



THE JOHN INNES SOCIETY

FOR CONSERVATION IN THE JOHN INNES ESTATE AT MERTON

Registered Charity No. 803759

TRUSTEES FOR 2024/2025

Officers:

Co-Chair Alison Cousins
Co-Chair Desé Child
Vice-Chair Ingrid Holtz
Hon. Secretary Tim Fripp (to 31.12.24)
Hon. Treasurer Vicky Kelly

Committee members:

Catherine Bottrill Ann Redfearn
Hubert Child Katherine Welch
Helene Nelson-Jones

Hon. Auditor: Mr. F. Rayner

**The 54th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on
Thursday 24th April 2025 at 8pm
at Merton Park Primary School**

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. To approve the minutes of the meeting held 16th April 2024**
- 3. To receive the Annual Report for 2024**
- 4. To receive the Accounts for 2024 and the Auditor's Report** and confirm the appointment of the Auditor for 2025
- 5. Motions:**
 - Involving a change in the Constitution and Rules of the Society: .
 - Other motions not involving a change of the Constitution and Rules. (*Any motion in this category should be in the hands of the Co-Chairs (as acting Secretary) not less than 7 days before the meeting.*)
- 6 To elect the Officers** (Officers are elected for one year).
- 7. To elect the remaining Members of the Committee**
(Under the existing Constitution members serve for one year and are eligible to be nominated for re-election. Under **rule 8** the permissible number of Committee members, other than the officers, is **12**. Nominations are therefore sought for all 12 positions.)
- 8. Any other business**

Notes:

Every member whose subscription is paid up to date at the time of the AGM shall be entitled to vote on each motion – Rule 3.

Nominees proposed as officers or members of the Committee must be over 18 years old and must be fully paid-up members of the Society. It is not necessary for the proposer or seconder or their nominee to be present at the meeting at which the election takes place. Nominations must reach the Co-Chairs not later than 10th April 2025 – Rules 7 and 8.

Alison Cousins and Dese Child Co-Chairs (Acting Secretaries)
mail@johninnessociety.org.uk or 5A Sheridan Road SW19 3HW

Following the formal AGM there will be a talk by Neaz Ahmed who leads the Muslim Women of Merton Community Gardeners in Mostyn Gardens after which there will be an opportunity to socialise while enjoying a glass of wine or soft drink.

PLEASE BRING THIS INSERT CONTAINING THE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS WITH YOU TO THE AGM

THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION AND RULES CAN BE SEEN VIA THE SOCIETY WEBSITE UNDER 'About Us / How we are run'.

USE LINK : <https://www.johninnessociety.org.uk/legal-stuff> MEMBERS WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS MAY OBTAIN A PAPER COPY OF THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION AND RULES FROM A COMMITTEE MEMBER.

Data Protection All personal information supplied to the Society by members will be used solely for communications with them concerning the Society's Governance, Membership, Events and matters concerning the Society. It will not be shared with any other organisation except where there is a Statutory obligation to do so.

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## **The John Innes Society Annual Report for the year ending December 2024**

Our committee Hon Secretary retired during the year, and we are in the process of replacing him but we still need additional members. Some policies were reviewed and updated.

### **Our Financial Situation**

The Society's finances continue to be healthy. Total income from all sources more than covered the costs of running the Society and of our activities described elsewhere in this report. Our chief sources of income are members' subscriptions with associated Gift Aid, together with proceeds from the Bridge group and events like plant sales. The John Innes Centre continues to give us an annual donation, and we also received a generous bequest of £500 from the estate of Judy Goodman, who sadly died the previous year.

For a long time, while interest rates were low, we held most of our longer-term funds with Virgin Money in a charity deposit account. In 2023 we moved some funds to CCLA Investment Management, who specialise in investing on behalf of Churches, Charities and Local Authorities. In September 2024 we transferred further funds into CCLA, and this is bringing us a greater level of interest while still at a comparatively low level of risk.

Our largest running costs relate to the Coach House in Melrose Road which we lease from London Borough of Merton. In 2023 we had pay for an inspection of the electrical installation and associated remedial works, but this year spending is back to a more normal level.

### **Membership**

Membership numbers currently stand at 629 subscribers in 367 households. This continues the trend of reducing membership numbers over recent years and is a 4.7% decrease on 2023. We thank members who have provided Gift Aid declarations enabling us to claim additional tax relief income.

The membership database now enables us to send emails or letters to individual members informing them whether their subscription is due for renewal in the current year. Please ensure we always have your up-to-date email address so you will still receive Newsletters and communications from the Society.

