the Society and its activities. The evening concluded with a little light refreshment and socialising. We thank those who were responsible for the catering.

There being no further business, the meeting closed.

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Chairman

Dated:

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CITY OF ROCHESTER SOCIETY

2019/2020

President: Alan Moss

Vice-Presidents: Derek Barnard, Betty Copleston, Peter Downton and Colin Whyman

Executive Committee - 2019/2020

Chairman: Pam Gibbon

Vice-Chairman: Rob Flood

Treasurer: Jean Skilling

Secretary: Christine Furminger

Paul Anderson
Odette Buchanan
Philip Dodd

Martin Dodsworth
John Liddiard
Ian Smith

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Introduction

This report of the Society's activities over the past year is presented for members' approval. Any matters concerning the report should be addressed to:

The Secretary, 14 The Close, Rye, East Sussex TN31 7BS

1. Chairman's Report

Pam Gibbon

- 1.1 As the year covered by this report began, no-one could have imagined the changes that were about to take place in our way of life, and which we are still struggling to deal with as these words are written. The consequences of the pandemic have in many ways touched us all. For Society members, a summer AGM was simply not to be. We look forward to a return to something like normality next year, but in the meantime, my colleagues on the Executive Committee will continue to keep a watchful eye on Rochester and the community. We look forward to meeting our friends again and to a time when we can resume our customary meetings and events.
- 1.2 I have recently had to accept that for health reasons I am unable to continue as your Chairman. This was a difficult decision for me, having thoroughly enjoyed assisting the Society while changes were being incorporated into its constitution. I look forward very much to seeing new people with fresh ideas becoming involved with the running of the Society. While I will no longer be active on committees, I plan to keep in touch and I hope to attend members' meetings and other occasions as often as I can in the future.
- 1.3 It was good to see the ingenuity shown by some of our members, intent on keeping calm and carrying on. Not to be thwarted when meetings were no longer possible, the Dickens Book Club took to Skype and Zoom in order not to miss out on their enjoyable monthly discussions!
- 1.4 A highlight of the year has been the publication of Bob Ratcliffe's wonderful book "*Railways of Rochester*". This captures Bob's inimitable style perfectly and the detailed knowledge we so much appreciated and benefitted from, and the lockdown has proved an excellent opportunity to enjoy it!
- 1.5 Last but by no means least, I want to express my grateful thanks for the help I have received from the Trustees and the Executive Committee during the course of the year and in particular to thank all those who give so much of their time and energy in support of the Society's aims. While we rely on the active assistance of our members, there is great satisfaction to be had in working towards a common purpose.

Reports of sub-committees and officers

2. Festivals sub-committee

Ian Smith

- 2.1 During the last 12 months we have held our usual Craft Fairs during the two Rochester Dickens Festivals – one in May and the other during November/December – in conjunction with Medway Council.

- 2.2** Both the festivals were very successful, as in previous years. In the summer we raised £770.50 through the Craft Fair and our efforts during the winter festival achieved an excellent £11,082.40, making a grand total of £11,852.90 for Society funds. We had many stall holders returning for both the summer and winter fairs and we also welcomed a few new stall holders. As is usually the case, the variety of goods being sold was so wide that a full list would be very extensive. I said last year that the Christmas Dickens Festival held in 2018 was the best yet but Christmas 2019 far exceeded all previous events, both in the number of stalls and in attendance. The feedback from the public was extremely encouraging.
- 2.3** Again this year, my grateful thanks must go to John Alison whose help and advice was invaluable. Eileen was running her own stall, and at the close of business on the Saturday of the Christmas event a presentation was made by the stallholders to both John and Eileen in recognition of their contribution to the festivals.
- 2.4** As at last year's festivals, there was a Society stall for only one weekend. My thanks must go to those few Society members who assisted with the erection of tables and stall numbers, and with moving tables between each weekend. This year we did not use bunting. At the Christmas event, however, the marquee suppliers erected Christmas lights which added to the festive atmosphere in the marquee.
- 2.5** I know I have mentioned John Alison already, but I want to emphasise that without his reliable support and tremendous help I could not have produced such a successful variety of Craft Fairs. John, on behalf of the Society, stallholders and myself, thank you for all your valuable help and assistance in running the fairs.
- 2.6** This year I was greatly encouraged because several of the stall holders who have been for one weekend now want to do all three weekends. We received so many inquiries from potential stall holders that it might now be possible to fill the craft tent twice over - a very nice position to be in!
- 2.7** I mentioned in my last AGM report that I will be standing down as Craft Fair Organiser - I shall be retiring within the next four years. I have asked for someone to come forward with a view to taking over from me, but now I urgently require an assistant to help me in running the fairs.
- 2.8** If nobody comes forward to offer assistance, two things will happen: in the first instance, the Society will lose a vital source of income. Secondly, if I cannot find a successor, the craft fairs will end. Medway Council will not step in and take over - these enjoyable events will completely cease. We really don't want this to happen!

