



BELMONT & SOUTH CHEAM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
Minutes of 53rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on
Wednesday 15th May 2024 held at St Andrew's Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam.

Present at the meeting were 60 attendees, including 9 members of the BSCRA Executive Committee and Councillor David Hicks. Invited guest - Liam Ronan-Chlond - Head of Engagement and Social Value at Socius.

Introduction and welcome by the Chair – Mr. Peter Matthey (PM)

PM welcomed everyone to this the 53rd AGM of the Association.

PM thanked the members of St Andrew's Church for permitting us to use the premises.

PM explained that the AGM would follow a similar format to usual, first the AGM formalities and then guest speaker.

PM welcomed the guest speaker for the evening - Liam Ronan-Chlond - Head of Engagement and Social Value at Socius.

Annual Report by the Chair

This was the 18th year with PM as Chairman who advised Members of the wide range of activities the Association has been involved with over the last year from the information we circulate in our regular emailed e-bulletins and our periodic paper Newsletters.

The Association would like to think that we are doing our bit to create a local community spirit.

We are represented on the Council's Local Committee and PM chairs the combined Cheam and Belmont Safer Neighbourhood Team's Ward Panels. We are regularly consulted by the Council for our views. PM is also the Treasurer for the Belmont Branch of the Royal British Legion and am able to share local knowledge across both roles.

Originally the Association was set up to monitor planning applications and this remains a significant workload; there are typically about 6 applications across our area each week. Increasingly we are involved with other matters such as traffic, parking, trees and the like.

We are endeavouring to extend our membership and the knowledge of the Association and have distributed nearly 5,000 of our Summer 2024 Newsletter to ALL houses and flats in our area to encourage residents who are new to our area to join up. Thanks to the work done by Treasurer Paul Arnold we now have the ability for members to pay their subscriptions online using a credit or debit card. Paul will say more later about how successful this has been. But all members can help – please mention the Association to any new neighbours and ask them to contact me or Paul to become members. From my personal experience of meeting new residents, there are many ways that we can and have helped them.

The Association has also sponsored the roll-out of road based WhatsApp groups in our area. These have proved to be very successful in keeping residents in touch with their neighbours. Popular topics are street parties, mis-delivered packages, and lost pets! We have implemented a high level "supergroup" that links nominated contacts with all of these groups to give a cascade roll-out of important messages. You can see details of all of the linked groups on the BSCRA website. If you have a WhatsApp group in your road which is not in this list, please let PM know. Alternatively, if you would like help setting up a group for your road, again please contact him.

PM went on to say that the big topics affecting currently our area are:

Our Neighbourhood Plan

For those of you who haven't read it, this a 100+ page document detailing how we would like to see our area being improved in the future. We continue to make slow but steady progress with the Plan thanks to the sterling efforts of Lyonel Bell. The Plan has been revised following comments by residents and a final version should be submitted to the London Borough of Sutton soon. Following this a poll will be taken across the whole area to approve (or not) the Plan. This then becomes part of the Council's planning policies for our area.

The Plan also contains a list of community projects that contributors have told us they would like to see implemented given suitable funding.

Other topics the Association is involved with are:

Epsom & St Helier's new Hospital

Whilst agreement has been reached to site the new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (SECH) on the old Sutton Hospital site no progress updates have been received for some time. The likely General Election in 2024 may delay the process.

London Cancer Hub

It has now been agreed that the venture will be taken forward jointly by Aviva and Socius. We look forward to hearing from Liam shortly.

Proposed developments on the old Sutton Hospital site which is owned by the London Borough of Sutton but now leased to Aviva/Socius have dominated our list of concerns both in terms of what it will mean for its neighbours and its implications for transport.

We are generally supportive of the London Cancer Hub proposals as these potentially offer a way of getting a number of important improvements to the area funded – roads and public transport alike, but only if we get the improvements that the area desperately needs.

Planning

We continue to fight off a barrage of unwanted large planning applications for the area, although where possible we try to be constructive and suggest changes to an application rather than outright refusal. The Burton Estates ASLC Character Appraisal continues to be a great help with this.

PM expressed disappointment that the Council was no longer personally notifying residents of planning applications lodged by their neighbours (unless they have signed up to notifications from the Council's planning portal).

PM thanked the BSCRA Road Stewards for their hard work in being the eyes and ears of the Association in their roads and enable us to distribute paper literature and to collect subscriptions. More Road Stewards are needed and if anyone would like to volunteer or knows of someone who might they are asked to contact PM.

