



Margate Civic Society

WINTER 2022 NEWSLETTER
ISSUE NO. 409

Margate Civic Society is a Founder Member of Civic Voice

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dear Members

How are you all?

I hope you have enjoyed the autumn sunshine before the temperature started to drop and we changed the clocks!

Six months on, the horrendous situation in the Ukraine continues and becomes even more alarming with more lives lost and intimidated parties on both sides of this war. One can only hope and pray that peace will eventually come, enabling people to resume their lives with their families at their side.

I hope that most of you are now all managing to stay well and safe and our best wishes go to anyone who is suffering from any health issues at this time, caring for a loved one or has been recently bereaved. As sadly, some of our senior Members are now unable to attend our meetings, due to poor health, I should, like to give a special mention to Fred and Pam Piggott who have been in contact with us, saying how much they enjoy reading the newsletters. If you would like a mention in the Spring Edition, please contact me.

In Memoriam: I was saddened to hear of the passing of Lord Boyce, who passed away on 9 November, aged 79 years. Some of you may remember meeting Lord Boyce when he attended our Society's Margate Jubilee Clock Tower Celebration on May 24 in 2014. He was a charming, distinguished gentleman, who had a 'presence' and I am delighted that he accepted Lynda's invitation to attend on that day. You will see that Geoff Orton has written an article about Lord Boyce in this edition (page 9).

I am also sad to announce that Jean Wassel died in early November. Jean was a long-time member of the Civic Society together with her late husband, Ron, who died some ten years ago. Jean and Ron lived on Domneva Road, Westgate-on-Sea.

Membership: I am delighted to welcome 2 new Members: Sandra King and the Town Mayor of Margate, Cllr Heather Keen. I appreciate you showing interest in our Society and look forward to seeing you both at future meetings.

Thank you to those who have supported us and renewed their Membership which is very gratifying. Purchasing raffle tickets, refreshments and merchandise will also enable us to make a small profit. All help is most appreciated!

Lecture Evenings: As you are aware, I always endeavour to organise a diverse programme of lectures, with something hopefully appealing to all Members' tastes, without breaking the budget!

It has been pleasing to see Members returning to meetings since October. Our new venue is a popular choice, with excellent facilities, enabling us to sell refreshments at reasonable prices which adds to the enjoyment of the evening. There is also greater parking provision, with well-lit user-friendly access and heating, which obviously will be extremely welcome during the colder months.



Above Members enjoying the excellent talk by Bob Varnham and, below, the serious business of drawing the raffle

It is our intention that these meetings will continue to be inclusive, welcoming, comfortable and friendly, so I sincerely hope that more of you will wish to come along next year and meet your fellow Members, whilst also showing your support.

You will see, on page 5, the **2023 Programme**, which includes ex-Margate Central Councillor and Town Mayor of Margate: Iris Johnston, who will be giving a talk next June, with an opportunity for questions afterwards. This will be a very relaxed, enjoyable evening which I am sure will appeal to many!

Blue Plaque Projects: I am delighted that the ‘unveiling’ of the 2 blue plaques dedicated to artists: Walter Sickert and Christopher Alexander held on 21 October, was a resounding success, in spite of it being an exceptionally windy day! You will see further on in this edition, Mike Thompson’s report, including a selection of photographs taken on the day by several individuals. Congratulations to all involved, especially Mike Thompson and Mike Wilton.



Above left, Mike Thompson with the Walter Sickert plaque and, right, members waiting for the ceremony to start

Below, a close-up of the two blue plaques in situ



Newsletter: It is hard to believe that this is actually the ninth quarterly newsletter edition for which Sally has been Editor with the Editorial Team: Mike Wilton, Mike Thompson and myself. Under this new regime: editions have included contributions from several of our Members, which have made very enjoyable reading. This has received a very positive response and we would, therefore, repeat our request that you please continue to give your support and remember that you are most welcome to contribute to forthcoming editions by forwarding articles, photographs, postcards, life stories, news of events, book reviews, poems etc. I hope that you will enjoy reading your Winter Edition.

As always, we would welcome your feedback regarding this issue - it is always good to hear from you!

Town Pride Awards 2023: The deadline for nominations is **14 February**, so please get in touch if you have seen a new build or renovation that you consider is commendable and fits within our criteria. We have already received some, so look forward to hearing from you.

