THE BETJEMAN SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 24/25 for THE CHARITY COMMISSIONERS

The Betjeman Society has continued to provide membership services for its members with over twenty events held to further the educational objects of the Charity and provide meetings to encourage the study and enjoyment of the works of Sir John Betjeman. We have used venues in London, Canterbury, Oxford, Wantage, Malvern, Leicester, Lincoln and Harrogate. We have supported a virtual monthly meeting that focuses on poetry and draws participants from Scotland and the South of England. We have plans to widen access to members in Cornwall and East Anglia.

Our principal source of income is from membership subscriptions and membership has held relatively steady with new members joining regularly on line from our website often replacing members who have resigned or died. We ask resigning members for their reasons for leaving and the two reasons are infirmity leading to an inability to join physical meetings and cost of living rises and therefore cutting back on expenditure. We have maintained our presence on social media platforms, X and Threads, and Instagram and have noticed slight increases in followers. We are active in following societies with similar objects in poetry and conservation.

We have maintained Betjeman's campaigning activity by continuing to be a member of Liverpool Street Station Campaign (LISSCA) which is a heritage coalition (founded by Betjeman in 1974) working to protect the station and surrounding buildings to oppose unsympathetic development that would wreck the heritage value of the station and parts of the historic hotel. This is an apolitical organisation united in its intent to improve the facilities of the station but not at the expense of the environment. The Society has also opposed two unsympathetic developments in Cornwall and through collective community action planning applications have been turned down.

In September 2025 we held a two day Symposium at Magdalen College Oxford to mark the one hundred years of Betjeman going up to that college. We also used the occasion to gather together academics and conservation experts to explore Betjeman's current reputation and were heartened by the positive reaction and confidence from attendees (over 50 delegates) and positive press coverage.

Some progress has been made in identifying the future direction of the Society and how to embed its activities in key Betjeman causes. This will help us to focus on the charitable objects of the Society and objectives has been identified for 2026.

We are aware of the impact of cost of living on our members but have been affected by rising costs, most notably postage, archive storage and printing costs. We have tried to absorb these but will need to take action in 2026 to control the impact. Nevertheless the Betjeman Society is in good health and confident of its role.

S J Jackson

Stephen Jackson

Chairman of the Board of Trustees, The Betjeman Society