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Annual Report

April 1st 2019 – March 31st 2020

Stroud Preservation Trust

is a building preservation trust set up to preserve buildings of particular historical, architectural and constructional interest, in and around Stroud, for the benefit of the local community and the Nation.

Founded in 1982

Our activities in an unusual year

As a Preservation Trust it always seems odd not to have a specific building to be working on – a real project that will make a significant difference to the landscape of the town or an area of Stroud. We trustees have been in that position for some time since the handing over of the Brunel Goods Shed to Stroud Valleys Artspace (SVA).

However, behind the scenes during 2019–2020 the trustees have beavered away at the possibilities of a building project only to be held up (as was everything else) by Covid-19 and the 'Lockdown'.



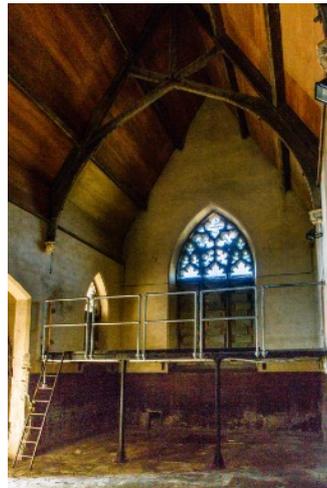
The Chapels of Rest in Bisley Road cemetery

These lovely buildings, currently owned by Stroud District Council (SDC), were beautifully built and can be seen from many vantage points around the town, the valleys and commons. The cemetery itself (but not the Chapels of Rest) has recently been asset transferred to Stroud Town Council (STC) from the District Council, its boundary walls have been mended and the nature reserve continues to flourish. In a recent 'bio-blitz' survey hundreds of plants, lichens, beetles, butterflies and moths were found showing that this cemetery is a haven for wildlife as well as for local people.



The trust understood that SDC intended to divest of their interest in the Chapels. The trustees agreed in May 2019 to pursue possible options on the buildings, and started to research and cost the options whilst working closely with SDC to find out what intentions they may have for its future. We went to view the Chapels and their large interiors on 20th June 2019 and found them very impressive. Later we met with SDC officers to look through details of leases and maps of services. SDC has been really helpful, sending us various reports including ones about the roofs' condition and other structural information and allowing us to have the keys for easy access.

We then worked through various different ideas, their potential costs (it would not be a cheap option) and thought about drains and roofs. We agreed with SDC that their officers would submit a report to the Strategy and Resources Committee on March 5th 2020 to ask that the Chapels be transferred as an asset to SPT on the understanding that if after two years we cannot raise the funds and make a good business plan that we return it to them.



Unfortunately, that agenda item was postponed until the next meeting in June 2020. In the meantime we held a positive and useful public meeting on March 15th 2020 where around fifteen people came to discuss ideas for the building following which we ran a survey to canvas further ideas. And then came the Covid-19 Lockdown.

We have been informed the report will go to the next SDC Strategy and Resources Committee committee in October or December 2020.

PS There is a good description of the history of the Chapels of Rest on the Stroud Local History website:

www.stroudlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/research/cemetery)

Supporting the work of Stroud District Council and its conservation officers

Hugh Barton, Jon Lowe and Andrew Davy met with Kate Russell (SDC's Conservation Officer) to look through the list of SDC concerns around listed buildings. This is a meeting we hold every two years or so to see if we can help with any buildings and to report back with any interventions that we have taken.

Our Freeholds

The Trust still owns the freehold on several properties including No1 Bridge Street (Cainscross), The Medieval Hall (Stroud High Street) and properties at Arundel Mill (Suraya, Garden House, Safflower Cottage, Safflower House and 1 Arundel Mill Cottage). These bring in £50 per year rental but we have been trying to encourage people to buy the freeholds over the past few years.

After two years of negotiations, the freehold of Vine House, in Cainscross, was finalised and In June 2019 the freehold was finally signed away with no additional solicitors costs incurred. The capital from selling the freehold in no way represents the amount of work that went into getting it sorted, but that's the value of volunteers for you!

Stroud's Subscription Rooms

This building is the most significant public building in the town and was in the process of becoming the property of Stroud Town Council. As a result SPT felt it was vital to provide immediate support for this major



community project. Our experience of developing and completing building projects helped us identify specific tasks within the project which would need funding to facilitate the best preparations for the planning stages. The trustees decided to contribute £9,700 to pay towards specific parts of the listed building consent (LBC) work on the Subscription Rooms. Our contribution paid for a Heritage Statement, a building costs

analysis, a services feasibility study and the LBC consent application.

Cheapside Warehouse

Sadly this important canal side building burnt down during the year. Hugh Barton and Camilla Hale have continued to support the planning applications for this site submitted by the developers, Newland Homes. The new development (still in contention as we write in September 2020) will be called Bath Place.



A potential new project

Gloucestershire Orchard Trust (GOT) contacted SPT to seek advice about a property they had recently acquired. Steve Hurrell and Anne Mackintosh visited the site and then returned to meet GOT's trustees at their ancient orchard at Longney.



After much discussion it was agreed that an old and dilapidated building called a 'fish house' set within their orchards on the banks of the River Severn was not worth repairing until there was a clear future use for it.



Old Convent at Beeches Green

Chris Gill has kept in contact regularly with the owners of the Old Convent at Beeches Green in Stroud. It is still not at its best but plans are in place and we have taken it off our 'to watch' list.

St Laurence Parish Church

Camilla Hale has been involved in both a potential arts project for St Laurence Church and in meetings to think through its future as a centre for the nine parish churches that make up the Stroud group of C of E churches. One of the Parochial Church Councillors (PCC) came to meet trustees to ask whether SPT could help with the futures of the building. We felt that as a critical friend we could keep an eye on developments but that the PCC itself needed to go a long way towards developing the ideas and looking at fundraising options and then came 'Lockdown' which has halted any further developments.

Our Trustees

At the 37th AGM in November of 2019, Jon Lowe and Andrew Davy officially became Trustees of SPT after having been co-opted at the last AGM and engaged with the Trust for nearly a year.

During the Financial Year the Trustees met nine times, organised one public meeting and held our AGM.

At the 38th AGM Anne Mackintosh will step down and after 38 years of service to the Trust as founder member, project officer, trustee, treasurer and holder of all the history and records she will be hugely missed and irreplaceable.

The Trustees in 2019 and 2020 were:

Hugh Barton	
Andrew Davy	
Chris Gill	
Camilla Hale	Chair
Steve Hurrell	Secretary
Jon Lowe	
Anne Mackintosh	Treasurer
Rachel Russell	

SPT's financial management is maintained by the Treasurer. Financial updates are provided for each meeting showing expenditure and income. Deposit accounts are organised to try to raise some interest on our funds.

Solicitors

Leeper Prosser, Solicitors,
30 Bath Road, Stonehouse, GL10 2JA

Bankers

CAFCASH
Shawbrook Bank

Auditors

Simon Fisher
of Shiner Mitchell Fisher & Co. Ltd

The Trust's income

Our income is generated from membership fees, donations, ground rents and bank interest.

Financial information

General Fund	£55,107
Income:	£3,087
Expenditure:	£11,345

(The expenditure figure is high because we donated the sum of £9,710 to STC towards their Subscription Rooms project.)

The Trust's accounts are available on request and on the web site.

SPT's contacts:

Camilla Hale	Chair sptrust30@gmail.com
Steve Hurrell	Company Secretary stevehurrell@mac.com

www.stroudpreservationtrust.org.uk

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