Historical Walks: Over the summer, Vice-President, Robin Colyer continued his programme of walks which were very popular, enjoyable and informative. In addition to this they are excellent value for money with a nominal donation requested of £3.00 minimum per person, which goes to our Society. Robin has confirmed that he will be continuing with future walks in 2023, details of which will be promoted via our spring newsletter and website, social media and various online tourism sites. Should you have any enquiries: you can contact Robin on his mobile: **07878 537 448**.

The Margate School: For details of their latest news see www.themargateschool.com - where you can see the various events that are planned for the New Year.

Cliftonville Farmers' Market: A reminder that the final market this year will be held on 18 December, from 1000-1300 hrs, on the Walpole Bay Lawns, behind the Walpole Bay Hotel, Fifth Avenue, Cliftonville, CT9 3HF. Admission is free. This is amazingly now in its 22nd year (Cliftonville Farmers' Market was established in 2001) by the Cliftonville Residents Association. It is run entirely by volunteers who give their time freely and it is self-funded.

Wilderness-to-Wonderland: This group are going from strength-to-strength and their latest venture is a proposal to add Margate Station planters to their 'Welcome to Margate/civic pride' endeavours'. They have been in negotiations with the railway and are now collaborating with the Turner Centre who have negotiating rights with the station via a collaborative arts project.

In order to show support, I have written a letter to Turner Contemporary, on behalf of Margate Civic Society, endorsing this project. Sir Roger Gale and Margate Town Team have also confirmed support, in addition to others, so hopefully I will be able to give you an update in the New Year.



Above: Wilderness-to-Wonderland, the beautiful flowers planted in Westbrook this summer.

Acknowledgements: As always, my thanks to the following Committee Members, namely Harry Scobie, Mike Wilton, Mike Thompson, Sally Whitworth and Kate Wilson, in addition to the Auxiliary Committee: Anny Squire, Heather Wilton, Diane Addison, Ray Pople, Glenys and Richard Clements and Aileen Christodoulou, for their ongoing support. Together we make a great team!

Please note that following our Christmas Soiree, we are now in recess over the darker, colder months (when no-one really wants to go out in the evenings), with meetings returning at 1930 hrs on Thursday, 2 March. Our guest speaker will be Kathy Bailes (The Isle of Thanet News) who, following Members' notices, will be giving a talk entitled: "Local Media Today and the Growth of Independent Publishers," so please make a note of this date in your diaries.

Wishing you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Peaceful New Year.

With my very best wishes

Pamela

Subscription reminder

Subscriptions for the current year were due on 1st October and if you have not renewed, this will be your last Newsletter. If you wish to renew, details are on the back page. If you have chosen not to renew, thank you for your past membership and we hope you will consider coming back to us in the future.

Kind regards

Mike Wilton, Membership Secretary

LECTURE PROGRAMME 2023

Please note that all future meetings will now be held at the Holy Trinity Margate Hall, St Mary's Avenue, Margate CT9 3TN

**Refreshments and merchandise will be on sale at all meetings. The talks start at 1930 hrs
and Attendees are requested to be seated by 1920 hrs**

January No Meeting

February No Meeting

2 March Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: “Local News Media Today and the Growth of Independent Publishers”

Speaker: **Kathy Bailes** (The Isle of Thanet News) Kent Press and Broadcast Awards - Kent Commitment to the community 2020, Kent news website of the year 2018 and Kent Digital Journalist of the year 2017.

6 April Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: “**Riding The Wall of Death**” - The Wall of Death was a major fairground attraction of the 1930’s. What was it and where did it come from? How did a Margate lad get to travel in Europe? Explore a little-known facet of life!

Speaker: **Felicity Stafford** (VP, MCS & Margate Museum Trustee).

18 May Guests: £4.50 nominal fee

Topic: **TOWN PRIDE AWARDS** (followed by refreshments and raffle)

Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: An Informal Evening with Iris Johnson

Speaker: **Iris Johnston** (Mother of five, former Town Councillor for Margate Central Ward and Town Mayor of Margate, Burgess of Margate).

6 July Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: “The Changing Fortunes of the Cinque Ports”

Speaker: James Dickinson (Historian).

August No meeting

7 September Guests: £3.50 nominal fee

Topic: “Suffragettes and Suffragists”

Speaker: Melanie Gibson-Barton.