3. Finance & General Purposes sub-committee

Pam Gibbon

- 3.1** This sub-committee comprises the Society's Trustees (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary). We meet occasionally to discuss matters of finance and issues which do not fit easily into other categories. Recommendations or proposals may be put to the Executive Committee from time to time as a result of these meetings.
- 3.2** Since March, the Trustees have remained in frequent contact via email and telephone.

4. Planning sub-committee

John Liddiard

- 4.1 I have always found it encouraging that so many people want to visit our historic city and enjoy its rich history and heritage attractions. I am advised that there is also a healthy interest from families to relocate within the city limits and to be associated with this sensory experience of wellbeing.
- 4.2 While Rochester's entrepreneurial spirit appears alive and well, at no time in our past has Rochester been subjected to so many large built development proposals, and this has led to a very busy year. Surprisingly, all these schemes contain provision for multi storey buildings intended for either residential or business use!
- 4.3 Although it may be quite feasible to support two or three of these proposals (suitably amended), any more would be an overdevelopment. This emphasises the need for clear and relevant guidance which is available within the National and Local Planning Policy documents. The application of this guidance is normally considered critical to achieving an acceptable solution. It is also fortuitous that Rochester's Conservation Area is quite extensive and is intended to prevent any building that is not sensitive to its historical context.
- 4.4 To support an obviously poor and inappropriate design must be considered to be negligent given the amount and availability of both the National and Local Planning Policy. Whoever considers that an historic cathedral city with a medieval street pattern and many nationally important listed buildings to be a suitable location for several multi storey buildings must be seriously questioned.

5. Publishing & Publicity sub-committee (with Events)

Philip Dodd

- 5.1 Like other sub-committees, there was an impact on the final few months of our particular corner of the Society due to coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown, which meant that, for example, our usual presence on the stand for the spring Dickens Festival could not of course happen. However, I am pleased to report that the quarterly *Newsletter* for May 2020 – thanks to Alan Moss's indefatigable efforts, with the help of our printer Jon Barker – was successfully published, with a splendid cover shot by Head Verger Colin Tolhurst showing the Cathedral's spire resplendently lit in blue in support of the NHS and other frontline workers. The sensible decision was taken that to minimise any unnecessary risks, this particular issue would be mailed out to members rather than being hand-delivered.
- 5.2 We also continued running the Dickens Book Club, which started in January 2020 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Dickens' death – one novel per month in chronological order, running through to March 2021. When news of the lockdown broke, we were able to swap this from physical to virtual meetings, using Skype and then Zoom, so that we didn't miss a month. In both cases, and at a time when so many of the Society's other activities were being cancelled, suspended or postponed, it felt good to be able to keep offering our members access to news and discussion. Our 2020 calendar had an appropriately Dickensian theme.
- 5.3 The highlight of our publishing was the successful release of Bob Ratcliffe's long-awaited *Railways of Rochester*, seen to fruition by the dedication of Rob Flood and the

help of Bob's family: this definitive book was published in November and is a fitting and lasting tribute to Bob's love of the subject and encyclopaedic knowledge.