### **Planning**

Development proposals were monitored within the whole Area of Benefit and plans which could damage local character were challenged. It was pleasing that permission was not given to fell several large trees with landscape value but still, in a Garden Suburb, tree and shrub cover is being eroded to make way for off-street parking and/or new outbuildings. There were several applications to bring Dorset Hall back into use but frustrating that technical issues are still holding this back. Despite numerous objections the Council granted permission for a tall and bulky hotel building in Crown Lane Morden which will dominate the abutting residential area. In more than one case residents went ahead with plans which had been turned down or for which they had no permission, keeping the Council's Enforcement officer busy.

On 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 the new Merton Local Plan was adopted and is now the first point of reference for applications made after that date. It is a huge document, and far from easy to navigate. Some of the good policies from earlier Local Plans have survived, such as recognising the local character value of preserving spaces between buildings.

## **Events**

Our annual Spring Plant sale continues to be well supported and a sell-out and provides a popular social gathering. The AGM in April was followed by a fascinating talk by the current occupant on the former residents of his late Victorian house. Music in the Park featured the Merton Concert Band and was much enjoyed. Profits went as usual to the Friends' Group for the park. The long-awaited return of the Open Gardens event was a huge success with access to a variety of layouts and a few new entrants. Discovery Day in Morden Library showcased the work of our Friends' Groups and coincided with a celebration of Merton's Heritage Service. After a gap of several years we were able to hold our popular quiz again, this time with a brand new quizmaster.

## **Newsletter and Website**

Our newsletter editor kindly agreed to continue for the time being despite having left the area, but she keeps up-to-date with all events via e-mail and a phone link in meetings. There is an extensive article in each issue on life in the area either 50 or 100 years ago and colourful centre pages whenever a horticultural event takes place. The website is monitored and updated regularly, and we use e-mail updates between newsletter editions.

## **Heritage**

There is continued frustration at the inability to persuade the local council to undertake a suitable repair to the roof of the Arts and Crafts bandstand in the park and an ancient wall around the Church Lane playing field continues to crumble. Part of the churchyard wall was repaired but other sections are looking unstable. We flag these issues up twice a year in our reply to Merton's Heritage Strategy. We published a Heritage Walk guide to part of the local area and donated copies to the local primary school. We led a walk for the Wimbledon Society in the Spring and The Victorian Society organised their own and came to view historic house plans from our archive in September.

## **Area Embellishment**

The Green Flag Award for the John Innes Park was achieved yet again. This year major work took place to clear the pond, repair the water feature and embed wildlife-friendly plants – a joint project with Merton Council, the RSPB and the Friends' Group. The Friends also replanted a large area by the entrance with new trees and shrubs and overall have done splendid work during the year.

We are constantly appealing for residents to care for trees especially in view of Merton's extensive tree planting but also concerned that some choices are affecting the original estate plan. We financed the restoration of a couple of conservation street signs which had been damaged. Volunteers in Kendor Gardens supported a few Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme youngsters and further encouraged wildlife with judicious planting. Community Payback teams also assist. There were more topical and creative window displays in the Coach House which were much admired, and the forecourt of the Coach House was tidied and shrubs pruned.

## **External Links**

We continue to support the Independent Merton Green Spaces Forum as a useful means of communication with the Council and its contractor. We also belong to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and rely on the London Forum for its advice on local planning.

We ended the year with the traditional get-together in the Coach House to thank our many volunteers for their help and support. We are grateful to so many members who will willingly step forward to ensure our major events are a success.