5 October	(Renewal of Subs Due)	Guests: £4.50 nominal fee
Topic:	Annual General Meeting, followed by:-	
		'Waterloo, The Bits Abba Got Wrong - looking at the Battle of Waterloo'
		Please note prior to refreshments and our raffle, there will be a collection for Cancer Research UK.
Speaker:	Steve Hookins (After-dinner speaker, historical presentations).	
November	No meeting	
December	No meeting	

FUTURE EVENTS IN THE AREA

WESTGATE-ON-SEA HERITAGE CENTRE

The Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre holds a talk on the first Saturday of the month, currently at Christ Church URC, Westgate Bay Avenue, Westgate-on-Sea. Doors open at 10 am and the talk starts at 10.30 am. All are welcome and non-members pay just £2 on the door. For more information, please go to www.westgateheritagecentre.org.uk.

BIRCHINGTON HERITAGE TRUST

The Birchington Heritage Trust have a Museum/Archive Room at the Burley Gallery in Birchington Library, which is open Monday, Thursday and Saturday mornings from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm. For details of their talks please visit www.birchingtonheritage.org.uk.

Both societies have published a calendar this year (see below) each priced at £5. For more details, please see the appropriate website.

**Birchington Heritage Trust
Calendar
2023**



New Inn, The Square, c.1900

Hospitality Edition

Reg. Charity No: 1099250
www.birchingtonheritage.org.uk

**WESTGATE-ON-SEA
HERITAGE CENTRE**



- *Calendar 2023* -

A COLOURFUL LOOK AT
WESTGATE-ON-SEA THROUGH THE DECADES

UPDATE FROM THE MARGATE MUSEUM TRUST by Felicity Stafford

CHRISTMAS EVENT: DECK THE HALLS

A talk by Felicity Stafford celebrating CHRISTMAS! Christmas Customs. Christmas Songs. Christmas Carols.

Dates: Saturday 10 December 2022 and Sunday 11 December 2022 (repeat)

Time: 2 pm

Cost: Free with entry. Donation for talk alone

EXHIBITIONS FOR 2023

Planned for February 2023

A Major Exhibition entitled “The Cruel Seas: Floods and Storms”:

This will look at the major storms and floods in Margate’s history. These include the Storm of 1808 which led to the formation of the Margate Pier and Harbour Company; the Storm of 1877 and the Surfboat disaster of 1897.

Any reminiscences of the 1953 Floods and the Storm of 1978 (when the Jetty was destroyed) would be greatly appreciated.

Usual Opening Times and Prices:

The Museum will be shut from 12 December 2022. It will re-open at the beginning of February 2023.

Margate Museum is in The Market Place, Margate, CT9 1EN Telephone: 01843 231213

Margate Museum – Open on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays from 11 am to 3 pm. Last entry at 2.15 pm.

The Tudor House is currently closed for maintenance.

Adults - £2. Concessions £1.50. Accompanied children (up to 16) free.



Above – The Tudor House and Margate Museum and Old Town Hall

THE BLUE PLAQUE PROJECT

by Mike Thompson

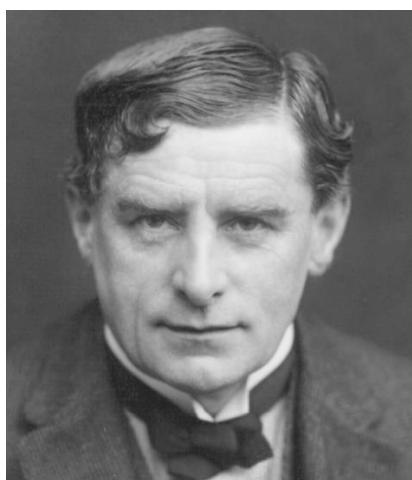


Above, the Mayor of Margate unveiling the Christopher Alexander plaque

The Adult Education Centre in Hawley Square, Margate started off life as the Thanet School of Art. Designed by the County Council Architect, Major W H Robinson, in 1929 in an iconic Art Deco style, it was constructed by J E Elliman and Sons of Beckenham and opened on the 8th July 1931 by Lord Northbourne.

As well as the wonderfully detailed external elevations dominating Hawley Square and Cecil Street, the building still retains a quite remarkable amount of classic Art Deco internal features, including oak panelling and internal piers, fretted metal radiator coverings and an abundance of full-length windows to capture as much natural light as possible. It is not at all surprising that on the 10th July 2018, it was granted Grade II Listed status in an effort to afford protection to these features in recognition both internally and externally of the architectural importance of the building.

The School of Art closed in 1974 and Kent County Council took over the building for use as an Adult Education Centre. However, prior to this and shortly after opening, the Thanet School of Art was to gain an important connection.