- 5.4** On the Events front, we had a pitch at the ever-enjoyable Cherry Picnic in the Vines (always excellent for promoting the Society), although this is sadly another victim of lockdown in 2020. At Christmas we held a stirring seasonal gathering in the Guildhall, complete with musical offerings, carols (sung with gusto) and the wonderful silhouette artist Charles Burns on hand to cut some exquisite likenesses. John Bradshaw spent much of the year plotting and planning a series of imaginative events, the first of which – a Dickens-themed musical entertainment called *Revue-ing The Situation* in the Crypt – had to be postponed from its original June slot but will be re-booked as soon as practical. John also booked the noted author Robert Hutchinson to talk about the spy mastering side of Sir Joseph Williamson at the Maths School in September 2020. At the time of writing, this event (along with a talk by Cindy Sughrue, director of the Dickens Museum, in November) remains pencilled in. We will see how events unfold, and keep members informed as regularly as possible. Finally, a thank you to Rob Flood for keeping the website and social media side of the Society going, again a vital link over the past few months.

6. Tours sub-committee

Martin Dodsworth

- 6.1** During 2019, our 21 guides took 1,263 people on booked and open tours of Rochester and raised £3,407 for the Society. These tours included four Dickensland tours, which braved the narrow lanes of the Hoo Peninsula with Alan Moss.
- 6.2** At the end of the season Pauline Weeds retired as a guide and we thank her for her years of service. Deborah Britton has joined the team as a trainee guide.
- 6.3** It is remarkable how many different nationalities we have on our tours but we were particularly happy to welcome the two groups of students from northern Germany who come every year, adding over £250 to our funds. We also had a group from Flanders on a singles weekend and some Dutch students who could not get over how hilly Kent is!
- 6.4** For the first time we have developed a link with a professional tour company, Isle of Wight Tours, which will hopefully bring a number of coaches to Rochester each year.
- 6.5** As ever, the numbers on open tours were variable but festival times were particularly successful. Most importantly, the tours give participants an insight into what a wonderful place Rochester is and many say not only that they will return again, but will encourage their friends to come as well.
- 6.6** Guides Day on 7 March was based in the Ithamar Chapel at Rochester Cathedral and included presentations and talks, with a buffet lunch at the George Vaults. Largely organised by John, Guides Day is designed to thank Society guides for their commitment throughout the year. The morning included presentations and an interactive talk from Helen Bradshaw which proved very popular. This was followed by a preview of two special Dickens-themed walks, led by John Bradshaw and Geoff Ettridge, which were planned to help the Dickens Chalet repair and conservation fund. Contributions totalling £62.00 were received from guides who followed these walks on the day.

7. Members' meetings and outings

Christine Furminger

- 7.1** In September we welcomed Roy Brooks of Intrada Ships Management Limited to our Moat House meeting room with the story of Scotline, a shipping line still using our port on the Medway. Simon Lace discussed the Cathedral's hidden treasures in October, giving members a preview of plans in store. Rob Flood gave an excellent illustrated talk on Chatham Intra's history in November.
- 7.2** The New Year brought Philip Dodd, who wanted to remind us that Rochester offered "Not just Dickens" but other literary heroes such as Edith Nesbit, Enid Bagnold, Russell Thorndike and Bennet Langton. In February, popular speaker Dr Jeremy Clarke of the Guildhall Museum returned with stories of Charles Dickens and his many connections with the Medway Towns.
- 7.3** The year's series was forced to end abruptly after our March meeting, when we shared with the Friends of Medway Archives a talk given by the Dean of Rochester, the Very Reverend Dr Philip Hesketh, on Dean Hole and his love of roses. We look forward to resuming our plans and rebooking speakers as soon as meetings are permitted again.
- 7.4** Some 30 members of the Society paid an enjoyable visit to the City of Peterborough on Saturday 20 July 2019. The rain failed to materialise, and a remarkable absence of heavy traffic made the journeys there and back smooth and swift. Peterborough is not usually regarded as a tourist destination - like Rochester, it lacks publicity – but it has much to offer plus a thriving shopping centre. The Cathedral is a glorious piece of Romanesque architecture with some unique features, including a wonderful west front and the tomb of Catherine of Aragon, Henry VIII's first wife. The City Museum and Art Gallery had a well-presented display of local history through the ages. We also discovered that an Anglo-Roman settlement at a nearby river crossing was called Durobrivae, which should ring bells for some!

