

Inspired by the past, picture your future...

LOOK! St Albans **our community voice on design**

"In the spirit of community-led neighbourhood planning our ethos is to be transparent, proactive, respectful, collaborative, open, diverse, explorative and community-rooted."
<http://www.lookstalbans.org/> email lookstalbans@gmail.com Twitter [@LookStAlbans](https://twitter.com/LookStAlbans)

Minutes of Look! St Albans 2nd Annual General Meeting held on Monday 9th February 2015 at 7.30pm The Octagon Room, St Peter's Church, St Peters Street St Albans AL1 3HG

Vanessa Gregory Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. She then asked for everyone's indulgence in taking time to pay a personal tribute to Honorary Alderman and former Councillor Clare Ellis, whom she had just heard had died in recent days. Clare had given Vanessa much support and encouragement over the years, especially when she was trying to encourage more understanding of the economic, as well as aesthetic value of enhancing the historic public realm. Vanessa looked back with great fondness at their joint participation in a conference held by the Historic Town Forum in Exeter which had apart from being informative had been fun, due in part to Clare's sense of humour and being terrific company.

The Chairman then went on to give a personal apology to those who attended the attempted AGM at the end of the design charrette in October 2014. It was perhaps with hindsight overly ambitious with rather a late start, consequently all the business had not been concluded in a safe and satisfactory manner, therefore she had taken the decision that a fresh AGM was required.

She expressed her enthusiasm for the opportunity the fresh AGM had offered in the evenings programme, with three excellent speakers; including an update on the working drawings by Simon Cove of Kirby Cove Architects for the development of the Hatfield Road Museum site. Many people in the room had taken part in the design charrette and were no doubt eager to see how our chosen design concept "Oak Tree Gardens" was progressing.

The chairman explained the theme of the evening was collaboration; and commented that collaboration inspired, challenged us to learn from each other, and sometimes awakened latent talents.

The chairman introduced Paul Cartwright, a firm supporter of Look! St Albans since its beginning. Paul gave a short presentation on St Peter's Church collaboration with students and alumni of the University of Hertfordshire on art installations at St Peter's and recent churchyard developments.

Paul summarised the work that he had been involved in for St Peters and gave out illustrations of the Tree of Life sculpture and briefly explained its significance and meaning.

A fallen tree together with Revd Anne Hollinghurst (St Peter's vicar) love of storytelling inspired and led to another sculpture known as the story telling chair and circle being installed within the churchyard. This had been designed by Alex Baranovskij from The University of Hertfordshire. This had enabled a Gorsedd (a celebration of the bardic arts of storytelling, music, poetry and song) to be held at St Peter's as part of the St Albans Literary Festival.

Paul looked to the future and hoped that the creative collaborative work at St Peter's would encourage others to help bring an end to the current dearth of public art in St Albans. He expressed a desire for St Peter's to assist with other sculptures outside the grounds of St Peters, perhaps even a sculpture on the roundabout at top of St Peters Street.

Paul's presentation was warmly welcomed and the chairman expressed her thanks on behalf of all present.

AGM

The Chairman introduced the AGM, the formal part of the evening's proceedings and advised that we would be using the constitution unanimously adopted at the inaugural AGM in November 2013 for this AGM. The items that required a vote had been in the public domain for quite some time. The minor amendments to the constitution were sent out to the Reps Group and well in excess of a 100 supporters in early in December 2014. Therefore the Chairman hoped most people felt well briefed ahead of the following proceedings.

The Secretary established there was a quorum as per constitution.

Representatives' Group members present

Vanessa Gregory, James Gregory, Tim Leicester, Chris Debenham, Anthony Oliver, Mel Hilbrow, David Lloyd, John Hoad, Helen Bishop, Dan Fletcher, Richard Hardy, Councillor Julian Daly, John Metcalf, Graeme Eastham

Apologies for absence.

Alan McCartney, Fiona Couper, Councillor Beric Read, Jane Gardiner, Anne Main MP, Debbi White, Revd Anne Hollinghurst, Rosemary Knight, Councillor Fred Wartenberg, Councillor Simon Grover, Alistair Woodgate, County Councillor Sandy Walkington

Minutes of the 2013 Inaugural Meeting.

