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

**AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7pm on 25 November 2021**

**at St Anselm’s Church, Kennington Cross**

**1. Introduction and apologies for absence**

There were 20 residents present. Apologies were received from Hilary Gal, Ben Summerskill, Grant and Freya Thomas, Daniel and Leah Zeto, Emma and Richard Moody, Ginny Tate, Owen Meredith, Mark Wallace, Clare and Stephen Pardy, K Newman, Councillors Jo Simpson, Jon Davies and David Amos.

The outgoing Chair, Penny Ritchie Calder, welcomed everyone and paused to remember the sad passing earlier in the year of Elizabeth Scott, who had lived in the square for 67 years.

PRC thanked the Rev’d Angus Aagaard for providing the venue for the meeting. He gave a brief talk about the proposals for the church site, describing the various objectives which would bring much-needed improvements and new opportunities. The local community had helped to shape the plans. Funding was now in place so it was hoped that redevelopment would be able to start once planning permission had been obtained.

**2. Minutes and matters arising from the virtual AGM on 11 November 2020**

The minutes of the last AGM were approved. Matters arising would be dealt with under the relevant items on the agenda.

**3. Neighbourhood Watch report**

1. PC Connor Vincent from the Princes Ward Safer Neighbourhood Team, representing Sergeant David Smith, gave an update on local policing. PC Jordan Blackman from Bishop’s Ward also attended. Incidents in our area were low, but the team was currently focusing on knife crime, robberies and traffic offences in the ward. PC Vincent stressed that any crime witnessed should be reported, either via 999 (if happening at the time), 101 or online, in order to ensure resources were directed appropriately.
2. In response to a question from Nicolas Bratza, PC Vincent said that any scams received by phone, online or via email should be reported to Action Fraud.
3. Sue Codrington asked if any action could be taken against noisy motorcyclists using the local main roads as a race track. PC Vincent said that traffic officers regularly monitored speed and decibel levels in order to reduce this problem.

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

The committee had met twice (once via zoom) and various members had taken responsibility for specific areas of action.

1. **Report on street cleaning**: Problems still remained with litter and dumping resulting from reduced street cleaning Thanks were due to Elizabeth Filkin for continuing to liaise with Lambeth Streetcare to get standards of cleaning improved and to deal with local businesses dumping refuse in the street.
2. **Noise and litter in square post-lockdown**: There had been issues in the summer with large crowds gathering in the square, resulting in a significant increase in litter and late-night noise. The committee had worked with the pub and the parks department to try to mitigate this. Temporary signs were put out to encourage people to leave the square at a reasonable hour.
3. **Parks department**: Liaison continued, particularly in relation to maintenance and leaf sweeping. Bags were still being provided by the council for residents to use for leaf collection in between visits by streetsweepers. A recent survey of trees had been carried out and some dangerous/low hanging branches were removed. The committee had also drawn up a policy on the memorialisation of benches in the square, following an enquiry received by the council. The wish list given to the parks department, including replacement of gravel, replacement of cherry tree, and repairs to railings, had not yet been actioned.
4. **Kennington Cross road safety:** Councillor Jon Davies had continued to liaise with TfL about improvements to safety measures for pedestrians and cyclists. He had recently been told that plans for additional traffic lights and revised phasing had been drawn up and it was hoped to implement the scheme in the next financial year (2022/23).
5. **Proposed Redevelopment of Lambeth County Court:** From March 2021 the committee and residents had engaged in discussions and site visits with the Duchy of Cornwall and their developers (Lucrum) regarding their proposals to convert the court into 9 flats, with a modern new storey. 71 objections were submitted to Lambeth when the planning application went in, including a detailed analysis from the committee. There was no news yet about a date for consideration by the Planning Committee. In June we applied to Historic England to have the building listed, supported by the Twentieth Century Society. A decision on listing was due to be made by Historic England and DCMS in early December. *[Post-meeting note: the building was formally listed Grade II on 13.12.2021].*
6. **Report on events**:

* Carols in the Square – this pared-back socially-distanced event took place on 18 December 2020, the night before the Christmas lockdown came into force.
* Online Christmas fundraiser - as contributions could not be collected during the carols event, residents generously donated £2705 to our online Justgiving site. Proceeds were divided between the Kennington Association’s Secret Santa and Vauxhall Foodbank.
* Christmas Day drinks – the lockdown also provided an unexpected opportunity to join neighbours at a distance for a celebratory drink on doorsteps on 25 December.
* A Rake Up Day was held in April in conjunction with Lambeth’s Community Freshview initiative. Around 25 residents helped to rake the square, clear litter and tidy up Charlie’s Patch. A plant swap was also held at the same time.
* The Association’s late summer party on 16 September was well attended. Thanks to all who brought food and wine.
* An autumn rakeup/clean up was organized in October and over 200 bulbs were planted on Charlie’s Patch and in nearby tree beds.
* Residents had also been encouraged to put up Christmas lights which had added sparkle to the square and streets during the winter lockdown.