8. Membership Secretary

Rosemary Clemence

- 8.1** I took over from Bob Howe in July 2019 and I am really enjoying the work. Our membership stands at 498 (as at the end of March 2020) but I am sure it will soon be over 500 again. As always during the year we have lost several members due to their moving away, quite a few have died, and some have decided not to renew membership. We gained 14 new members.
- 8.2** Within the membership there are still 135 members who pay annually, either by cash or cheque. It would make life easier for the Treasurer if more people paid their subscriptions by standing order – this would also mean there would be no need to remember when the next payment falls due. A standing order form is available from me – my details are in the *Newsletter*. Those with on-line banking can set up a standing order easily themselves of course, following the information their bank provides. Please be sure to advise the Treasurer too, if you decide to assist us in this way.

9. Society Grants

Jean Skilling and Christine Furminger

- 9.1** The Society has been able to offer financial support during the 2019/20 year to a number

of community projects in the total sum of £2,930.00.

- 9.2** We were pleased to assist Rochester's City Centre Forum with £140.00 towards the cost of providing hanging baskets for the High Street displays. King's School received £90.00 towards advertising for a popular production at the school and £400.00 of sponsorship went to Medway Open Studios. Rochester Film Society was granted £500.00 to enable it to continue running its activities. The "Rose King of Rochester" weekend, celebrating the life of Dean Hole and which took place over the August Bank Holiday, included a new piece of chamber/choral music written by Philip Dodd. The Society contributed a total of £800.00 towards producing this very successful event.
- 9.3** The Society was pleased to contribute £500.00 towards a bench in memory of Bob Ratcliffe, which is now residing in the Cathedral Garth.
- 9.4** Last, but by no means least, we gave a grant of £500.00 to Lynsey Harrison towards the costs for creating a new bronze bust of Richard Watts, which will reside in the garden at the Six Poor Travellers House.
- 9.5** Reviewing these various contributions towards the life and enjoyment of our city, and its locality, we were struck at the small number of requests for grants that the Society received during the course of the year. It is disappointing – we would like to do more, and our members may be in a position to help us here. Perhaps you belong to another society, or a group with plans for a community-based project? If you are looking to raise funds then please remember you can contact us to assist – we will of course require full details in order to assess whether the project meets the Society's aims and objectives, and there will be an application form to complete when making any request, but grants are available. Why not check whether we can help?

10. Website and Social Media

Rob Flood

- 10.1** The Society's on-line presence in 2019/2020 has continued to be an important way for the public to interact with us.
- 10.2** Our website - city-of-rochester.org.uk - continues to receive good traffic. We had 3,800 unique visitors to our website over the last year, down slightly on the previous year, with 9,000-page views over 4,600 sessions (down by 9% on 2018/19). Most users continue to interact with us from desktop computers - 60% - with 33% of the activity on the site to mobile/smartphone devices and only 7% to tablets/iPads. Of all the visits to our website, most continue to look for guided walks and tour information although we've seen a marked increase in visits to our online shop since the publication of Bob Ratcliffe's wonderful *Railways of Rochester* book in December. 12 people joined or renewed their membership through the website.
- 10.3** Our MailChimp account is still the way that most members engage with our online activity. Our mail-out campaigns now go to 280 email addresses (slightly down following General Data Protection Regulation requirements), predominantly members but also some strategic non-members, including a number of Medway councillors and Council officers. Mail-outs are still typically twice a month. Our average 'open rate' on our campaigns continues at well over 65% (this is against an industry average of 20%) and they continue to be the part of our on-line activity that most people talk to me about.

