



A charitable company limited by guarantee.

Company registration no. 4574188

Charity no. 1126736

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 31 March 2019



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Charity information

The Hackney Society Limited is a civic and amenity society.

Board of Trustees:

Ray Blackburn
Monica Blake
Laurie Elks
Wendy Forrest - from 11 September 2018
Tony Gillett
Julia Lafferty
Nick Perry
Lisa Shell

Officers:

Chair: Nick Perry

Vice Chair: Lisa Shell

Treasurer: Tony Gillett

Registered office: The Round Chapel
1d Glenarm Road
London E5 0LY

Bankers: The Co-operative Bank PLC
P.O. Box 250
Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

Independent Examiner: David Harris FCMA
36 Malvern Road
London E8 3LP



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ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2019. The company's charitable objects are as follows:

- 1. To promote the highest standards in design and protect Hackney's unique heritage.**
- 2. To encourage positive development of the borough's built and natural environments, through engagement with a broad cross-section of local people and experts.**
- 3. To encourage exemplary new design, regeneration and conservation of our rich heritage.**

The Hackney Society is a membership organisation, a registered charity, and a company limited by guarantee. An elected Board of Trustees, drawn from the membership, manages the work of the Society.

What do we do?

- Organise public events including talks, guided walks, exhibitions and site visits (aimed at members, non-members and new audiences)
- Produce publications which celebrate Hackney's social, cultural and architectural history
- Produce a regular newsletter 'Spaces' to highlight the society's work and important current issues
- Campaign to protect local buildings of historical and/or architectural merit
- Co-ordinate a Planning Group to assess important developments and emerging policy on the built environment
- Promote high standards of design, construction and conservation, including through making comments on selected planning applications in the borough
- Support the six Conservation Areas Advisory Committees (CAAC) made up of local people including publication of their minutes on our website, where required
- Build links between residents, officials and councillors, including being a member of Sustainable Hackney
- Provide advice and support to local groups to help them improve their neighbourhoods



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Review of activities during year ended 31 March 2019

Introduction

The Society has highlighted the limited funding we receive in a succession of recent annual reports. 2018/19 has seen no improvement in this respect. Yet the Society continued to deliver a modest programme of projects and events whilst maintaining its public profile and its level of engagement with the planning authority on matters of development, and develop future projects.

Crucially, the Society continues to meet its charitable objectives.

1. Membership

Membership is stable at 215 members of whom 63 are life members, and as a body provides the largest single source of income, albeit generating little to no surplus for general projects. In the wake of our change of bankers reported in our last Annual Report, there has continued to be an encouraging take-up of non-Standing Order renewals, but there remain around thirty members who in spite of attempts to contact them, have not updated from their old Standing Orders and so are no longer members. We continue efforts to establish if those people wish to rejoin.

2. Fundraising and volunteering

The necessary work to continue the activities of The Hackney Society either has been undertaken by volunteers, or, where appropriate and funding has been obtained, outsourced. Work such as organising events, editing the newsletter, book sales, managing the membership and dealing with planning matters continues to be done solely by volunteers including, and especially, the Trustees.

3. Programme of events

Events have been well-attended and popular.

We ran **eight events** during this financial year.

There were **two** walks: *Hackney Wick*, led by Ralph Ward, followed by a visit to the Howling Hops Brewery; *Stokey: a Jewish Village*, led by Rachel Kolsky.

There were **four** building tours: Rio Cinema (+Savoy Cinema), led by Andrew Woodyatt and Hackney Earth; Suleymaniye Mosque led by Suleyman Tunali, preceded by the AGM and a talk by Justin More on Batey & Co, formerly of that site; Tower Theatre, led by Sarah Ley, followed by a social evening; South Hackney Churches, led by Louise Goodison, Laurie Elks, hosted by the Hampden Chapel and St John of Jerusalem Church.

There were **two** talks: *Jam for the Rich*, by Wayne Asher and Stella Bland, in partnership with Friends of Hackney Archives and held at Hackney Archives; *The Hackney Disinfecting Station*, by Tim Walder, held at the Hackney Learning Centre.



