

**Covent Garden Community Association ('CGCA')**  
**Trustees' report for the year ended 31st March 2016**

The Trustees present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2016. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's trust deed, and with applicable law and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities'.

*Chair's note*

CGCA will be celebrating its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary this coming year. We were established in 1971, in an outpouring of local feeling, to campaign to protect our neighbourhood from the Greater London Council's brutal designs for a 'modern' Covent Garden. Looking back, the victories were an amazing achievement, providing so many new homes, and saving all the beautiful buildings that make the area so special. But now we have a wider remit to protect and improve quality of life here, and much of our work is dealing with the fruit of the area's undoubted success, some of which comes at the cost of our community.

In an attempt to keep a liveable balance in Covent Garden, we deal with seemingly endless late night licence applications, constant planning applications to exploit every inch of the area, complex environmental challenges, and issues that risk our community's safety. This is set against a difficult financial background that has affected both our councils to our detriment. Without regular grant aid from either London Borough of Camden or Westminster City Council, we now rely even more on the generous support of our members, and friendly local businesses of all sizes.

Our vast volume of work is divided largely between our Executive Committee members and other volunteers according to their expertise and experience. Without these volunteers, we would not be able to give Covent Garden the voice that it needs, and our heartfelt thanks go to them again this year. During the year we had two part-time members of staff: Meredith Whitten, an urban planner who ably co-ordinates and advises our Planning Subcommittee, and Kathy Pimlott, who supports us in many administrative areas.

Jo Weir, MBE

*Objectives, Governance and Structure*

The Association is governed in accordance with the Constitution dated October 1971 as subsequently amended. It aims to maintain and improve the quality of life for residents and workers in the Covent Garden area.

We give a voice to local people and work closely with our local councils, businesses and other service providers. We promote high standards of planning and architecture, secure the preservation and improvement of buildings and features of historic or public interest including those in the public realm, and seek to stimulate public interest in the area. The Association is recognised by both City of Westminster and London Borough of Camden as the amenity society to be consulted on matters relating to the geographical area set out in our constitution.

The charity is run by a voluntary Executive Committee as detailed below and elected at our last General Meeting. Delegated authority is given to specialist subcommittees and others in the areas of Planning, Licensing, Environment and various events.

Membership of the Association is open to those who live or work in the Covent Garden area; Associate membership is available to those from elsewhere.

### *Activities, Achievements and Performance*

Over the year we held or were represented at over 100 meetings. As detailed in the following sections, most of these involved serious and detailed discussions of issues, policies and activities which have a profound impact on us all. However, we were also invited to represent the community at more light-hearted occasions. These included regular events such as the unique Covent Garden Rent Ceremony in June, and St. Clement Danes School's ever-delightful annual Oranges and Lemons Service in March. In April our Chair, Jo Weir, and our local Camden councillor Sue Vincent, gave a talk to Coin Street residents about the history of our organisation, which proved almost comic.

On a much sadder note, in November at St. Margaret's by the Abbey we attended the memorial service for Councillor Audrey Lewis who died in July 2015; Audrey will be deeply missed as a courageous, hard-working and urbane defender of the interests of residents living under pressure in the West End.

With our website up and running from last year, we were pleased to start producing a periodic newsletter again this year. This has kept us in more regular touch with a wider number of local residents and businesses, leading to useful dialogue and increasing our membership base.

### Licensing

During the year the Licensing Subcommittee, chaired by David Kaner, considered 30 licensing applications submitted to either Westminster or Camden Councils. We worked in depth on 26 of the applications for new licenses or material variations to existing licences where there was a threat to residential amenity. This was a higher number than the previous year, and nearly 3 times the number in 2013/4. They included 5 new restaurants and 4 premises that were wishing to add alcohol sales to their current offering.

Applicants continued to negotiate conditions with us directly in advance, to come up with solutions felt to be satisfactory on both sides. We resolved 12 of the 26 applications in this way. This is valuable because it takes less resource for everyone involved and usually results in a better set of conditions than will emerge at a contested hearing.

Applications that we dealt with included a new large restaurant on Bedford Street, two new restaurant premises in Neal's Yard - which seems to be turning into a food court; the first Starbucks with an evening dining offer, and discussions about a number of licences which will come from the Consolidated and Almacantar developments around Denmark Street and Centrepoint.

