

# Annual General Meeting of the Chelsea Society

Held on Monday 23rd November 2015

at Chelsea Old Town Hall

Chaired by The Chairman, Damian Greenish  
and Vice-Chairman, Sarah Farrugia

## Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting and offered apologies from the President, John Simpson, who has been called away due to recent world events. He then introduced the Vice-Chairman (Sarah Farrugia), the Hon. Treasurer (Tom Martin) and the Hon. Secretary (Lindsay Kennedy) as well as the other Council members.

The Chairman informed the meeting that he planned to change the order of the agenda items so that he could deal with customary business first and then allow time to debate and vote on the resolutions that had been put forward.

## Minutes

No comments were made and these were therefore agreed and accepted.

## Point of Order

At this point, Gillespie Robertson raised a point of order that the resolutions be taken before any further business so that the meeting could see which way the Council members would vote. The Chairman thanked Mr Robertson for the intervention but pointed out that the Council members' votes would be equally visible later in the meeting. He therefore preferred to retain the planned running order.

## Elections to the Council

Three members were re-elected to the Council (Martyn Baker, Michael Bach, Jane Dorrell) and one new member was elected, namely Dr. James Thompson.

## Accounts

The Hon. Treasurer presented the accounts for the financial year to 30 June 2015. The Independent Examiner had scrutinised the accounts and the Society is deemed to be in good financial health. The statement of the accounts will be available in the *Annual Report*. The accounts were approved by the meeting.

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Members attend the Annual General Meeting at Chelsea Old Town Hall.

## Chairman's Report

The Chairman presented his report for the year. The full text of his statement is published on the website and in the *Annual Report*. Questions were invited on the report and these are set out in Appendix 1. The report was then adopted.

## Resolutions

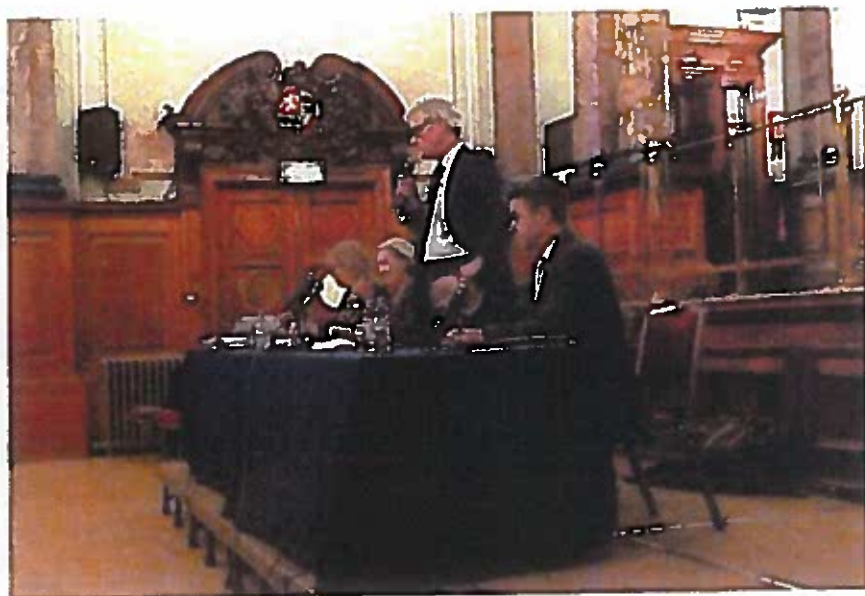
### Resolution 1: Crossrail 2

The Chairman invited Chris Lenon to propose the resolution 'The Chelsea Society opposes the plans to build a Crossrail Station and route in Chelsea.'

Mr Lenon noted that Crossrail 2 poses a threat to the amenities and character of Chelsea and therefore should be opposed by the Society. He went on to give further background and justifications for the resolution in terms of the case for transport, business and heritage. Mr Lenon invited the meeting to vote in favour of the resolution. The resolution was seconded by Gillespie Robertson. The Chairman asked if anyone opposed the motion and there were questions and comments from the floor, these are noted in Appendix 2.

The resolution was put to the vote and carried by a substantial majority (205 members were in attendance).

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*Damian Greenish addresses the Members at the Annual General Meeting*

### Resolution 2 : Change to the Constitution

Chris Lenon was invited to put forward the second resolution:

'The Council shall be responsible for the day-to-day work of the Society, and subject to the following proviso shall have power to take any action on behalf of the Society which the Council thinks fit to take for the purpose of furthering the Objects of the Society. Such power shall not be exercisable by the Council if 10 or more members of the Society draw the Council's attention to a significant issue in relation to the said Objects which involves an area of more than 750 square metres of proposed infrastructure or other major construction development in Chelsea. In any such case the Council shall consult members by way of ballot to determine the policy of the Society on that issue. The Council shall make and publish every year a Report of the activities of the Society during the previous year.'