1. **Finances**: The Chair reported that full accounts were available for inspection, and that the current balance stood at £1073.49. The Association was grateful to Edward Hutchison for his further generous donation of £150 - proceeds from another sale of his plan of the square. Expenses included a £200 donation to the Lollard Street Playground in memory of Elizabeth Scott, items for the rake-up, including litter pickers, bulbs and plants, the website hosting fee, and the cost of producing temporary ‘ keep the noise down’ signs for the square.

**5. Parking**

This item had been put on the agenda as some residents had expressed concern that pressure on parking spaces was increasing, particularly at weekends. Heart of Kennington residents reported a similar problem. The cause was not known, but might be related to the imposition of the congestion charge at weekends as well as on weekdays. The square provided free parking just outside the zone. If the problem continued, residents could consider the option of requesting parking restrictions on Saturday mornings to try to deter weekend parkers. However, this would need full discussion and may take some time to implement. No further views were expressed at the meeting.

**6. Forthcoming events and proposed dates for 2020/2021**

a) Remainder of 2020:

- Polly Hutchison confirmed that the Supper Club would resume after a long pandemic-enforced break on 8 December. The meeting thanked her for her work as organiser.

- The annual Carols in the Square would be on 20 December. It was agreed that following the success of the 2020 online Christmas fundraiser, this should be repeated, with proceeds going to the Kennington Association’s Secret Santa appeal and aid for refugees. Any takings on the night at the carols event would go to Vauxhall foodbank.

b) Events for 2021 would include:

* Spring clean/Community Freshview: April date t.b.c.
* Summer Party/Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations: June – plans t.b.c.
* Carols in the Square: date in December t.b.c.

**7. Membership of the Committee and election of new chair**

PRC welcomed Ursula Ovenden who was nominated as chair. All present unanimously endorsed this appointment which would take effect as of this meeting. PRC thanked the committee for their work over the last year, and noted that Rod Spence, Carola Breuning, Emma Moody and James Taylor had now stepped down. New members elected since the last AGM were Owen Meredith, John Rump and Sue Codrington. All members were voted in to serve a further year and would take on specific roles. The committee therefore comprised: Ursula Ovenden (chair), Owen Meredith (treasurer), Sue Codrington, John Rump, Mark Wallace, Edward Hutchison, Michael Honey (secretary), Hilary Gal, Mike Tyler, Simona Springer, K Newman, Penny Ritchie Calder.

Edward Hutchison paid tribute to PRC’s contribution. She then briefly reviewed her 13 years as chair, noting that during that time the committee had managed to achieve a number of improvements to the immediate area, including security doors for Broadgates Court, full repaving and new street furniture and bike docking station on the corner of Cleaver Street and Bowden Street, a new gate at the art school end of the square, major overhaul of drainage in the square, and the transformation of the area of waste ground on Bowden Street into Charlie’s Patch. Residents had also raised over £11,000 for charity through the annual carols events, and made many donations over the years to the local foodbank. She thanked everyone for their help and support.

**8. Any Other Business**

It was agreed more pressure should be put on businesses in Cleaver Street to help keep their frontages and the street litter free.

**9. Date of next AGM –** November 2021: date to be confirmed.

**10. Presentation by Harminder Brainch of the Stop the Blocks campaign**

HB described the work that he and other members of the campaign had done to try to resist the over-development of the Woodlands site (Cinema Museum and former workhouse). As a result, the plans had been turned down by the council, but a new application had gone in for a scheme which was still far too tall and too dense for the surrounding neighbourhood. He urged everyone to submit their views to Lambeth.

**11. Presentation by Edward Hutchinson on Kennington Green**

EH reviewed the work that had been done to engage with various stakeholders, including TfL, to ensure that the re-landscaping of Kennington Green was achieved to the best possible standard. When the area was requisitioned for excavations and a new headhouse for the Northern Line Extension, EH and other local residents had rejected TfL’s original proposals and fought to achieve a much better design and implementation.

Those present thanked HB and EH and agreed that both these presentations showed that it was possible for the voice of the community to be heard if enough pressure was applied.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm.