For over 100 years, Birmingham Civic Society has worked to make Birmingham a better place for everyone. We are a membership body made up from a wide range of volunteers who encourage community engagement and promote pride in our city.

Our work involves many activities some of which include:

- Improving our green spaces through delivering the Birmingham Trees for Life scheme
- Inspiring the minds of young people through our Next Generation Awards
- Promoting and improving our built environment, architecture and public art
- Celebrating the heritage of our city by installing Blue Plaques and History Plates

Working together to make Birmingham a better place for everyone.

President
The Lord Mayor of Birmingham

Vice Presidents
The Bishop of Birmingham
Sir Frederick Crawford DL
Lord Jones of Birmingham
Rt. Hon The Lord Rooker
Bruce Tanner DL

Trustees
Trustees of the Society as at 30th June 2019:

- Amelia Ladbrook [Chairman]
- Nick Venning DL [Deputy Chairman]
- Robin Barnes [Treasurer and Company Secretary]
- Gavin Orton
- Michael Butler
- Stephanie Bloxham
- Geoff Cole
- Christine Cushing
- Sean Elson
- Tony Elvin
- Lorraine Francis
- Stephen Hartland
- Rita McLean
- Haroon Qayum
- Councillor Paul Tilsley
- Matthew Vaughan
- Isobel Wilson-Cleary

Photo Credits:
Anne-Marie Hayes
Jonathan Hipkiss
Birmingham Trees for Life
It was a huge honour to take up the role of Chairman in 2018, as we celebrated the end of our widely celebrated Centenary programme. Having been a Trustee of the Society since 2016 it was with great pleasure I saw the final impact of our Centenary activity and cannot say thank you enough to everyone involved over the past few years. It is with pride that we now look forward to the next 100 years, and I invite all of our members, volunteers and supporters to join us on this journey.

The theme of our Centenary was #TheCityBeautiful, and we were delighted as a Society that this was recognised beyond our Centenary year, when we welcomed a hive of activity to the city with the Civic Voice Conference. Civic Voice is the national charity for the civic movement in England, and the conference gave us an excellent opportunity to showcase our vibrant heritage and the work of the Society. Collaboration and unified voices are more important than ever when many services that affect our civic spaces and places are being affected. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Civic Voice and the organisations that we have connected with through this successful two day conference.

In my year as Chair so far it has been my mission to ensure as many of our citizens are aware of the work that we undertake, to make Birmingham a better place for everyone. I am incredibly proud of what our volunteers achieve and the difference they make to Birmingham.

I would like to say a personal thank you to our three new Trustees for 2018, Matthew Vaughan, Isobel Wilson-Cleary and Stephanie Bloxham. All have contributed hugely to the Society and alongside our strong board of Trustees, I am excited for the years ahead.

Amelia Ladbrook, Chairman.
Citizenship

Citizenship with no barriers...
At Highbury Hall, on Thursday 11 October the Elderly Explore team from Turves Green Girls’ School, were announced as our 2018 Next Generation Award winners in front of the Lord Mayor of Birmingham and over 110 school children, parents and business professionals.

Their project plans to run regular events at their school for local older residents, to help prevent loneliness and social isolation. The girls have been awarded the ‘Newman Prize’ of £1500 and mentoring support, which has enabled them to make their project a reality.

The following week, the girls presented their Elderly Explore idea at a Civic Voice Conference workshop run by some of our Citizenship Committee members, which explored ways of engaging the younger generation in the Civic Movement.

A Citizenship Committee initiative, we were delighted that this year’s winners project reflected the aims of Permission to Smile (P2S). We are delighted to be continuing our support for this much needed campaign.
Heritage

Young people honour the homeless
We asked the pupils of Chandos Primary School to nominate whom they thought worthy of a special centenary Blue Plaque. Years 4 and 5 researched local organisations and individuals, and some impressive presentations at an assembly for years 4,5 and 6, they took to the polls and voted for their winner; the honour going to homeless charity SIFA Fireside. The plaque was unveiled at Chandos by the Lord Mayor and the pupils.

More Than a Plaque
An excellent short film has been produced to mark our centenary, which traces how a Blue Plaque is created, from selecting a recipient to installing the plaque. Featured in the film are members of our Heritage Committee alongside poet Casey Bailey, and his performance of ‘Blue Plaque’.

We have also launched our interactive map, produced by our Blue Plaque co-ordinator, Penny Colbourne, and web designers Creative Tweed. You can browse the map on our website to see all our Blue Plaques and History Plates around the city, and learn a little about each recipient.

Planning

Converted Jewellery Quarter workshop receives 2019 Renaissance Award
Our Planning Committee unanimously agreed that Mary Street was the recipient of our 2019 Renaissance Award. The building dating from 1823 has been carefully restored and transformed into a modern home by owners Malcolm Kirkham and Jan Arkwright who sensitively bought the former workshop back into use, which they now call their home.

Mary Street has been transformed into a fine city home creating an oasis of quiet and calm in the heart of the Jewellery Quarter. Our Planning Committee were thoroughly impressed with the level of repairs and conservation carried out and how the new interventions have been introduced and skillfully integrated.
Trees

Centenary Arboretum
November saw members gathered at the Lickey Hills to finish planting the arboretum marking the Society’s centenary and to unveil a commemorative plaque. Once again the morning started with less than clement weather, but just as everyone went out to plant, the rain stopped and the sun even briefly appeared for the unveiling of the plaque. Birmingham Trees for Life and the Lickey Rangers have planted a wide variety of interesting new trees to create the arboretum, which can be found down the slope from the Visitor Centre.

BTfL breaking records
On a bright but chilly morning, BTfL welcomed a record number of children at Perry Common Recreation Ground. 61 children arrived by minibus from St Bernadette’s Catholic Primary, Oasis Academy nearby brought 48 pupils, and St Margaret Mary Primary, right next to the park, sent another 44 children!

This site has undergone a lot of flood alleviation and renovation work over the last couple of years, and this huge gang of helpers planted 1000 sapling trees to create some new areas of woodland along the riverside. Thank you to the Birmingham University students and Deutsche Bank volunteers who supported on the day.
Events

Leader’s Breakfast
Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council, reflected that whilst the Society has rightly been looking back over the last 100 years it is now only right to be looking forward. The main message was that Birmingham is getting its confidence back and we must build on this. As a city we must opportunities like HS2 and the Commonwealth Games, to invest in our younger generation, creating real skills and real jobs, and to bring communities together with inclusive regeneration.

Summer Reception prepares for Commonwealth Games 2022
It was great to hear from Neil Carney, keynote speaker at our 2019 Summer Reception, about the positive impact that the 2022 Commonwealth Games will bring to Birmingham.

After opening his engaging speech with an inspiring video, Neil shared some key statistics about our Games and invited members to get thinking about how we can all contribute to Birmingham 2022.

Centenary Year round up
At Blakesley Hall in July, members heard a round up of our City Beautiful centenary project from Jane and Rachel of Mrs History then enjoyed guided tours of the Hall and Old Yardley village and joined in the family fun at the Summer Fête.

During the centenary project we held almost 50 additional events, where we engaged with over 1700 people and 190 school children, had over 5000 social media interactions and were supported by 200 days of volunteer time. 4 films were produced by school children, 6 new Blue Plaques were erected and 1 centenary arboretum was replanted!
Working together to make Birmingham a better place for everyone.

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