Mr Lenon said that, once elected, the Council members are not answerable to the members of the Society. He noted that members can currently vote off Council members and can call an EGM but that would be at their own expense. Mr Lenon added that the Society should pay more attention to the views of its members and reflect these on significant issues. This could have the added benefit of strengthening any responses on planning issues. He explained that the resolution is being put forward as there needs to be a simple mechanism for members to decide the Society's policy on significant issues. He noted that he would be happy for

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the principle to be included in a review of the rules and constitution. Gillespie Robertson seconded the resolution.

The Chairman invited David Le Lay to speak in opposition. Mr Le Lay said "I was Chairman of the Chelsea Society for 22 years and I am delighted that the Society is continuing to flourish. I beg you to vote against this resolution for the reasons set out in the Chairman's report. It is unworkable and based on the premise that the Society is undemocratic. This evening, you've heard many ways in which the Council listens including a proper AGM. The point about twenty members calling an EGM is not strictly accurate. There is a provision that the Council may ask for the cost to be covered but this is discretionary and represents a safeguard against calling frivolous meetings. No such safeguard is included in the resolution. Ten members is a very small number -- less than 1% of the membership. I fear that, if passed, this resolution could be misused to silence the Society, for instance by developers. In addition, ballots are time consuming and expensive -- and what would happen if the plans change, another ballot? I love this Society and I believe this would change its character and potentially wreck it. Please vote against it."

Further questions and comments were invited, and these are shown in Appendix 3.

Following the open session, Gillespie Robertson asked the Chairman for a vote on the principle underlying the resolution. The Chairman responded that the formal procedures in place mean members need to be given 28 days notice of resolutions and so they cannot be amended on the night. However, he did agree that the rules need to be updated. He also had no objection to Council papers such as minutes and notes of planning meetings being published to allow greater visibility of the workings of the Council.

On that basis, the proposer and seconder asked to withdraw the resolution. The resolution was withdrawn.

The Chairman then invited members to stay for drinks and the meeting was closed.

### Appendix 1 - Questions and Comments following the Chairman's Report

Melinda Hughes "I would like a view of how Council members are likely to vote before the resolutions are put forward."

The Chairman responded that it would be presumptuous of the Council to take a position before the vote takes place.

Gordon Toland "Did the Chairman receive a reply to his letter to Greg Hands about social housing?"

The Chairman had not yet received a response, but a member of the MP's team who was present said he would follow up.

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Peter Golding "The Council states some useful planning principles in its paper, but is it trying to preserve the building in the Sutton estate?"

The Chairman said that the planning committee is looking into this. He reiterated that an overall ambition is to resist breaking up of communities and any reduction in social housing.

Jean Keal: "I am a tenant in the Sutton Estate. We are campaigning for renovation not demolition. We want to retain social rental housing not just affordable housing."

### **Appendix 2 - Questions and Comments on the resolution regarding Crossrail**

Does the resolution oppose the station or the route or both? (name not given)

Gillespie Robertson responded that there was no opposition to Crossrail 2 in general, just the station and route through Chelsea.

Kim Taylor-Smith: "Since I became a councillor, I have declared an interest in this subject. We need to consider the views and the needs of the next generation and so I do not think this is an appropriate time for this resolution."

Rosy Baker: "Greg Hands has suggested an alternative station in Fulham. Is a 'no' vote also a 'no' vote for a station in Fulham?"

Answer from the floor: "A route through Imperial Wharf would be expensive and difficult so a business case would not get through." The Chairman added that it was not for the Chelsea Society to suggest alternative locations for a station.

### **Appendix 3: Questions and Comments on the resolution regarding the Constitution**

"Is it standard practice to ask for declarations of interest?" (Name not given.)

Chairman "Yes. For example, I personally excuse myself from any matters relating to the landowners with whom I deal."

Frank Busby: "There has been an influx of new members very recently. Is there a takeover bid going on?"

Sir Paul Lever: "The genesis of the resolution is that the Society took a position last year which is clearly out of kilter with the views of the members. The Council should reflect on this. The workings of the Council need to be more transparent so we can communicate our views. Whether real or not, there is a perceived problem with the communication between the Council and the Society members."