

London Members' Centre

In aid of



Chairman's Newsletter

January 2025

(a Recognised Scottish Charity No. SC 027207)

Dear Members

You will see from the Agenda for our Annual General Meeting, that we have included an item asking members to consider the future of the London Members' Centre.

As I said in the last Newsletter, my term as Chairman ends in May, and it seems that nobody wants to be Chairman. We need a Chairman for the LMC to continue. There is still time for somebody to come forward. As an organisation we are facing other difficulties. Our membership numbers continue to drop. Currently we have 177; in October 2019 we had 289. . Our Visit Leaders work very hard to organise a varied programme of events, but we no longer have sufficient people applying to join the visits to make a worthwhile donation to NTS' funds. At the moment, our Spring Tour still hasn't enough applicants to make it viable, but there's still 4 months to go and this might change. This is the last tour that Margaret Cund will organise and I am sure we would all like it to be a memorable one.

Where do we go from here?

At our last committee meeting we had the unenviable task of considering whether we were still meeting our Charitable Objectives. In case you haven't read our Constitution document recently, I'll remind you what these Objective are:

To act as a local centre for promoting interest in and for furthering the work of The National Trust for Scotland and in furtherance thereof:

- a) *To bring the aims and work of The National Trust for Scotland to the notice of people in the London area and encourage participation in the work of The National Trust for Scotland and its London Office.*
- b) *To make membership of The National Trust for Scotland more effective and enjoyable by arranging visits to places of interest and by holding meetings for lectures, talks and discussion.*
- c) *To encourage by all suitable means membership of The National Trust for Scotland and to assist in raising funds for its purpose.*

Our shrinking membership would suggest we are not meeting (a). Of course, there is no longer an NTS London Office. This was closed by the NTS, since it appeared to be a significant drain on their finances - rather than being a fund raiser. . Sadly, we also seem to be failing to achieve the aims of b) and c) as fewer people attend our events and our ability to raise funds for the NTS is diminished. We used to be the best fund raising Members' Centre! Where do we go from here?

If the meeting decides there is no future, then an Extra-ordinary General Meeting will be called to formally close the charity. All our monies would be donated to the NTS itself. There might be a suitable project to fund in LMC's memory.

I would ask everyone to give very serious consideration to the issues we face in advance of the AGM.

Meanwhile we have a couple of new visits for you to consider as well as a talk to go with the AGM in May. **We've moved the AGM start to earlier at 11.30am** to allow our speaker a reasonable time slot before lunch.

Visits coming up:

6 February - Salters' Hall

20 March - Winter Walk - details attached

April - St Paul's Cathedral - details will be emailed as soon as we have them.

22 May - AGM and talk - details attached

4 to 9 June - Spring Tour - Aberdeenshire (I can provide electronic or paper details, on request)

Although Crown Court Church has accepted our booking for the meeting in May, they have said that they might not be able to honour it since they have refurbishment works planned. (It might all depend on their contractor's availability). Our April Newsletter should let you know.

For future visits, I regret that we are no longer able to offer refunds if you book and then decide not to attend. Our refund policy assumed that we had a waiting list and somebody else could take your place. We have to incur up-front costs, like tickets, and we are unable to get a refund from the venue.

It recently came to my notice that Peter Dewar died last summer. Peter was Chairman of LMC from 2005 to 2010. During his term of office, LMC published *A Gleam in the Eye* to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Centre.

Best Wishes



Charles Hope

PS I've just heard that there might be a volunteer willing to be Chairman