We also did substantial work on the applications from McDonalds to vary the licence for their new site at Cambridge Circus, which is underneath one block of flats and near to many others. The premises had been a sit-down restaurant in the past, and as a result have a 'supper hours' style licence until 1am. It was a major concern because of the risk that a late opening fast food premises would change the nature of this part of Covent Garden by attracting people to the area and retaining them here after other premises close and after we would normally expect them have left. In this case the applicant chose not to take up our offer of prior negotiation, but we were successful in arguing at two licensing hearings (in May and September) that variation to allow McDonalds to operate a late-night fast food operation there should be refused by Camden.

The council's second decision was then appealed to the Magistrates Court by McDonalds. We coordinated with Camden's legal team a number of residents to make statements to the Court, as well as obtaining statements from a major landowner in the area and from Westminster Council's Licensing Team in support of Camden's refusal. The appeal hearing took place over 3 days in early April, just after the period covered by this report. McDonalds brought expert witnesses and also went to the expense of carrying out a noise survey of the Seven Dials area over two weekends. 3 of the CGCA's witnesses were called to speak, as well as Councillor Sue Vincent. Despite McDonalds' efforts to show that the Council were wrong to refuse permission, the District Judge gave a strongly worded judgement supporting the decision made by Camden's Licensing Panel. As a result McDonalds continues to operate only until 10.45pm. We look forward to constructive dialogue going forward.

## Planning

Our Planning Subcommittee, Chaired by Elizabeth Bax, meets fortnightly to consider planning applications made in (or affecting) the Covent Garden area. It comprises 8 regular members and welcomes any party interested in a particular agenda item to attend and feed into that discussion. The agendas are posted on our website ahead of time and circulated to residents' associations who request them.

This year we were consulted and commented on 268 planning applications in total – 130 for London Borough of Camden and 138 for the City of Westminster. This did not include the Table and Chairs consultations which were 49 for Camden and 64 for Westminster.

During the meetings we also hosted, over the year, 20 presentations for larger developments across both areas. At these sessions the developers present their plans to us prior to making planning applications to the council, and we trust they will take our views on board when making their application. If their plans are altered following negotiations with council planning officers, they return for an update on our views.

We comment on applications varying from major constructions with hundreds of pages of plans, to changes of use of existing buildings. The emphasis for changes of use in the last couple of years has been either office to residential or to 'dual use'.

Whilst we generally welcome extra residential units, these are rarely of a type that would suit primary residence living, and are often in locations that are subject to a lot of extraneous noise; they are more suitable for holiday or short term lets, to which we almost always object. The new change in legislation to dilute Section 25 of the Greater London Council (General Powers) Act 1973 - which prohibited all rentals of less than 90 days - may encourage holiday

and very short term letting, which is often detrimental to our long term residents. However, we were partially successful in lobbying for a limit in the Deregulation Act which became law during the year. It will now only allow short term letting if the property is owned and occupied by the person offering the let, and only for an aggregate total of 90 days per year. We look forward to hearing that it is making a difference to our residents

We also object to each application for a change to 'dual use', which we believe to be unlawful. It would grant the applicant permission to change use at some point in the future, typically between A1 and B1 (shop and office) or A1 and A3 (shop and restaurant) or B1 and C3 (office and dwelling), without the need to apply for planning permission or consult with neighbouring residents at that time. This effectively removes the premises from planning control, whereas the planning system is set up in a way that otherwise gives local people the opportunity to voice their concerns before a change of use is granted.

CGCA viewed a number of legislative changes during the year with dismay.

The Housing Act is potentially a great threat to our community, increasing rents for some of our long-term residents and widening the right-to-buy. Our experience of the right-to-buy in central London is that it is widely abused and, within a short time, properties are rented out to short-termers. Our elected representatives in Camden, both local and governmental, fought hard to oppose this during the year, but it is now in place and we can only hope that high purchase prices will prevent too much take-up. It has an impact on CGCA's activity in the area of Planning because we press for affordable housing from large developments – often against great opposition. If this housing will be in private hands in a matter of years then the effort would be wasted.