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The Trustees would like to thank the various venues and the walk and talk leaders for supporting our events programme through volunteering to participate in these events. Their energy and commitment is greatly appreciated and to be recognised.

As agreed at the AGM in September 2018, from January 2019 the charge for events is £5 for members, £10 for non-members. This will bring in funds which can be used when we are asked to pay for a venue or speaker expenses.

There will still be occasions with "no charge", e.g. joint events with Friends of Hackney Archives.

4. Publications

1. The Society continues to sell its backlist titles through local bookshops, and occasionally at local events and fairs. Since 2018, the Society has sold its titles in modest quantities through the Amazon Marketplace. It is our policy to price Amazon sales so they are no cheaper than RRP and that our income, net of postage and package costs, is greater or similar to those of direct website sales and trade sales.

2. Work that began in 2014 on a new version of *Hackney Houses*, a guide to improvement, conservation and maintenance of late Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian houses remains on hold.

3. The Society has published a book to celebrate its 50th anniversary, *Hackney: portrait of a community 1967 - 2017*. The book has been well received and reviewed in the local press. Because of its size and scope, it proved expensive to produce and the initial print run had to be limited to 1000 sale copies, to keep within the cash constraints of the Society. These all sold and a reprint of 550 copies took place in 2018/19. These are selling steadily.

5. Spaces newsletter

The Society produced **four** issues of *Spaces*: 60, 61, 62 and 63. The newsletter is quarterly and is written by voluntary contributors. They cover planning and historic building issues in the borough, topical issues, forthcoming events, buildings at risk and updates on Hackney Society projects and events. Buildings and issues covered by *Spaces* over the year included: Hackney Wick Station, Hackney Wick, Garden House, Hackney Characterisation Study, Toynbee Hall, Black Stone House, St John's Churchyard, Boris Building, Hackney Town Hall, Hackney Design Awards 2018, Holborn Studios, Talks at the Tower and Pitcairn House. To celebrate and publicise the book *Hackney: portrait of a community 1967-2017*, *Spaces* continued the column that presented a photo from the book. Selected by Laurie Elks, the photos in issues 61 and 62 were by David Hoffman and Gordon Edgar.

The newsletter continues to be funded piecemeal and by in-kind contribution of the editor and Trustee, Monica Blake, along with Ray Blackburn for help with copyediting. The Trustees would like to thank Paul Bolding, Sue Cooke, Johan Dehlin, Siobhán Doran, Gordon Edgar, David Hoffman, Iain Langlands, Jonathan Nicholls, Killian O'Sullivan, Rossana Tich and Ralph Ward for their **articles** and **photographs**. We would also like to thank Glory Hall. Without her generosity, we would not be able to afford the commercial rates for **design**.



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6. Websites

The Society continues to maintain our main website <http://hackneysociety.org> and in lieu of grant funding to redevelop the site entirely, continues with minor reorganisation of pages in the hope that the most relevant materials are easier to find.

Two other *micro-sites* are still available but not actively updated.

hackneybuildings.org (aka lovelocallandmarks.org)
hackneysociety.org/health

The Trustees thank *Community Sites* for their continued provision of services at very modest costs for community and amenity groups such as ours.

It has been the Trustees' aim to prioritise redevelopment of the website but we remain constrained by the lack of capital funds for the project, which we estimate would need around £3000.

7. Social Media

Social media continues to be important and we are indebted to member Rossana Tich who continues to manage our Twitter presence. As at 31 March 2019 we had around 10,700 Twitter (@HackneySociety) followers, up by 400 on the same time last year.

Our Facebook (@theHackneySociety) page is less actively managed and generally automatically reflects our Twitter activity.