The Chairman asked those present if they were happy to agree the minutes from the inaugural AGM.

Adoption of minutes was proposed by Chris Debenham and seconded by Anthony Oliver

The minutes were formally voted upon and adopted, with one abstention and no objections.

Matters Arising.

No matters were raised.

The chairman formally identified those individuals and organisations to be found in Appendix A Representatives Group and introduced in particular new Reps Group members Richard Hardy and Dan Fletcher.

Chairman's Annual Report. *This can be found at the end of these minutes.*

Treasurer's Report. Chris Debenham Treasurer explained the main items of expenditure and drew attention to the figures circulated. The current balance in Look St Albans accounts is £256.76.

A formal set of accounts were not due until April 2015. The adoption of accounts as presented at this AGM were proposed by Anthony Oliver and seconded by Mel Hilbrow

The accounts were formally adopted, with one abstention and no objections.

Treasurer's report, summary of receipts and payments and budgeted expenditure for year 2014 can be found at the end of these minutes.

Proposed changes to the Constitution was presented by Deputy Chair Mel Hilbrow: The proposal was to consider and if thought fit to pass as a resolution, collectively or individually, the changes to the Constitution set out in the appendix as shown on our website and in printed form available on the night.

The Deputy Chair explained why these minor changes were needed to 1) avoid confusions, 2) enable work to progress, 3) avoid unnecessary work and 4) promote good governance. Look! St Albans formal business meetings would be reduced from four to two per annum, unless more were required. It was intended that Look! would hold at least two informal gatherings per annum, often in a local pub to allow Reps Group members and Look! St Albans supporters to hold informal discussions.

2 questions were raised;

A minor change was requested verbally for immediate adoption.

The secretary advised the constitution is clear that all changes require at least 28 days' notice in writing in advance of the AGM. Therefore a verbal change could not be adopted tonight. However if the suggested change was advised to the Secretary in writing it could be considered at a future AGM.

One general matter was raised and answered satisfactorily on the night.

Adoption of the changes to the constitution was proposed by Tim Leicester and seconded by Anthony Oliver.

The changes in constitution were formally voted upon and adopted, with one abstention and no objections.

Adopted constitution can be downloaded through this link
http://www.lookstalbans.org/uploads/2/7/7/4/27749191/look_st_albans_constitution_adopted_9th_february_2015.pdf

The AGM concluded at approximately 8:15pm

There then was a presentation by Simon Cove of Kirby Cove Architects of the working drawings for the redevelopment of St Albans Museums Site, Hatfield Road, St Albans, following our design charrette held at the end of October 2014. A number of questions were raised which Simon was pleased to answer and was happy to take away a number of helpful suggestions.

The chairman expressed on behalf of all present her thanks to Simon and commented there was real enthusiasm in the room for the proposals and a delight that the design concept from the charrette was coming to life.

The Chairman then was delighted to introduced Angela Koch of ImaginePlaces. Angela had been lead external independent facilitator for the Museum of St Albans Hatfield Road site design charrette, and lead facilitator on behalf of the Prince' Foundation for Building Community at our original Enquiry By Design workshop in February 2012.

Angela's presentation was entitled 'Design Codes and Charrettes - so what?' Angela explained in her opinion the national regulatory system in planning and designing places is weak, in constant flux, fuzzy, complex, wordy and kept too many people busy arguing and fighting whilst achieving astonishingly little. Nonetheless within that system there was the ability for use of local design codes, these gave clarity and the ability to cut through the ambiguity to the benefit of the developer, Local Planning Authority and local residents. Whilst Design Charrettes allowed people to positively engage and shape their neighbourhoods and learn about the complexity of good Placemaking. It was therefore in the hands of developers, the local planning authority and local people to decide if they had the collective will see if the glass was half full and change from arguing and fighting to a more positive engagement. *(This slide presentation will be available to view on <http://www.lookstalbans.org/> website in addition to a 'handout' format).*

The Chairman thanked Angela on behalf of all present for her thought provoking presentation and invited people to ask her questions informally over the following drinks.