Permitted development rights to allow a change of use from B1(a) offices to C3 residential came into force in May 2013. These rights became permanent in April 2016. This means that the change of use can occur without planning permission. Whilst this was meant to address the housing shortage, both Camden and Westminster councils were concerned about the loss of office space and the impact on the boroughs' – and London's – economic competitiveness, including employment. The impact was particularly acute in Westminster, which lost 1.8 million sq ft of office from 2011-2015; 75% of this space was converted to residential. Meanwhile, Camden lost 257,000 sq ft of office space in less than 12 months.

The Central Activities Zone, which includes Covent Garden – and lies in parts of both Camden and Westminster – received an exemption from this permitted development right, although this exemption is set to expire in May 2019. From 1 September 2015, Westminster City Council began limiting office to residential conversions across the borough. No office losses will be acceptable except in cases where a developer can demonstrate that the benefits of the overall development outweigh the loss of office space, or if the proposals involve reversion to the original domestic use of an historic building. Where this is adequately demonstrated, the developer will be required to provide additional office floor space elsewhere to mitigate the loss.

Major applications we saw last year are now in progress with works to the Royal Opera House having commenced at the start of the year, and Kings Court (Floral Street through to King Street) progressing well and on time.

Unfortunately works to Bow Street Magistrates Court have now stopped and the building is once again on the market. The previous developers did have a very exciting architectural dig

with evidence of medieval human remains being found dating from 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries AD - from the earliest phase of human occupation discovered on the site along with artifacts suggesting Pagan Saxons rather than Christians. Quarry Pits were also found, which would have provided materials for the constructions of Saxon London.

Consent was given by Westminster for the highly contentious proposal to demolish a 30 year old Seifert building at 90 Long Acre (First Chicago House) and replace it with two buildings of greater mass containing over 100 residential units, office and retail uses. Surrounding residents are already dreading the thought of 2 years of dirty, noisy works and living in the shadow of a new building which is a number of stories higher in parts than the existing already overly large block.

Servicing new developments is an increasing issue for the community. Deliveries and refuse collection may add hundreds of new vehicle journeys into Covent Garden over the next few years. CGCA is negotiating for more stringent servicing conditions, and we are currently speaking with local landowners and developers about using shared servicing providers so that the number of large delivery lorries and refuse/recycling vehicles are kept to a minimum. We look for reversing tones to be switched off at night and early in the morning, and for simple solutions such as rubber wheels on cage trolleys to be used to reduce noise. We press for bottle crushers and pulverisers to minimise the noise of tipping glass bottle, and most new premises now comply with this.

We continue to fight for safe passage on our pavements with our comments on tables and chairs applications – occasionally with success, mostly in reducing the number applied for, and the removal of A boards and menu boards. It is, though, a continual battle as diners will move furniture themselves. When managed well, tables and chairs can be a welcome addition to life in our area. Our aim is to ensure safe passage for pedestrians but also to minimise the noise nuisance that can be caused to residents nearby - usually those living above. We press to maintain the 2 metres clear pavement width that is recommended by TfL, and speak with or report premises that are in breach of their consents and causing problems. We also seek to secure suitable end of day times for the use of tables and chairs, so that they are safely stowed away and do not cause a nuisance by attracting late night revellers or by being dragged inside late at night. In September we hosted a ‘walkabout’ with Camden highways to deal with the worst offenders.

Air conditioning units are always an issue, with numerous office and retail premises causing problems, and also some new residential developments. We welcome replacements with new and more efficient units and re-siting away from residential windows.

Kitchen extract plant has also become an increasing issue this year, with some noise and smells causing long term problems to residents before they are dealt with by the authorities.

We continue to monitor planning breaches, some of which have been flagrant in our area, and to ask the authorities to take the necessary enforcement action. This can include obliging the offending party to meet with residents who are affected, to reach a solution; many of our residents are vulnerable and they rely on CGCA to take up their cause.

Meredith Whitten continues as our Planning Advisor and we are very grateful to her for guiding us through our weekly agendas.