# THE JOHN INNES SOCIETY

Registered Charity 803759

## Income and Expenditure Account for the Year to 31 December 2024 (& 2023)

|                                               | 2024         |   | 2023         |   |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------|---|--------------|---|
|                                               | £            | £ | £            | £ |
| <b>GENERAL ACCOUNT</b>                        |              |   |              |   |
| Members' Subscriptions                        | 3,670        |   | 3,627        |   |
| Gift Aid tax relief                           | 1,217        |   | 1,152        |   |
| Interest                                      | 2,925        |   | 1,887        |   |
| Donations                                     | 772          |   | 922          |   |
| <b>Total Receipts</b>                         | <b>8,584</b> |   | <b>7,588</b> |   |
| <b>Running costs:</b>                         |              |   |              |   |
| Annual Meetings                               | 107          |   | 108          |   |
| Depreciation                                  | 88           |   | 88           |   |
| Rent & Rates                                  | 1,480        |   | 1,457        |   |
| Electricity, Maintenance                      | 1,286        |   | 2,440        |   |
| Insurance and bank charges                    | 442          |   | 412          |   |
| Software, Stationery                          | 486          |   | 361          |   |
| Subscriptions to Outside Bodies               | 45           |   | 45           |   |
| Sundries                                      | 122          |   | 51           |   |
| <b>Surplus/(Deficit) on General Account</b>   | <b>4,529</b> |   | <b>2,627</b> |   |
| <b>PROJECTS ACCOUNT</b>                       |              |   |              |   |
| <b>Fundraising Income:</b>                    |              |   |              |   |
| Plant Bring & Buy Donations                   | 2,292        |   | 2,303        |   |
| Bridge                                        | 2,150        |   | 2,075        |   |
| Open Garden Day                               | 2,467        |   | -            |   |
| Other Events & Fundraising                    | 3,127        |   | 1,469        |   |
| <b>Fundraising Costs:</b>                     |              |   |              |   |
| Plant Bring & Buy Costs                       | 883          |   | 847          |   |
| Bridge purchases                              | 55           |   | 535          |   |
| Open Garden Day                               | 310          |   | -            |   |
| Other Events Costs                            | 1,806        |   | 771          |   |
| <b>Net total fundraising</b>                  | <b>6,981</b> |   | <b>3,695</b> |   |
| <b>Spending on Society Activities:</b>        |              |   |              |   |
| Historical e.g. exhibitions, archives         | -            |   | -            |   |
| Newsletter incl distribution                  | 494          |   | 582          |   |
| Environmental e.g. gardens, parks             | 1,179        |   | 1,671        |   |
| <b>Total Society Activities</b>               | <b>1,673</b> |   | <b>2,253</b> |   |
| <b>Surplus/ (Deficit) on Projects Account</b> | <b>5,308</b> |   | <b>1,441</b> |   |

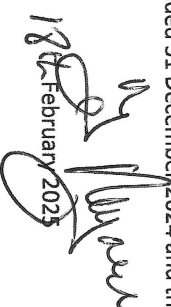
## Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024 & 2023

|                                                   | 2024           |   | 2023           |   |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|---|----------------|---|
|                                                   | £              | £ | £              | £ |
| <b>ASSETS:</b>                                    |                |   |                |   |
| Investment Accounts                               | 99,851         |   | 88,197         |   |
| Balance at Bank                                   | 1,250          |   | 2,654          |   |
| Equipment                                         | 263            |   | 351            |   |
| Stocks at Cost - Books & Merchandise              | 350            |   | 400            |   |
| Advance payments                                  | -              |   | -              |   |
| <b>Less accruals and subscriptions in advance</b> | <b>101,715</b> |   | <b>91,602</b>  |   |
|                                                   | <b>(2,458)</b> |   | <b>(2,550)</b> |   |
|                                                   | <b>99,257</b>  |   | <b>89,052</b>  |   |
| <b>Represented by:</b>                            |                |   |                |   |
| <b>GENERAL RESERVES</b>                           |                |   |                |   |
| Brought forward                                   | 19,392         |   | 16,765         |   |
| General Account Surplus / (Deficit)               | 4,529          |   | 2,627          |   |
| <b>PROJECTS AND PROVISIONS</b>                    |                |   |                |   |
| Brought forward                                   | 62,964         |   | 61,523         |   |
| Projects Account Surplus / (Deficit)              | 5,308          |   | 1,441          |   |
| Life Members' Subscriptions                       | 3,070          |   | 3,310          |   |
| Bequests                                          | 3,718          |   | 3,111          |   |
| Park Fund                                         | 275            |   | 275            |   |
| <b>TOTAL RESERVES:</b>                            | <b>7,063</b>   |   | <b>6,696</b>   |   |
|                                                   | <b>99,257</b>  |   | <b>89,052</b>  |   |

V J Kelly, *Hon. Treasurer*

### Report of the Auditor to the Members of the John Innes Society

I certify that these accounts show a true and fair view of the Society's results for the year ended 31 December 2024 and the state of affairs at that date.

  
18 February 2025

Hon Auditor Frederick J Rayner  
30 Daybrook Road, Merton Park, SW19

### NOTES:

The Society has progressively accumulated the General Reserves and Provisions funds over a number of years. The Society has a full repairing Lease on the Coach House, a Locally Listed building, and also holds reserves in the event of a decision to launch a legal challenge e.g. a Judicial Review.