PM thanked both the Treasurer and General Secretary for their help during the past year and was pleased to report that they are willing, again, to stand for re-election.

PM also thanked all the members of the Executive Committee who provide us with an invaluable sounding board for setting our direction and priorities and for volunteering to help with the organisation of many of the Association's activities (such as this evening).

David Riley has now stood down from the Committee. Thank you David for all your support.

Helen Rees, a resident of South Cheam has agreed to stand for election to our committee to fill the vacancy left by David. Helen is very enthusiastic about being involved with Community issues in the area.

Thanks also to our Ward Councillors for their support during the year and with whom we could not make many things happen.

PM also thanked members, for their ongoing enthusiastic interest and support. If the committee has an issue to solve we know we can rely on members to support us, and hence their neighbours in getting a resolution.

Finally, PM thanked his wife Helen for her patience and endurance of the time spent on Association business.

Treasurer's Report - Paul Arnold (PA)

Paul explained his report would cover the following areas.

- The 12 month financial period ending 31 December 2023.
- An update on the success of the online payments portal
- Thank colleagues for their support and ask for any willing volunteers to be road stewards

The 12 month financial period ending 31 December 2023.

In 2023 we continued to collect subs online but for the first time since the Covid pandemic we asked our Road Stewards to collect subs door to door.

For the 12 months to 31 December 2023 BSCRA revenues were £2,671. There was a surplus of £416. and the year ended with total net assets of just over £10,000.

Revenues of £2671 consisted of £815 collected in advance, £1792 collected in 2023 and £64 of donations and interest.

Membership numbers are based on the number of paid up members, but with the pause on subscription collections during the pandemic and a low profile push for payments in 2022 it is reasonable to use a membership number from an earlier year of approximately 2000 members.

Online payments portal

The online payments process using Square has been very successful. Over 1070 payments totalling over £7500 have been received. This means revenue has been received for several years into the future.

That said it is great to be in a position where we can potentially fund appropriate projects within the Neighbourhood Development Plan. There is a significant wish list of projects for the BSCRA area and these are summarised in Appendix 1 of the Plan titled “Our Community Projects”, alongside other projects for the wider geographical area covered by that plan. It is not suggested that BSCRA funds should be used to pay for all of these items, but your committee may decide that selected projects may warrant funding if other funding sources are not available.

One such project that has already been completed is the provision of a defibrillator in Belmont Village. This was provided through a matched funding scheme, so BSCRA paid £750 and a central organisation provided the balance of £750 and the defibrillator. Many thanks to BSCRA committee member Paul Lincoln, Michelle Schmitz from The Good Home and Glen Watkins from local electricians Watkins and Cole for making this happen. Such a significant investment from BSCRA would not have been possible without our Road Stewards, delivering newsletters, collecting subs and encouraging residents to pay online. So, a big thanks to all of our road stewards. As mentioned by PM in the most recent e-bulletin we do have a number of vacancies (details displayed to attendees). These are the roads where we are most keen to fill vacancies.

Election of Officers

PM reported that the current holders of the positions of Chairman, General Secretary, and Treasurer, namely himself, Tony Butler and Paul Arnold had agreed to stand for the coming year. There are no other nominations. All had been proposed by the Committee for the ensuing year.

The nominations were seconded and then approved unanimously on a show of hands.

Election of Executive Committee

The Executive Committee members were to be elected as a block. As reported above, all the committee have agreed to stand again for election. The members who are standing for election to the Committee for 2024-25 are: -

Lyonel Bell	Sesi Katakam
Margaret Bentley	Rashid Khan
Catherine Clarke	Christopher Noon
Paul Lincoln	Paul Sarfaty
Helen Rees	Arran Sutherland

As with the election of Officers, PM explained that all Committee Members had previously been proposed by the Committee. The nominations were seconded and then approved unanimously by a show of hands.

Election of Accounts Examiner

PA confirmed that Mrs. Alison Griffiths is willing to continue in the role of Accounts Examiner and explained how much he appreciated her role and help. Thank you, Alison.

The appointment was proposed by PA, seconded by Arran Sutherland and carried unanimously electing Alison as Accounts Examiner for the coming year.

This brought the formal motions and procedures to a close.

Members' Forum

PM introduced the guest speaker - Liam Ronan-Chlond – Head of Engagement and Social Value at Socius.