## The West End Partnership Board

The Chair of the CGCA's Licensing Committee, David Kaner, continued to serve during the year as a member of the West End Partnership Board. The Board comprises representatives of various stakeholders in the West End of London, including TfL, the Police, Business Improvement Districts, landowners, and both Westminster and Camden Councils. David Kaner and Matthew Bennett (Soho Society) represent the Amenity Societies who are members of the West End Community Network (WECN), and so are there to represent the interests of residents. The Board has a number of working groups covering areas such as Transport and Infrastructure, Evening and Night-Time Economy, and the Public Realm. The WECN has representatives on each of these.

The Board published its Vision and Delivery Plan in June 2015. These are available at <http://westendpartnership.london/>. The Delivery Plan is intended to outline how the Vision can be made a reality over the 2015-2030 period. There are over 120 different projects across the West End, with some of these in the Covent Garden area. The Board has also set up some working groups based on the themes of the Vision - and one of these, the People Task Group, is covering many of the projects related to how to make the West End a better place to live. These include projects relating to deliveries and servicing of commercial premises. This type of activity has a huge impact on residents, and as the West End gets busier this can only increase. Another area of focus for the group is how to improve enforcement activity against the many contraventions of existing rules which already take place.

## Policing and crime

We continue to work on many levels for our community, with both our local police forces.

We attend both Westminster and Camden Safer Neighbourhood Team meetings to highlight problems and to help set priorities on issues that affect our area. In Camden, our Holborn and Covent Garden Safer Neighbourhoods Team continues to do sterling work despite being down to only 4 officers serving a wide area. In Westminster we have the Covent Garden Safer Neighbourhood Team based at Charing Cross police station.

An area of serious concern to residents is the recent return of blatant drug related activity to our streets, particularly in the Camden half of Covent Garden where uniformed beat officers tend to be less in evidence. This activity has gone hand-in-hand with a number of break-ins to property in the area, shoplifting and aggressive begging.

The situation is so bad that it was made the sole priority for the Holborn and Covent Garden Safer Neighbourhoods Team from February. Many of us remember the appalling situation in the late 1990's and early 2000's, and the hard work put in by us and others on the West End Drug Partnership to change things for the better. With the dissolution of that body, there seems to be less co-ordination across boroughs and agencies.

We arranged meetings with officers based at Holborn in September and November, and took part in a street survey with them. This followed the disastrous decision to disband the night time tasking team around Cambridge Circus and Shaftesbury Avenue, which kept things under control until early 2015. In the coming year we are arranging meetings at higher, borough level, with the support of our MPs, Keir Starmer and Mark Field. A focus will be to

encourage more work between police based at Holborn, Charing Cross and West Central stations (the latter covering Soho).

There were also a number of brothels 'popping up' in flats in the area. This activity has become very agile, with pimps using rental websites to secure properties short term, and pedicabs transporting customers to unidentified locations. The pattern is for several girls to be moved into a flat overnight, sometimes more than one to a room, then for constant visitors for several weeks while neighbours realise what is happening and the authorities find the landlord, establish illegality, and act. One case involved the criminals placing a 'bouncer' on the door of the building all night, which was very intimidating to residents.

In the Autumn we welcomed our new Camden Borough commander, Penny Banham, who joined us and read at our carol service in December.

Julie Etheridge, the exceptionally able co-ordinator of the Central Westminster Police Consultative group died in July and will be sadly missed. This valuable group, chaired for many years by our own Chair, Jo Weir, was dissolved in 2014?; we believe that this has reduced the accountability of senior officers to the public in Westminster.

#### Environment, Public Realm and Transport

We took an active part in the working group for the re-vamp of Earlham Street all year. Elements that we have successfully had included are: no shared surfaces (ie: a proper pavement); no pedestrianisation of the existing road; no loading until 8am; no fixed street seating; some greening. The proposals went out to public consultation after the end of the period, and there some remaining elements that are of concern to local people, such as a small 'piazza' space that we believe will attract antisocial behaviour at night, and insensitive relocation of motorcycle bays. We hope that Camden will finally be able to improve the market on the back of this. CGCA responded in detail in 2012 when Camden consulted on a new Street Trading Strategy, as did the local landowners and the Seven Dials Trust. There is an opportunity here to create something worthy of what is Covent Garden's 'Western gateway'.

Traffic congestion and pollution started to become a major issue in the Seven Dials area as the year progressed. Some traffic data and research is being done on the reasons, and we may need to work on changing traffic flows next year as the level of fumes has become intolerable for the many residents there including families with children.