- 10.4** On Twitter, the Society's account @CORochesterSoc still sits at just over 2,700 followers and we continue to receive over 300 profile visits per month. Our Tweet impressions continue to be driven by our monthly 'What's On' mail-outs and we received over 18,000 impressions during the year (this is down substantially from the highs of last year) but we continue to average of over 700 per tweet. Our July 2019 tweet about Rochester Cathedral's adventure golf course received 2,400 impressions, our June 2019 tweet about the new signs at Rochester railway station featuring the word 'Medway' received 1,300 impressions and our tweet showing a comedic take on the proposed Corporation Street Hotel received 1,250 impressions.
- 10.5** Our Facebook account has grown by another 100 to 710 followers and our posts continue to reach up to 300 people. Our best performing posts continue to mirror our MailChimp mailouts with January's What's On post reaching over 400 people with 90 engagements.

Reports of Society representatives on other organisations

11. Civic Voice

Christine Furminger

- 11.1** The Society remains affiliated to Civic Voice, the umbrella organisation for civic societies, which was founded following the demise of the Civic Trust in 2009. Civic Voice has a significant role in the world of amenity societies and has a voice in Parliament through the All Party Parliamentary Group for Civic Societies.
- 11.2** Civic Voice provides a direct source of information, experience, insight and expertise to people who care about and are actively involved with their communities. Other benefits include competitive insurance, banking and website support. It is hoped that enjoyable annual events, such as Civic Day and the National Convention, will be able to take place again once the present pandemic, and this long period of uncertainty, has run its course. In the meantime, there are now regular virtual talks from prominent experts to enjoy via its website and help and advice continues to be available to members.

12. Medway Tourism Association (MTA)

Alan Moss

- 12.1** The Society continues to send representatives to meetings of the MTA, an organisation which brings together a wide range of organisations – large and small – engaged in the leisure and tourism industry in the Medway Towns.
- 12.2** During the period covered by this report only one meeting of the MTA was held, on 1 July 2019 at Fitted Rigging House Suite at Chatham Historic Dockyard. It was attended by 21 members representing 15 different organisations. Among the matters discussed were:
- Medway Council's proposed bid for 'City of Culture' status in 2025;
 - proposals to mark the 150th anniversary (in 2020) of the death of Charles Dickens, to which the Society would be making a substantial contribution with its

specially arranged tours and events (sadly, of course, it has since become necessary to put all celebrations on hold); and

- the proposed new Charles Dickens Gallery at the Guildhall Museum.

