**CLEAVER SQUARE, CLEAVER STREET AND BOWDEN STREET RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

**AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7pm on 13 November 2013**

**at the City and Guilds of London Art School**

**1. Introduction and apologies for absence**

There were 35 residents present. Apologies for absence were received from David Wilson, Vivienne Kay, Emma and Richard Moody, Mike and Val Tyler, Nick Bundy, Ade and Claire Cordell, Alison Jack, and Stephen Morgan.

The Chair, Penny Ritchie Calder, thanked the City and Guilds of London Art School for again providing the venue for the meeting. She welcomed prospective local councillors Jo Simpson and Chris Marsh to the meeting, and thanked the outgoing councillors, Steve Morgan, Lorna Campbell and Mark Harrison for all their work on local issues.

**2. Minutes and matters arising from the AGM on 23 November 2012**

The minutes of the last AGM were approved. It was agreed that matters arising would be dealt with under the relevant items on the agenda.

**3. Neighbourhood Watch report**

PC Gareth Turner kindly provided an update on local policing issues, including statistics on burglaries, thefts from cars and other crimes in the immediate area. He reminded residents of the need to ensure that properties were fully secure, particularly during the pre-Christmas season. He also mentioned the ongoing scheme to mark bicycles and reunite owners with their stolen bikes; details were available from Kennington Police Station.

**4. Chairman’s report and Association finances**

1. **Report on street cleaning**: Renewed thanks were due to Elizabeth Filkin and Julie Wheelwright for continuing to liaise with Lambeth Streetcare to get standards of cleaning improved and to deal with local businesses dumping refuse in the street. EF stressed the importance of other residents reporting litter to Streetcare. PRC noted that BT had been very responsive when asked to clear litter from the grounds of the telephone exchange in Kennington Park Road.
2. **Report on events**: There had been several very successful events in the past 12 months. Carols in the Square in December 2012 saw a record turn out and raised £800 for Breakthrough Breast Cancer. A Rake Up Day was held on 20 April 2013 in conjunction with Lambeth’s Community Freshview initiative, when some 40 residents helped to rake the square, sand benches, clear litter and plant flowers and shrubs. The Association’s 50th anniversary was celebrated in style at a tea party in the square on 23 June 2013. Thanks were due to K Newman and those who helped with the organisation. The popular Supper Club met at local restaurants every month during the year, and thanks were given to this year’s organizer, Vivienne Kay. A volunteer was being sought to help with bookings in 2014.
3. **Broadgates Court:** Efforts continued to be made to persuade Lambeth to install security doors to prevent problems and risks arising from street sleepers, drug dealers and others using the stairwells illegally. In the meantime the police had been carrying out regular patrols.
4. **Snow wardens**: During the winter several residents were trained as Snow Wardens under Lambeth’s new scheme, and had helped to keep pavements clear after snowfalls.
5. **Charlie’s Patch**: Guerrilla gardening had continued on this patch in Bowden Street, with four more flower tubs added in the summer and 300 bulbs planted for spring 2014. The garden was awarded a special cup in Kennington Gardens Society’s annual competition.
6. **Foodbank contributions**: Donations from residents had regularly been taken to the Vauxhall foodbank during the year; The Chair thanked those present for bringing along a large quantity of tins and packets to the AGM. The foodbank had written to the Association to thank residents for their generosity.
7. **Website**: The Association’s website (cleaversquare.org) was launched in January 2013. Thanks were due to Michael Brown for his expertise and patience. The Chair reported that the site was regularly updated and that suggestions for additional content would be welcome.
8. **Finances**: The Chair reported that full accounts were available for inspection, and that the current balance stood at £407.70. Expenditure over the year included the cost of the anniversary party and AGM, and expenses associated with resolving the problem of drainage in the square.