We have played an active part in Westminster's plans for the area's public realm, as reflected in the Covent Garden Action Plan for many years. This deals with the Westminster half of Covent Garden by splitting it into 4 areas. Area 1 (around the Piazza) was again busy this year, but the Area 3 (across Long Acre including 'cross-border' work with Camden around Seven Dials) steering group is now working largely through group correspondence rather than meetings.

With pollution high on the political agenda, we continued to press for greening of the area at every opportunity. Trees are essential to this, but they are vulnerable to traffic and to careless contractors.

The wall-mounted street lighting project in Seven Dials and neighbouring streets was rolled out in 2013-14 and there is now interest in extending it. The project is led by David Bieda of the Seven Dials Trust in partnership with Camden, Westminster, English Heritage, Shaftesbury plc and the Mercers' Company. It is the fruit of many years' work, and CGCA has been involved through the Area 3 steering group. The old lighting columns have been replaced with gas-lamp style lanterns mounted on buildings, incorporating 21<sup>st</sup> century technology in a way that is an international first.

The major Crossrail project also affects our area. We continue to be represented at meetings that are held to discuss its progress and forthcoming proposals, but are concerned about the excavations that creep under historic areas, as far south as parts of Seven Dials.

A lot of work was done by CGCA this year on TfL's proposals for the 'Night Tube'. We took the lead on this for amenity societies across London, who are concerned about the lack of planning that has gone into policing and managing behaviour around stations in the middle of the night. TfL projects over 30,000 people coming in and out of stations around Covent Garden between 1am and 6am. We are also campaigning for stations in the middle of residential patches, like Covent Garden station itself and Russell Square to remain closed. There are many stations within a short walk of these, on streets that are busy with ambient noise and will not attract so much disturbance to residents trying to sleep.

The CGCA regularly reports highway defects such as potholes, flood points, defective paving and street lighting, fallen bollards and trees etc.

### Events and Partnership working

As usual, we took part in the annual May Fayre at St. Paul's churchyard, with our ever popular plant stall. Many old friends stopped to catch up with us amid the crowds who always pass through during the day to watch the Punch and Judy shows, Maypole dancing and varied entertainment.

Later in May our 'reps reception' was popular. This is an opportunity for active residents who represent their street or block to meet their neighbours, share issues of common interest, and discuss how any wider problems might be tackled while enjoying a convivial evening.

Our Covent Garden Street Festival in September went well. The festival is gathering momentum, providing an opportunity for the local community to come together and celebrate. Our festival committee did an excellent job in organising stalls and entertainment and persuading local businesses to donate a sparkling array of raffle prizes. It follows hard on the heels of the St. Giles Agricultural Show and Fair, beautifully organised by the team from Phoenix Garden, where we always disseminate information, and which is now becoming a regular feature of the Covent Garden calendar.

Our annual community carol service, held at St Paul's church in December was another great success, with a lovely party afterwards sponsored by Capco. The event was well attended, as ever, by over 200 people, and enabled the community regardless of their religious beliefs to come together and enjoy the friendly atmosphere in a magnificent setting.

Our work continues with our fellow amenity societies nearby, such as The Soho Society (Jo Weir, our Chair, is on their executive), Bloomsbury Association, Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association and other, smaller groups. We share many similar problems, and collaborative



work highlights our shared concerns for the whole area and the welfare of our residents, workers and visitors.

Via Jo Weir and local representatives we continued to be involved in the important campaign with Soho over unsatisfactory rearrangements for the GP surgery there. Many Covent Garden residents are patients, and the 'Soho Patients Action group' was set up in 2014 to press the local NHS to be transparent and inclusive about decisions. However, the interim providers, a not-for-profit partnership of GPs called Haverstock Healthcare still do not know if their contract will be renewed after July 2016 and nor do patients.

We continue to be an active part of the West End Community Network, founded by amenity societies from across Central London to tackle wider issues together.

We work closely with other community organisations in Covent Garden, such as Dragon Hall, the Phoenix Garden, Seven Dials Trust, and the Seven Dials club. We consult with active local tenants associations, and encourage residents to set them up in new buildings. In March Neal's yard held its first community meeting, with many residents and small businesses coming together to outline some exciting plans.

We welcome Graham Chase as the new Chair of Trustees at the Covent Garden Area Trust, on which we are also represented. The trust was established in 1988 as a result of CGCA's campaigning in the 1970's to save the area. Their remit is to ensure sympathetic use of the 'protected lands' in and around the Piazza, to which end they hold an under-lease until the year 2138. Their area of interest lies within CGCA's wider area of remit and we look forward to working closely together in the coming year.

We are also represented on The Covent Garden Area Trust, The Jubilee Sports Hall, Friends of Lincoln's Inn Fields (of which we are founding members), Save London's Theatres, WCC Civic Watch, and the West End Amenity Society Forum (WASF).

### ***Financial review***

The Association continues its work mainly through the efforts of committed volunteers, many of whom live or work in the Covent Garden area. Our costs are met through a mixture of member subscriptions, donations and grants.

We are grateful to the London Borough of Camden, Westminster City Council, and many local people and businesses for their financial or other forms of support during this period.

Our income as stated in the accounts increased to £14,757 from £8,268 last year, while expenditure increased to £17,869 from £11,753. The variation was due a) to a drawdown of £3,720 income from old grants held in reserve, spent on areas covered by those grants and b) the success of our street festival as a fundraiser.

We have managed to control core expenditure in recent years by moving to a small office within the Seven Dials Community Centre, which has been far cheaper to run than a stand-alone unit, and where the Seven Dials Community Centre kindly allowed us to share costs with the Seven Dials Trust. We have also controlled expenditure by working without a full-time paid administrator. We pay for specialist support work only for our Planning subcommittee and last year took on a part-time administrator for just one day a week.

Amid greater pressures on the voluntary sector, we are nevertheless confident that Covent Garden's community will find a way to afford to continue to stand up for our unique area at the heart of the Capital.

### ***Reserves policy and risk management***

The trustees continue to review any major risks which may be faced by the charity and reserves are set to provide sufficient resources in the event of adverse conditions.

Our policy is to hold a general reserve of at least 1 year's expenditure, being the greater of the mean of the past 2 or 3 years' turnover as deemed appropriate by the trustees. This year's turnover was £14,757. Past years' turnovers were 2014-15 £8,268, 2013-14: £18,555, so a general reserve should be held in the range £7,675 to £13,860. It currently stands at £8,508, after allocation of £19,778 to cover the deficit budget approved by the Executive Committee for the coming year. We have two designated reserves: a £10,000 relocation fund if needed to establish a stand-alone office, and a £30,000 legal fighting fund which we dipped into this year for a licensing hearing and then topped-up again from other reserves.

We judge the financial position to be sustainable in the medium-term. The operational position is more critical because of insufficient paid-for capacity. We are seriously concerned that our services are constrained by low income. This year we covered a £3,112 loss from reserves, which was really an operating loss of over £7,000 as we took income from old grants; last year it was £3,485.

There is a strict system of financial control in place. The trustees have also examined other operational and business risks which we face and confirm that they have established systems to mitigate the significant risks.

### ***Trustees***

The trustees delegate day-to-day running of the charity to the Executive Committee. Members who held office during all or part of the period are:

- J. Weir (Chair)
- A. Rigby (Vice Chair)
- E. Bax (Honorary Secretary)
- R. Bent
- S. Gray
- M. Houston
- M. Zini-Lopes

The Executive Committee is nominated by members of the Association, and stand for election at a General Meeting. Additional committee members may be co-opted outside a General Meeting where the Trustees or Executive Committee believe that they have the necessary skills to contribute to the charity's development.

The trustees are required to comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements, preparing statements for each financial year that are compatible with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) regulations 2008 as they apply to smaller charities.

***Voluntary help and gifts in kind***

Once again, it is difficult to record the true number of hours spent in a voluntary capacity during this last year. We have benefited from countless volunteers who gave of their precious time willingly in order to maintain the high standards of response expected of us as a recognised amenity society, especially in the areas of licensing, planning and public realm. The trustees are very grateful to these volunteers without whom the pressure of work would have been overwhelming.

We are also grateful once again to those businesses in the area who have chosen to help us in a range of ways.

**Approved and signed on behalf of the Trustees**

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**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016

**J. Weir**  
**Chair**