Vanessa thanked everyone for attending and hoped they had enjoyed the evening. She thanked Reps Group colleagues and others for their help in providing refreshments including Alison Debenham for her excellent homemade cakes.

Chairman's Annual Report

First of all I want to thank in particular my fellow officers, who have given me tremendous help and support in so many ways in this first year. For one thing they have dug deep into their pockets to help us get up and running.

When we held our inaugural AGM even I, completely convinced that design charrette's was the way forward, could not have imagined our 2nd AGM would be only a few short months after our 1st charrette. The very reason Look! St Albans was set up. We will hear the progress

from the outcome of that charrette later on; but suffice some facts which reinforce, given half a chance, the community will actively and positively engage to help shape future buildings and open spaces in the beating heart of our city. 47 different attendees gave a total of 329 hours which averaged 7 hours per person. For our first site specific design charrette that was pretty impressive!

Following on from our inaugural AGM the Steering Group adapted to being the Representatives' Group. This has taken some getting used to, for as far as I know we are the first community led group in the country to offer this different way of working. Our work has been endorsed by professional groups and organisations and we were delighted to be included in a recent Hertfordshire University publication as an example of good practice of collaborative planning.

We are breaking new ground in St Albans which we hope others will emulate. This takes time, persuasion and loads of hard work. However we firmly believe what binds us together is stronger than what separates us, and anything that is worthwhile doing is not necessarily the easy option!

We don't fit neatly into an existing pigeon hole. We believe we fill a gap between the council, developer and the community. We believe we share mutually beneficial aims;

- To cut down the time it takes to go through the planning process.
- Ensure we have investment in our city centre to keeping our city centre thriving
- Ensure new buildings and spaces are, in part, designed with people who know St Albans best and consider to be a worthy durable legacy for future Albanians.

As and when required we set up working parties and invite members of the community with appropriate skills to assist in these.

Our most successful working party to date was the website group, with thanks especially to Anthony Oliver. We were able to work with students from Oaklands, who as a part of their work experience designed our new dedicated website under the direction of their tutor Raj Dhillon.

Initially a brief was given to two teams and we on the reps group had the hard decision to choose the winning design. Importantly not only did the students design the website, they had significant involvement in the contents too.

The website <http://www.lookstalbans.org/> is a vital resource in promoting Look! St Albans to potential developers who hopefully will be willing to work with us.

Also in keeping the community updated on what we are doing on their behalf and importantly asking for feedback.

Our website is also linked to the council neighbourhood planning webpage.

We continue to grow in reaching more of the community, which is a core aim and dare I say we are growing in confidence that we are doing the right thing. As I mentioned earlier a useful innovation to keep in contact was what we call 'informal gatherings in the pub'. We welcome new ideas from you, different venues and formats.

But returning to why do I feel that growing confidence?

As we held our 1st design charrette last October Civic Voice the national organisation representing many groups around the country of which I am an individual member launched their document **Collaborative Planning For All**, which dare I say in many places could have been lifted from many of our communications of the last 2 years or so. I have been invited to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Civic Societies launch of this document on Wednesday. Trust me if I get a chance to say what we are doing in St Albans.....I will!

One issue which I am sure The Treasurer will mention is fund raising. At the moment we are preparing one grant application, but to keep going and growing we need your support. We don't have membership fees as that would be against our ethos of being inclusive. However that does not stop people in making regular donations if there are able. For example if half of our supporters gave the equivalent of one large coffee and muffin that can be purchased at any of our well frequented coffee shops, that would make a significant contribution in our annual running costs! But we need to raise more, as you will hear soon.

We always welcome help in many ways, expertise, willing hands but there is no getting way from the fact that we need to raise funds. As we enter our 2nd year this must be a priority and any ideas or help you can offer on that front will be most welcome.

Please do join us at our next informal gathering we have serious aims, but we believe we should have fun along the way. In the meantime please spread the word about us, genuinely all are welcome!