Walter Sickert, world famous post-impressionist artist, was born in Munich, Germany in 1860 and he and his family settled in London in the late 1860s. He visited Margate around 20 years later when his mother was recuperating from an illness.

In 1934, at the age of 74, he was settled in St. Peters and invited to lecture at the Thanet School of Art to pass on the benefits of his experience and expertise to the students. This he did most successfully. Walter Sickert died in 1942. (See photo of Walter Sickert left)

Christopher Alexander ARE, ARCA was a notable and extremely talented local artist. He was born in Margate in 1926 and after the Second World War won a place at the Royal College of Art. He taught at the Thanet School of Art in the early 1960s prior to moving to teach at the Canterbury College of Art. He produced a huge number of drawings and paintings, many showing Margate and other places in Thanet. He died in 1982.

In recognition of this connection between the former School of Art and the two eminent artists, Margate Civic Society joined forces with the current Margate School (located in the former Woolworths building in Margate High Street) and decided to erect two blue plaques in celebration.



Above left – the Mayor of Margate, Cllr Heather Keen, and right, the crowd watching the ceremony

The proposition was put to the Adult Education Centre and the KCC staff here were very enthusiastic about the idea. Meetings were held and ideas exchanged. Margate Civic Society contacted the manufacturer of their Town Pride blue plaques, awarded annually to newly renovated or constructed buildings of outstanding merit, and proofs for the new designs were provided and amended as appropriate. Listed Building consent to affix the plaques to the building was required from Thanet District Council and the Society is indebted to the Hume Planning Consultancy for providing their expertise, making the application and gaining the necessary consent on a complimentary basis.

Production timescales were agreed with our plaque manufacturer Croft Cast Signs and a date for the unveiling of the 21st of October agreed.

A comprehensive list of invitees was drawn up and the invitations sent out. The Mayor of Margate, Cllr Heather Keen, kindly agreed to perform the unveiling and on a windy but dry 21st October, around 50 guests gathered outside the Adult Education Centre. Following an introduction from Pamela Pople, Chair of Margate Civic Society and contributions from Geoff Orton on behalf of The Margate School and Steven Alexander (son of Christopher Alexander), the Mayor duly unveiled both plaques.

A buffet reception was then very kindly provided by the Adult Education Centre and all present enjoyed this generous gesture.



Above left – left to right, Geoff Orton (The Margate School), Mike Wilton (MCS), Pamela Pople (Chair MCS), the Mayor of Margate and Mike Thompson (MCS) and, right, Steven Alexander, son of Christopher Alexander, addresses the crowd

The whole process from the original idea to the unveiling went very smoothly and the Society's sincere thanks are due to all those involved but special thanks must go to Antoinette Gilbert and her team at the Adult Education Centre, Croft Cast Signs, the Hume Planning Consultancy, the Mayor Cllr Heather Keen, Kathy Bailes from the Isle of Thanet News for historical detail and my Society colleague Mike Wilton as co-project manager, for his invaluable assistance.

