

A learned society for the twenty-first-century

Society of Antiquaries of London
10 March 2023

In autumn 2022 the Society of Antiquaries embarked on a review of its vision and strategy.....

The charter says...

**The encouragement,
advancement and furtherance of
the study and knowledge of
the antiquities and history of
this and other countries**

We're not reinventing
this, but can we be more
exciting, singleminded,
memorable, future-
facing?

A vision for the Society

Who we are

What an antiquary is, and why it matters

and

What we're for

Our impact: who we benefit, and how

So that...

More **fellows** join, and fellows contribute more

Staff stay longer, and work on what matters most

The **public** and government warmly support us

Before

Interview core team, Jun

Brainstorm with
management team, 7 Sep

The project plan

Workshop 1

9 September

Three hours with the core team to imagine the ideal future for the Society, and to sketch a first draft vision

Research

Ten interviews with a selection of fellows, Council members and managers

Check peer organisations

Online conversation with staff

An analysis of research on public attitudes

Sessions on content and policy

Workshop 2

20 October

Three hours with the core team to understand the research findings

And develop a second draft vision

Exploring more

Conversations with Burlington House neighbours, National Lottery and Arts Council England

Sessions on research

Talk to AHRC and others about partnering



Workshop 3

17 November

Two hours with the core team to refine the draft and make recommendations to the Council

APPROVAL

Presented to the Council
8 December 2022

Full discussion by Council
26 January 2023

Presented to the Fellowship
23 February

Final approval by Council
9 March

THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS, AGREED BY COUNCIL:

- 1 We adopt a new vision that doesn't just describe what we do now, but opens up new energy and activities for the **next ten years**
- 2 This vision talks about our **three main beneficiaries** - fellows, the sector and the wider public
- 3 To make sure we survive and thrive in those ten years, and make the most of our charity status, we need to put the most stress on our **public benefit**
- 4 That benefit is about the way we help **society as a whole learn** about the past - for its own sake, and for the present and the future. And we need to talk about it confident, forward-looking, **public-facing** language
- 5 The word 'antiquary' is puzzling for the public, so we need to give **meaning and personality** to the idea of 'antiquary'
- 6 Alongside our vision, we should agree on a set of **values** and strategic **goals**

Own
our
name

Our vision

The Society of Antiquaries is a community of **researchers and scholars** curious about the past: its objects, **images**, places, texts and ideas, and what they can say to us today. For 300 years, we've worked across disciplinary borders. We record, conserve and interpret; but we also question, critique and **push understanding forwards**.

To do this, we nourish a lively and increasingly diverse fellowship of historians, archaeologists, **curators** and many other specialists. We stimulate the wider heritage sector, acting as a global independent forum. And we aim to excite the world, bringing the broadest possible public audience into our never-ending **enquiry**.

In a complex, contested and uncertain world, our **enquiries** remain as vital as ever: to understand how people live and think, through the **places they live and** things they create.

Our vision: short version

Who we are

A community of researchers curious about the past and what its objects, images, places, texts and ideas can say to us today

What we're for

To understand how people live and think, through the places they live and things they create.

Human practices
and societies: how
they've worked in
the past, and what
that means for
present and future

To understand how people live and think,
through the places they live and things they
create

Creativity as a
central theme

Objects, images,
texts, ideas

How we might express it externally

To a public audience

Are you curious about the past and what its things and places can say to us today? Then you're an antiquary. Join our great **enquiry** into **understanding** how **people live and think**.

To a sector audience

The world needs more understanding. One way is to find multiple new perspectives **on and** from the past. Join our cross-disciplinary **enquiries into understanding** how people **live and think through the places they live and things they create**.

Understanding how people live and think: 2023

Rituals of power



Heritage in conflict

Our values: what we believe in

Appreciation of the material remains of the past created by all peoples in all parts of the world, and a respectful attitude towards different traditions of understanding and valuing the past.

Recognition of the **relevance** of understanding the past to present and future generations, and the importance of protecting and conserving our material heritage as key resources for study and public engagement.

Promotion of **diversity** of opinion, specialism and background among our Fellowship, Affiliate Membership, audiences and across the sector, regardless of gender, sexuality, race or [dis]ability.

Commitment to excellence and **rigour** in research, based on scientific principles, evidence and challenge, so that understanding of human life in its physical and cultural environments will continue to grow.

Support for the wider research and heritage community through **partnership** and collaboration with other institutions and stakeholders.

Active promotion of debate and wider **engagement**, study, and enjoyment of the material past, including developing new approaches and appealing to audiences that have traditionally been excluded from this process.

Our strategic goals: what we'll do

vision	To understand how people live and think through the places they live and things they create		
strategic aim	Nourish our community	Stimulate our sector	Excite the world
10-year goals	<i>The fellowship every researcher in our disciplines wants to join</i> 10,000 members and affiliates Diverse, interdisciplinary and dynamic	<i>A global independent forum on heritage</i> Digitised and open source resources Vital new interdisciplinary discoveries	<i>The place where exciting new ideas are shared first</i> Reaching an audience of 1 million Higher public appetite for material past
long-term priorities	Spark more serendipity By facilitating interdisciplinary projects among fellows Support throughout careers By challenging and mentoring fellows and affiliates	Offer catalysing resources Through our library, collections, research grants and publishing Provoke wider debate By convening events that provide a platform for new ideas	Open up our places By opening BH to the public and expanding our work at KM Share with the world Through online courses, videos, podcasts, schools programmes
mid-term strategies	To add	To add	To add
actions for 2023/4	To add	To add	To add

And a vital fourth strand

vision	To understand how people live and think through the places they live and things they create			
strategic aims	Nourish our community	Stimulate our sector	Excite the world	Organise to deliver
10-year goals	<i>The fellowship every researcher in our disciplines wants to join</i> 10,000 members and affiliates Diverse, interdisciplinary and dynamic	<i>A global independent forum on heritage</i> Digitised and open source resources Vital new interdisciplinary discoveries	<i>The place where exciting new ideas are shared first</i> Reaching an audience of 1 million Higher public appetite for material past	<i>A modern efficient and forward-facing organisation</i> An engaged and motivated workforce and a known and committed Fellowship Demonstrating equality diversity and inclusion in all it does
long-term priorities	Spark more serendipity By facilitating interdisciplinary projects among fellows Support throughout careers By challenging and mentoring fellows and affiliates	Offer catalysing resources Through our library, collections, research grants and publishing Provoke wider debate By convening events that provide a platform for new ideas	Open up our places By opening BH to the public and expanding our work at KM Share with the world Through online courses, videos, podcasts, schools programmes	Motivated team Through effective structures, collaborative working and clear decision-making Sustainable organisation With premises to suit need and clear financial plan
mid-term strategies	To add	To add	To add	To add
actions for 2023/4	To add	To add	To add	To add

So what changes?

For the benefit of the fellows



For the benefit of **everyone**

One organisation among
many in the sector



Central to the sector, as an
independent global forum

A relatively small fellowship



Much bigger, much more
diverse, much more **engaged**
- and actively supported
throughout their careers

On a page