13. Rochester City Centre Forum (RCCF)

Alan Moss

- 13.1** The Society continues to be represented at meetings of the RCCF, which is a non-political coming together of Rochester residents, businesses and other city-based organisations, to discuss the well-being of our city centre, and to discuss and organise ways in which this can be enhanced and promoted. Among its achievements so far have been the establishment of the regular artisan market and the reintroduction of floral displays along the High Street.
- 13.2** The Forum continues to meet three or four times a year, with Mrs Sarah Tranter as the elected chairperson. In the period covered by this report the Forum met on four occasions, on 1 April, 4 July and 3 October 2019, and on 13 February 2020.
- 13.3** At the meeting on 2 April 2019, held in the main chamber of the Guildhall, the main item on the agenda was a presentation by Matthew Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) who gave an overview of policing strategy in the Medway Towns. He explained that his role as elected PCC is to set policing priorities for the county, by consulting with the public and putting together a Police and Crime Plan – *Safer in Kent*. He then holds the Chief Constable of Kent Police to account for the delivery of that plan. The PCC also sets the council tax precept for policing, is responsible for the overall policing budget, and commissions services for victims of crime and funds community safety projects.
- 13.4** After the presentation members of the Forum were given the opportunity to discuss and put questions to Mr Scott on issues of concern, especially issues relating to policing in Rochester.
- 13.5** The meeting on 4 July, also at the Guildhall, included the AGM when officers and committee members were elected for the ensuing year. Officers for 2019/20 are:
- Sarah Tranter (Chair), Elizabeth Whitlam (Vice-chair), Marion Haslam (Treasurer) and Toni Doran (Secretary). Pam Gibbon, Chair of the City of Rochester Society, was re-elected as a committee member.
- 13.6** The meeting on 3 October was held in the King's School Conference Suite. Reports were received on a number of topics including policing, the artisan market, Christmas lights, High Street floral displays and forthcoming events in Rochester. There were also presentations from King's School and from Medway Dementia Friends.
- 13.7** We were back to the Guildhall for the meeting on 13 February 2020. (The Forum continues to grow in number; there were 41 people present at this meeting.)
- 13.8** Reports were received from representatives of the Police, from Medway Council about the rough sleeper initiative, and from the organisers of a Medway Pride Festival in August. There were also up-dates about the artisan market, traders' planned

initiatives, forthcoming events and, from the Cathedral, a report on the huge rise in visitor numbers thanks to the crazy golf event last summer and the presence of the Knife Angel sculpture. The Museum of the Moon event was then in progress.

.....
Secretary

.....
Chairman

..... 2020

THE CITY OF ROCHESTER SOCIETY
Registered Charity No. 252603
BALANCE SHEET AT 31ST MARCH 2020

	Notes	2020	2019
		£	£
CURRENT ASSETS			
INVESTMENTS			
National Savings & Investments		9,146	9,073
Scottish Widows (at cost) [Market value 15.12.19 £31,369.75]		10,000	10,000
Stocks	3	6,808	2,939
Debtors		0	0
Advance payments		820	150
HSBC Deposit Account		32,076	33,007
Pay Pal		0	47
Cash at bank	4	5,200	1,178
Cash in the hands of officers		444	0
Total current assets		64,494	56,394
LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			
ADVANCE RECEIPTS			
Subscriptions received in advance		30	240
Life Subscriptions	5	1,180	1,240
SUNDRY CREDITORS			
Trade creditors		420	420
Other creditors		651	288
Total current liabilities		2,281	2,188
NET CURRENT ASSETS		62,213	54,206
 REPRESENTED BY			
General fund b/f		50,246	43,051
Surplus for year		8,007	7,195
		58,253	50,246
Life subscription fund	5	3,960	3,960
Total funds		62,213	54,206

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020

1. Accounting policies – General

These accounts have been prepared under the historic cost convention

2. Assets

Renewals are charged to revenue

3. Stock

Stock is stated at the lower of cost and realisable value

4. Life Subscriptions

From 1/4/2017 life subscriptions have been included in the income and expenditure account at £10 per member per year, the balance being carried forward to future years as advance receipts. Further contributions will not be made to the life subscription fund.

THE CITY OF ROCHESTER SOCIETY
Registered Charity No. 252603
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2019-20

	Notes	2019-20	2018-19
INCOME		£	£
Subscriptions		2,990	3,172
Life membership	5	160	150
Donations		66	64
Interest receivable		141	111
Income from meetings, outings etc		1,145	1,195
Christmas event		568	798
Income from tours		3,501	2,919
Sale of publications		4,044	1,666
Craft Fairs		31,135	28,020
Dickens Chalet Repair & Conservation Fund		62	
TOTAL INCOME		43,812	38,095
EXPENDITURE			
Cost of meetings and outings		1,694	1,396
Christmas meeting		621	1,471
Tours		590	392
Committee & AGM expenses		1,055	767
Newsletter printing		2,916	3,355
Insurance		285	272
Printing, stationery and postage		1,456	1,711
Donations and grants		2,930	750
Publications		3,290	1,992
Craft Fairs		19,282	17,227
Affiliations and subscriptions		610	685
Website		163	163
Purchase of equipment		83	0
Other costs		410	299
Independent examiner's fee		420	420
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		35,805	30,900
SURPLUS FOR YEAR		8,007	7,195
		43,812	38,095