8. The Hackney Society Planning Group (HSPG)

The Planning Group meets on a monthly basis to review proposals for significant developments within the Borough. Group members submit comments to the Council in response to planning applications, as well as provide advice to developers, their design teams and other interested parties ahead of their submissions for planning approval. The Hackney Society is not a statutory consultee. However, in the light of the Council's encouragement of early consultation, the Planning Group continues to be approached directly by developers, who make regular presentations to the group ahead of their submissions for planning approval, including the following over the last financial year:

- 55 Morning Lane (Tesco) – Dukeminster / Hackney Walk by Rafael Viñoly
- 337-359 Kingsland Road – Topclass Investments by Ne/AR Architects
- Bishopsgate Goodsynd – Hammerson/Ballymore by FaulknerBrowns, SpaceHub, Chris Dyson, Eric Parr, BuckleyGrayYeoman et al
- The Triangle, Well St – Hackney Joint Estate Charity by Baily Garner
- New Era Estate – Dolphin Living by Allies and Morrison
- St Mary's Lodge – by John Stebbing & Associates



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The group has engaged periodically with the Council's ongoing programme of spatial planning and policy consultations, though limited resources in terms of volunteer time make this a difficult task to perform diligently. Of particular note is the Council's 'LP33' programme to renew the entire Local Plan.

The group raises questions and concerns but also attempts to provide support to those bringing positive visions and quality of design to the borough.

The group recognises a shared interest with the borough's six CAACs (Conservation Areas Advisory Committees), who comment on applications within conservation areas, and continue to share information, and invite CAACs to relevant presentations, meetings and discussions. Whilst comments from the Planning Group have not been uploaded to the Hackney Society website over the last few years, four of the CAACs have provided their comments for upload (with a fifth imminent), which we hope provides a useful resource. Publication of the HSPG comments is complicated by the ad-hoc way in which they are made to the Council – which introduces an additional effort to publish them on the outdated Hackney Society Website.

The Council have not resumed their coordinated meeting for all six of the CAACs in over two years, but have continued hosting occasional Planning User Forums. We are pleased to have assisted the re-formation of the Shoreditch CAAC with a new chair and secretary and to publish their comments on our website. Nick Perry continues to develop some planning application monitoring and access software for the Group and CAACs, which makes their work more efficient and effective and can mitigate some of the (now limited) shortcomings of the Council's services.

The Society's Chair, Nick Perry, continues to attend most of the Council's Planning Sub-committee meetings as an observer, occasionally making a public address, and usually reporting on developments live via Twitter.

Lisa Shell retains the chair of the group, with administrative support from Nick Perry, and a consistent contribution from the following volunteers throughout the financial year: Dickon Hayward, Trevor Horne, Robin Mallilieu, Michael Nelles, Ken Rorrison, Bernard Tulkens, Alfie Stroud, Luke Dewey and new regular attendees and architects Sarah Mann and Craig Douglas. Other attendees have included: Edoardo Milli. Unfortunately, Luke Dewey and Alfie Stroud have stepped down from the group for the time being, but we hope to entice them back to the group which they stay connected to.

The planning group email discussion list comprises many more members, including the chairs of the CAACs, who receive monthly minutes and are updated of meetings, presentations and planning issues of interest.



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9. Partnerships

The Hackney Society works with other organisations in Hackney. In particular, it is represented on the committee of Friends of Hackney Archives. The Society entered the fourth year of a reciprocal membership exchange with Sustainable Hackney.

10. Plans for 2019/20

With no immediate prospect of grant funding, and a continued lack of specialist trustee skills in this area, our plans for the next year continue to be modest and focused on what volunteers can offer. We continue to seek to expand on those skills and apply for funding where appropriate and the return on the investment of time is sufficient.

We continue to have eyes on a revamp of our websites but these are likely to require at least £3000 of capital funds.

The standard membership fee of £15 has remained constant for a number of years and is modest considering the benefits that may derive from it. Membership fees no longer provide the Society with any material surplus once the production expenses for *Spaces* are deducted. As a rule, we no longer offer free places on walks and talks to members and this move, announced at the last AGM, was well received and understood. We continue to explore new membership models in light of our running costs and with ambitions of future projects in mind, whilst simultaneously ensuring engagement is high amongst the people of the borough. Nonetheless we continue to be grateful for all membership contributions and donations of all sizes which allow us to continue to do what we do on a tight budget.