**6. Update on drainage in the square**

Edward Hutchison gave a detailed account of the lobbying and exploratory work over the last year, noting the following:

* the lack of any accurate drainage plans, historic or current;
* persistent flooding after rainfall, made worse by fallen leaves and debris; now potentially a health and safety hazard;
* the 3-page log of emails and phone calls to Thames Water, culminating in an unannounced visit by EH to their HQ;
* TW’s subsequent excavation, revealing only obsolete pipes (filled by tree roots);
* the commissioning of a water diviner, John Baker, enabling pipe runs to be identified with more accuracy;
* EH’s submission of 3 options to Lambeth parks: (1) repair and redo existing drainage system – very expensive and still prone to blockages; (2) regrade the square to drain to each side - very expensive; (3) install vertical drains to allow drainage using the underlying geology. A quotation had been obtained from a specialist company, Weatherhead, to show that option (3) was viable.
* Following a meeting with Lambeth and their contractor Conway, it was agreed that option (3) vertical drains was the best solution. Conway had provided a quotation of c. £28,000, just under the threshold requiring higher budget approval levels.

Confirmation that work would go ahead was currently awaited from Lambeth. Those present thanked EH and the Chair for their efforts to resolve this problem.

**7. Proposed guidelines for builders**

The Chair said that while building work was a fact of modern life (and a positive thing, ensuring that homes were well maintained and improved) there had been an unprecedented amount of refurbishment in the square over the last few months. The committee had suggested that it might be helpful for residents to have a set of guidelines to give to their builders, reminding them of the regulations concerning noise, working hours, dust etc. It was agreed that this would be useful and the Chair undertook to circulate a draft for comments in due course.

**8. Update on 50th anniversary ‘Plan of the Square’ project**

Edward Hutchison updated the meeting on progress being made on a drawing recording the layout of the square and the ground floor layouts of all the properties bordering it. He showed sketches indicating the level of detail that was required to draw the plan accurately. The Chair and meeting thanked EH for his work on this project, and also thanked Hilary Gal for helping to acquire the necessary plans. It was hoped that the final plan would be reproduced as a limited edition and in other forms to raise funds for the association.

The Chair also noted that people were continuing to add to the written reminiscences of residents past and present, which it was hoped might be made available more widely in an appropriate form at a later date.

**7. Forthcoming events and proposed dates for 2013/2014**

The annual Carols in the Square would be on 19 December, featuring the Fever Pitch choir. This year’s charity was still to be confirmed. Other events for 2014 would include:

* Spring clean/Community Freshview: confirmed for Sat 26 April 2014
* Summer Party: date in June t.b.c.
* Carols in the Square: date in December t.b.c.

**9. Membership of the Committee**

The Chair thanked the committee for their work over the last year. All were voted in to serve a further year. New members were actively being sought for the committee and the Chair encouraged residents to put themselves forward.

**10. Any Other Business**

Use of square by boules players and others: Michael Jack suggested that those who regularly used the square, such as boules players involved in regular tournaments, should be asked to contribute to the upkeep of the square. This could be by, for example, helping on rake-up days (which they had done the previous year). It had become known as a boules mecca and this had the potential to deny other users the peaceful enjoyment of the square. A promotional event (featuring lighting and music) organized by Lacoste in September was felt to be out of scale as well as potentially contravening open space by-laws. It was noted, however, that Lacoste had subsequently donated a polo shirt worth £120 to the Residents’ Association to use to raise funds. It was agreed that while residents had no official jurisdiction over the square, a watchful eye would be kept on future events and dialogue would be maintained with the boules players.

Fireworks**:** Clare Pardy reminded the meeting that in the past a fireworks display was regularly organized by the pub on 5 November. It was agreed that it would be worth seeing if this idea could be resurrected, provided current safety guidelines etc did not make this too complicated to organize.

**11. Date of next AGM**

November 2013: date to be confirmed.

There followed a detailed presentation from **Keith Trotter, Nine Elms Project Programme Coordinator,** about the major regeneration of the Nine Elms/Vauxhall area and what it would mean for local residents. During the Q&A session concerns were expressed about matters such as the reduction in the amount of social housing that developers were obliged to provide; the potential lack of a sense of community; the quality of the architecture; and the viability of the ‘linear park’ which would be in shadow for much of the year.

The meeting finished at 8.15pm.