THE CITY OF ROCHESTER SOCIETY

RULES AND CONSTITUTION

Charity Registration No 252603

June 2017

RULES AND CONSTITUTION OF THE CITY OF ROCHESTER SOCIETY

- 1. Name.** The name of the Society shall be “The City of Rochester Society”.
- 2. Objectives.** The objectives of the Society shall be to promote:
 - (a) public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of Rochester and its surroundings;
 - (b) the development of a live, modern community, with the highest standards of architecture and planning;
 - (c) interest in cultural activities;
 - (d) the re-instatement of Rochester’s city status;
 - (e) other features of general amenity, including preservation, conservation and education, for the benefit of both residents and visitors; and to do all such lawful acts and things as are incidental to the attainment of the objectives of the Society. It may, if it deems it fit, do such acts or things in conjunction with any person, body, institution, authority or otherwise.
- 3. Membership.** Membership of the Society shall be open to all who are interested in the aims of the Society and shall be in the following categories: life membership, yearly membership (adult), yearly membership (junior) – for those under 19 years of age), yearly membership (corporate). Membership shall lapse if the full subscription is unpaid by 31st July in the relevant year. The executive committee may also elect honorary members as it deems appropriate. Honorary members shall not be required to pay a subscription.
- 4. Subscription.** The rate of subscription shall be as recommended by the executive committee and approved by a majority of members present at an annual or special general meeting. A new member joining the Society and paying the first subscription between 1st January and 31st March in any year shall not be required to pay a further subscription until 1st April in the following year. Otherwise, all yearly membership subscriptions shall be renewed on 1st April. The Society shall have power to accept donations for any purpose not inconsistent with its aims.
- 5. Meetings.** An annual general meeting shall be held, on a date appointed by the executive committee, between 1st May and 30th June of each year, to receive the executive committee’s report and audited accounts and to elect members of the said committee. The committee shall decide when members meetings of the Society shall be held and shall give at least fourteen days’ notice of such meetings to all members.

Special general meetings of the Society shall be held at the request of ten or more members. Thirty members personally present shall constitute a quorum for a general meeting of the Society. Corporate members shall be entitled to send two delegates, each delegate entitled to one vote, to the annual or special general meeting of the Society.

- 6. Management of the Society.** The management of the Society shall be vested in an executive committee consisting of a chairman, vice-chairman, honorary treasurer and honorary secretary and up to seven other members.

The executive committee may appoint other members of the society to serve on the executive committee, but without voting rights.

The executive committee may also appoint other members of the society as officers, in addition to those defined above, but without voting rights. The executive committee shall decide whether such additional officers shall be required to attend meetings of the executive committee.

Five members of the committee shall constitute a quorum provided that one of that number is an officer of the Society.

The chairman, vice chairman, honorary treasurer and honorary secretary shall constitute the trustees of the society.

- 7. Committee.** The Society shall, at every annual general meeting, elect individually the four officers as defined in rule 6 and up to seven other members to constitute the committee for the ensuing year. The executive committee shall take office at the end of the meeting at which they are elected and shall hold office until the end of the next annual general meeting.

Members of the executive committee may be re-elected for a further term or terms of office, save for the four elected officers, as qualified in rule 8.

The executive committee shall determine the upper spending limit that each of the sub-committees defined in rule 9 may be permitted to spend on their own authority on individual purchases and transactions, though not as a component of a project or item which would in total exceed the permitted upper limit of spending.

- 8. Election of officers.** The chairman, vice chairman, honorary treasurer and honorary secretary shall serve for a period of time not exceeding the following:

Chairman and vice-chairman – three years;
Honorary treasurer – seven years;
Honorary secretary – five years.