Liam explained that Socius has partnered with Aviva Capital Partners and landowner, London Borough of Sutton on a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a sustainable district for excellence in cancer research. Working closely with The Institute of Cancer Research, London, The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust, and Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust, the London Cancer Hub (LCH) will consist of a one million sq.ft. life sciences district on a five-hectare site. The shared vision is to build on the groundbreaking facilities already provided by the Institute for Cancer Research and Royal Marsden Hospital with a new ecosystem of labs, R&D and commercial facilities, that will attract researchers and scientists from around the world and accelerate the development of groundbreaking cancer treatments. The London Cancer Hub (LCH) will deliver major social and economic benefits, including 13,000 highly skilled jobs in health, science, education and construction, c.£1.2bn GVA to the UK economy, and £12m increase in business rates.

Liam went on to explain how the involvement of the local community was being sought via public consultation. Socius were very aware of the worries over traffic, transport links and parking and wished to reassure members that their fears were being considered.

PM thanked Liam for the presentation and was delighted that many concerns of members were being taken into account. PM was also concerned that the suggestion that retail outlets would be available at the LCH did not compete with existing retail areas eg Belmont High Street.

PM sought questions from the audience

Q. What are the short term intentions for the site – there is rubble to be cleared, fly tipping occurs and the former carpark requires grass to be cut. An architect who has been involved is not now responding. There are also concerns over the immediate water table.

A. All concerned wish to tidy up the site. LR-C will contact the council with whom responsibility still rests. There are also out of date hoardings that need to be replaced.

Q. It remains difficult to understand how the 000's of people who will be attending the site can be accommodated transport wise.

A. Aviva and Socius are aware the concerns and are spending a great deal of time considering solutions also involving Surrey CCC and the government.

PM added that parking was one of the major concerns. Only 65% of RMH visitors come from London – this is likely to be replicated at the LCH, where will these people park?

A. It is realised that this is the top priority and another good reason to encourage local recruitment.

Cllr Hicks noted that TfL preferred walking or cycling to car transport but this preference is not realistic. Public transport from the south is virtually non-existent.

PM noted that a Park and Ride near Banstead Railway Station had been suggested but a viable site had not been identified.

Q. How many shift workers might there be. What is planned re safety of movement?

A. No details are held but the implications are being considered.

Q. There will be added pressure on rental properties and accommodation. What provisions have been made?

A. Yes, this is apparent. Again, recruitment of local workers will be helpful.

Q. Are there any other international centres that can compete with Oxford, Cambridge etc?

A. We already have a world class institution in the Cancer Research Centre.

Q. What sort of research will be undertaken?

A. A range of research will be undertaken but not animal research.

PM thanked Liam for his helpful presentation and hoped that we will see the concerns expressed being addressed at all points.

Updates on other initiatives in BSCRA area

PM gave the following updates:

The new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (SECH) for Belmont.

Early stage plans should be available in June.

Belmont Station

Plans are agreed to double the frequency of trains to 4 per hour but twin tracking will not be put in place. Instead trains are to be turned at Belmont Station. A four train per hour service is planned to commence in May 2026. Proposals are being developed to improve the pedestrian route from the station to the London Cancer Hub.

Planning Applications notifications

PM explained that the Council will not, in future, notify residents of planning applications close to their properties with a personal letter. To be notified, residents must register with the Council's planning portal (which is not a simple process). BSCRA will endeavour to notify members who are on the BSCRA email distribution list of any applications relating to nearby properties.

20mph speed limit for South Cheam

PM displayed evidence provided by the Council of speeds in the area. This showed that the key areas where vehicles exceeded the speed limit were:

- Northern end of Sandy Lane
- West Drive
- Northey Avenue
- Burdon Lane & Manor Road (northbound rat run)

The recent public consultation carried out by the Council indicated that a significant majority of residents did not want a 20mph limit implemented. Of the 541 responses received, 81% objected to the 20mph proposal for the whole of South Cheam. Instead residents felt that 30mph enforcement would be better than speed limit reduction

PM understands that the Council will not impose a 20mph limit without further discussion with local Councillors and residents.

A member noted the increase in car thefts from drives in the area and recommended the use of steering wheel locks.

PM concluded the meeting by thanking all attendees for their presence.

TB noted that PM continued to work tirelessly for the Association and its members and a show of appreciation was given.

PM advised the meeting that the 2024 AGM would be held on Wednesday 14th May, 2025.

Minutes prepared by TB 31.05.2024