LOOK! ST ALBANS - OUR COMMUNITY VOICE ON DESIGN

Report by the Treasurer for the period ended 31 March 2014

The Summary of Receipts and Payments that I have produced is necessarily brief. Look! St Albans was not constituted until November 2013, and the transactions for the relevant period relate to the cash collections and specific donations made prior to and at about that time, and payments made in connection with the public meeting.

The financial statement for the current accounting year is likely to be in similar form. Look! St Albans will have a certain number of expenses to be met annually, about £1,150.00 on current projections, and realistically can meet these only through donations from its members and the public. We are fortunate that the first charrette, where the Council is the landowner, will involve a relatively low level of expenditure on the part of Look! St Albans, but it is expenditure that must still be funded, and we must expect that we shall have to raise significantly larger sums for the cost of hosting future charrettes that we may hold with developers.

Whilst grants may be available, our experience to date has been that applications need to be made in relation to specific projects, the practicalities of which are that the process of application, approval and release of funds will take longer than the time within which we must hold a charrette. We therefore need to build up a significant fund - projections of the sum we

might have to raise to cover the cost of even a single charrette are in five figures. All donations, large or small, will therefore be very welcome, and in this respect please bear in mind that information about making donations is on the Look! St Albans website, <http://www.lookstalbans.org/>, for donations by cash, cheque or through Paypal. We shall also be looking into business sponsorship although, again, this may only be obtainable in relation to a specific charrette, or one element of a charrette, e.g. catering, hire of premises, publicity.

October 2014

Christopher Debenham, Treasurer

Look! St Albans - Our Community Voice on Design

LOOK! ST ALBANS OUR COMMUNITY VOICE ON DESIGN

Summary of Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st March 2014

RECEIPTS

Donations

| | | |
|-------------------|----------------|---------|
| Public collection | £306.76 | |
| Individual | <u>£145.00</u> | £451.76 |

PAYMENTS

Public meeting

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Banner | £25.00 | |
| Sound and projection | £50.00 | |
| Hire of hall | <u>£120.00</u> | <u>£195.00</u> |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--|----------------|
| SURPLUS/ (LOSS) for the year | | <u>£256.76</u> |
|------------------------------|--|----------------|

LOOK! ST ALBANS OUR COMMUNITY VOICE ON DESIGN

Budgeted Expenditure 2014

Annual costs

(i.e. costs likely to be payable annually regardless of whether Look! St Albans is involved in a charrette/workshop)

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Indemnity insurance policy premium | £500.00 |
| Subscriptions to other bodies, e.g. CVA, Flickr | 25.00 |
| Printing, postage and stationery | 350.00 |
| Website - hosting, domain name | 50.00 |
| - maintenance | 250.00 |
| Hire of premises, e.g. AGM | 325.00 |
| Sound and projection fee, e.g. AGM | <u>50.00</u> |
| | <u>£1,150.00</u> |

Likely charette/workshop costs (per charrette)

(i.e. those costs Look! St Albans should expect to have to pay on the occasion of each charrette-assuming a small to medium sized development, one day charrette)

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Publicity and printing costs | £600.00 |
| Banner - costs to erect and remove | 700.00 |
| Venue - hire for charrette | 500.00 |
| Venue - hire for public meeting (pre charette) | 325.00 |
| - hire for public meeting (post charette) | 325.00 |
| Refreshments - c £8pp x 30, but allow | <u>300.00</u> |
| | <u>£2,750.00</u> |

Potential charrette/workshop costs (per charrette)

(i.e. those costs towards which Look! St Albans would expect to negotiate payment by, or a contribution from, a developer - assuming a small to medium size development)

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Two specialists @ £1,000 each per day <i>(assume 4 days' preparation, charrette and report)</i> | £8,000.00 |
| One facilitator @ £650 per day <i>(assume 10 days' preparation, charrette and report)</i> | <u>£6,500.00</u> |
| | <u>£14,500.00</u> |

These minutes were approved by those present and signed by the chairman at the 3rd AGM on Monday 25th April 2016

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Chair Look! St Albans Our Community Voice on Design