If a nomination for any of the above positions is not forthcoming before the date of the annual general meeting, the above periods of office may be extended by a maximum of two years, subject to the approval of the annual general meeting.

Members of the society who have served the permitted continuous period in any of the elected offices and are therefore debarred for re-nomination will qualify for nomination to that office after a period of at least two years.

The chairman, vice chairman, honorary treasurer and honorary secretary shall form the finance and general purposes sub-committee of the executive committee and shall meet as required. It shall have authority to spend society funds when such a decision cannot await the next meeting of the executive committee.

9. Sub-committees. The executive committee shall create the following sub-committees for the efficient running of the society:

- Planning;
- Members meetings/events;
- Tours;
- Publications, Publicity and Promotions;
- Festivals.

The minimum size of respective sub-committees shall be three and each sub-committee may co-opt other members of the society who have special interests or skills which are deemed to be of benefit to the society, subject to the approval of the executive committee.

At its first meeting following the annual general meeting, the executive committee shall appoint an elected member of the executive committee to each sub-committee.

There shall be no limit on the number of sub-committees upon which an elected member of the executive committee or a member of the society may serve.

The chairman of the society shall be an ex-officio member of all sub-committees.

Each sub-committee shall elect its own chairman at its first meeting following the annual general meeting.

An elected member of the executive committee from each sub-committee shall report to the executive committee, usually in writing, on significant issues or when an executive committee decision is required. In the event that an elected member of the executive committee who is a member of the sub-committee is not available, then a substitute may attend and report to the executive committee, but without voting rights.

The executive committee may create working groups as necessary to undertake specific projects.

- 10. Election of President and Vice-Presidents.** A president may be elected at a general meeting of the Society. He or she shall serve in that capacity for a period of one year and shall be eligible for re-election for one or more further terms. One or more vice-presidents may be elected at a general meeting of the Society. Such vice-presidents shall be elected for life. The president and vice-presidents shall not be required to pay a subscription.
- 11. Appeals.** The executive committee shall have the power to make appeals, solicit donations and canvass monies for carrying out the objectives of the Society.
- 12. Expenses and administration.** The executive committee shall, out of monies received by the Society, pay all proper expenses for the management of the Society and shall use the residue of such monies as it thinks fit for or towards the objectives of the Society.
- 13. Investments.** All monies belonging to the Society at any time which are not immediately required for Society purposes shall be invested by the Trustees on behalf of the Society in such investments, securities or property as they consider fit, always complying with the requirements of the Charity Commission.
- 14. Borrowing.** The executive committee may borrow for the objectives of the Society such monies at such rate of interest and in such a manner as it may think fit, provided that the consent of a general meeting of the Society shall first be obtained.
- 15. Amendments.** The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority of members present at an annual or special general meeting provided that ten days' notice of the proposed amendment has been sent to all members and provided that nothing therein contained shall authorise any amendment permitting the expenditure of funds of the Society on any object which is not a charitable object at law.
- 16. Winding up.** In the event of the winding up of the Society the available funds of the Society shall be transferred to such one or more charitable bodies, having objectives similar or reasonably similar to those herein before declared as may be chosen by the executive committee and approved by the Charity Commission.

Explanatory note

(This note does not form part of the Rules and Constitution)

The City of Rochester Society was founded in 1967. Its area of interest is that of the City of Rochester as it existed immediately prior to the reorganisation of local government in 1974, which may be described as the urban area of Rochester and Strood.



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
City of Rochester Society

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 March 2020

**Charity no
(if any)**

252603

Set out on pages

Attached

(remember to include the page numbers in additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 March 2020.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

The charity's gross income did not exceed £250,000.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Christopher John Kember

Date:

6/11/20

Name:

Christopher John Kember

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

Accountant
FMAAT

Address: Sinden Thackeray Partnership
4 Stirling House, Sunderland Quay, Culpeper Close,
Rochester, Kent. ME2 4HN.

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

[Empty box for disclosure details]