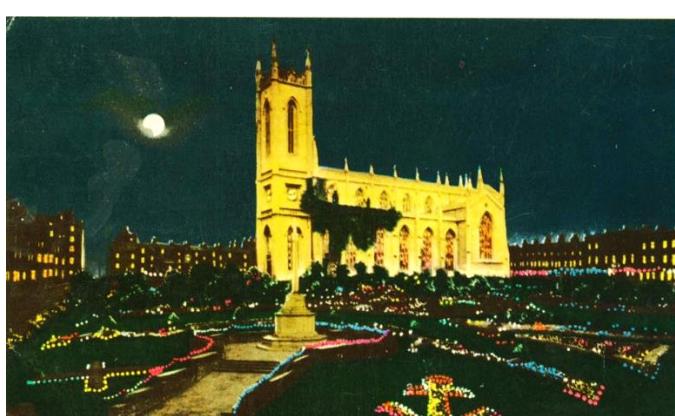
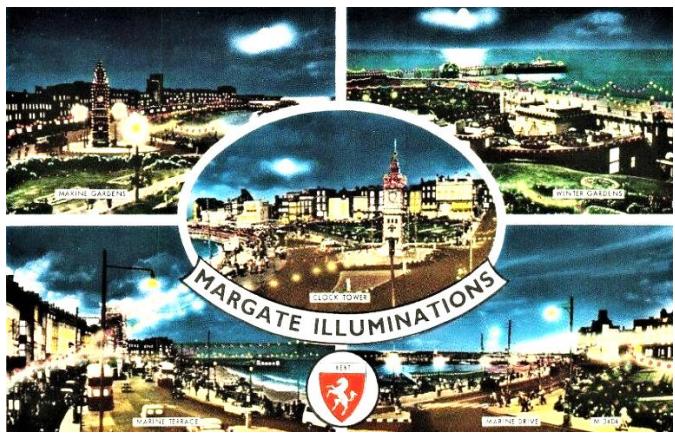
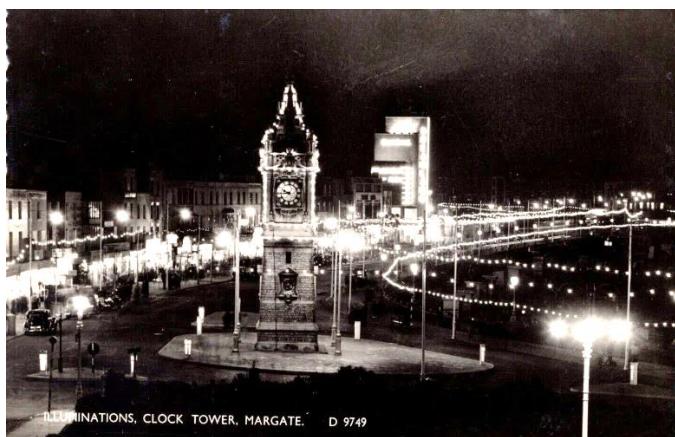
The plaques make a positive contribution, and indeed complement, the external appearance of the building. It is most gratifying to think that these plaques should be in place for a long time, celebrating the use and patronage of this iconic building.



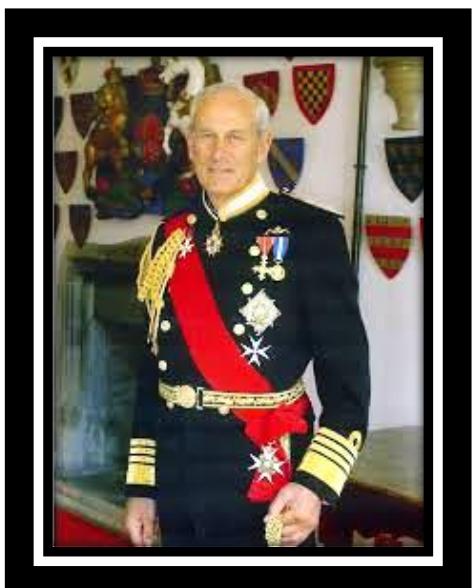
Members of the Margate Civic Society, the Margate School, the Adult Education Centre and special invitees who attended the event

Mike Thompson

ILLUMINATED MARGATE OVER THE YEARS



IN MEMORIAM
ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET LORD BOYCE



1943 – 2022

Members will be saddened to learn of the death of our Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports on 6 November after a long illness. We in Margate have good cause to be grateful for his assiduous attention to his Wardenship responsibilities: most notably for honouring us with his lady wife, Fleur, at the 2014 Time Ball Restoration Ceremony and again at Margate Museum a few years later for the Battle of Margate Exhibition put on by Ian Dickie and Felicity Stafford. The English had liberated the French wine fleet and made merry for the next twelve months – it was 1387 and served them right for despoiling Sandwich once or twice over the centuries. All part of that rich local heritage which deserves a rather more permanent recognition (you may think.)

Michael Boyce was a Cold War submarine commander known as 'Iceman' (it required nerves of steel playing 'hide and seek' under the Arctic) and who later oversaw 'hot war' in Iraq and Afghanistan as chief of the defence staff. He was not afraid to 'speak truth unto power' which did not endear him to Defence Secretaries and Prime Ministers. His own father was RN with a DSC and, at age 17, he joined up himself for 42 years' active service: 'His bite was unforgettable and those who encountered the admiral at his most fearsome found it a wounding experience'. We found him rather otherwise as a much mellower and really quite charming old salt. Rest in peace thou faithful servant.



Geoff Orton

1963 – THE YEAR THE SEA FROZE

by Sally Whitworth

Many members will remember that cold, cold winter of 1962/63, which started sixty years ago this December, when the sea from Herne Bay along the north Kent coast froze up to a mile out from the shore. Even looking at these photographs now makes you shiver!



Looking towards the Nayland Rock Hotel

On the 12th February 1963 the Thanet Times published a special supplement entitled 'A Sea of Ice Off Margate', which reported that "When fog which enshrouded the sea-front at Margate suddenly lifted on Saturday morning, 26th January 1963, the sight which met the eyes of the people was a sea of ice extending as far as the end of the Jetty". For several days the surface of the sea was a pattern of closely knit patches of ice, gently rising and falling with the tide. Fortunately, there was no call for the lifeboat, in fact, it is doubtful whether it could have been launched and plough through the ice, which was nine inches thick at the foot of the slipway, had there been a distress call. The sea was dead calm and the only movement was the gentle rise and fall of the ice as the tide ebbed and flowed".



Above (left) the frozen sea in the harbour and (right) looking towards Marine Terrace with Arlington House under construction in the background. Below the Jetty and another view of the harbour



The wintery outbreak began with snow on the 12-13th December 1962 and then on the 22nd December, an anticyclone formed over Scandinavia, dragging cold continental winds in from Russia. As the high moved south, parts of Southern England had heavy snow on the 26th and 27th December. The cold air became established. Blizzards followed and by the end of December there were snow drifts some eight feet deep in parts of Kent. Freezing fog too was a hazard for most of the country in December/January but generally the winter was sunny – the sunshine totals were above average for many places - although the weather was extremely cold. Records showed that the winter of 1963 was the coldest since 1740. Gale force winds and drifting continued throughout February until early March 1963. The 6th March was the first recorded day without a frost and from that point onwards temperatures rose, the snow disappeared and the Great Freeze, which brought such misery to the country, was over.



Above frozen sea looking towards Reculver Towers and, below, Margate Jetty and Lifeboat Station



Sally Whitworth

Like any seaside towns, Birchington, Cliftonville, Margate, Westbrook and Westgate-on-Sea have had their fair share of wild seas and storms but we hope that this year the weather will be gentle with us and cold and snowy days kept to a minimum. We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year.



CLIFFS AT MARGATE.

Two postcards of rough seas from circa 1910 (top) and 1905 (bottom)

Sally Whitworth

Margate Civic Society

www.margatecivicsociety.org.uk



Founded in 1968, the Margate Civic Society is a registered charity (No.257884) and a founder member of Civic Voice. The Society's purpose and aims are to encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Margate and its environs (Birchington, Westgate-on-Sea, Cliftonville, Westbrook, Garlinge, Acol, Sarre and St Nicholas-at-Wade); to stimulate public interest and care for the history and character of the area; and to encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general amenity and historical interest. To this end, Town Pride awards are given annually to those buildings which have been refurbished, cleaned or modified and which, in the opinion of the Society, have enhanced the appearance of the town. New high-quality buildings are also eligible for the award. The Society also vets planning applications and makes known to Thanet District Council any objections to those applications which it considers necessary.

Committee for 2021/22:

President: Mr Ralph Handscomb

Chair: Mrs Pamela Pople, Hurston Cottage, Sloe Lane, Westwood, Margate CT9 4DX

Tel: 01843 221689 e-mail: chair@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

Vice-Chair: Mr Harry Scobie

Secretary: Vacancy e-mail: secretary@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

Treasurer & Membership Secretary: Mr Mike Wilton, 30 Barrington Crescent, Birchington CT7 9DF

Tel: 07799 835819 e-mail: treasurer@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: Mrs Sally Whitworth

Tel: 07949 835777 e-mail: newsletter@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

Planning and Conservation issues: Mr Mike Thompson, 7 Seymour Avenue, Margate CT9 5HT

Tel: 01843 832834 e-mail: planning@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

Minutes Secretary: Ms Kate Wilson

All committee members are Trustees of the Society.

Please contact the Society by email at enquiries@margatecivicsociety.org.uk

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Enrolment/Renewal Form

I enclose the sum of £..... (Cheques should be made payable to Margate Civic Society)

Name.....

Address.....

Tel:..... Email:.....

Subscription rates for 2022/23

	Individual	Joint	Junior (under 18)	Corporate
Paper Newsletter*	£13	£17	£5	
Email Newsletter#	£10	£14	£2	£20

Please send this form with your payment to the Treasurer, Mike Wilton, 30 Barrington Crescent, Birchington CT7 9DF. Please see our website for alternative methods of payment.

* A paper Newsletter means that a black-and-white printed copy will be delivered to you.

An Email Newsletter means that a full-colour copy will be emailed to you.