



**BELMONT & SOUTH CHEAM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**  
**Minutes of 52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on**  
**Wednesday 17th May 2023 held at St Andrew's Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam.**

Present at the meeting were 70 attendees, including 9 members of the BSCRA Executive Committee and Councillors Eric Allen, David Hicks, Jane Pascoe and Tony Shields. Paul Scully MP. Invited guest - Trudy Richards from the Trading Standards Team of the London Borough of Sutton.

**Introduction and welcome by the Chair – Mr. Peter Matthey**

PM welcomed everyone to this the 52nd AGM of the Association – the first “in person” meeting since 2019. PM asked how many attendees didn't attend the last AGM on Zoom – about 12. Only 2 attendees did not receive PM's eBulletins – details obtained. There was an overwhelming majority in support of “in person” meetings for the future.

PM thanked the members of St Andrew's Church for permitting us to use the premises and gave a brief background of the church and it's architect.

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

PM welcomed the guest speaker for the evening - Trudy Richards from the Trading Standards Team of the London Borough of Sutton.

**Annual Report by the Chair**

This was the 17<sup>th</sup> year with PM as Chairman who reported as follows:-

“Most members will be aware 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. Much of the information in these bulletins comes from other members although we do moderate and hopefully add value to some suggestions. We 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 I chair the combined Cheam and Belmont Safer Neighbourhood Team's Ward Panels. We are regularly consulted by the Council for our views. I am 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.

The COVID pandemic has been an interesting period for us as we have endeavoured to use our contacts with the local community i.e. you! to spread messages from the NHS and to try to combat loneliness at times when people were no mixing.

During this period, we did not ask our Road Stewards to knock on doors to collect subscriptions as we felt this was not appropriate. But as a consequence, we are aware that we may not have made contact with the many new residents who have moved into our area.

We are endeavouring to remedy this and over the past month we have distributed nearly 5,000 of our Spring 2023 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 of you can help – please mention the Association to any new neighbours you may have 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 me know. Alternatively, if you would like help setting up a group for your road, again please contact me.

So, what are some of the big topics affecting our area:

#### 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 first revision of the Plan has gone out to consultation with notification to around 6,000 households. We are currently finalising the changes that this consultation has surfaced and hope to publish a final version on which there can be a community vote a little later this year.

The Plan contains planning policies relevant to our local area which once the document is approved by referendum will become Material Considerations in determining planning applications and appeals. 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 we are involved with:

#### Epsom & St Helier's new Hospital

From what we can see that the Epsom & St Helier Trust's plans for a new Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (SECH) in Belmont have stalled. At our last AGM in May 2022, Jacqueline Totterdell, the Chief Executive Epsom & St Helier University Hospitals & St George's University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust told us that the new hospital opening had slipped from 2025 to 2027. From what we can see even this date is now at risk.

Back in 2019, the government announced that it was building (or majorly enhancing) 40 new hospitals, with 8 being fast tracked. The proposed new hospital in Belmont was supposed to be one of these. The delay is claimed to be the need to standardise on the design of the buildings, but we suspect funding of the NHS remains an issue. Also, several of the hospitals on list have major structural problems which may cause them to be prioritised.

Transport is a key concern, particularly given other developments on the site for example the opening of the RMH's new Oaks Centre and we had been hoping that much needed transport improvements in the area would be funded by this major development.

#### London Cancer Hub

Proposed developments on the old Sutton Hospital site which is now owned by the London Borough of Sutton have dominated our list of concerns both in terms of what it will mean for its neighbours and its implications for transport. Having tried unsuccessfully to find a development partner for the site, the Council is now intending to sell the land on a long lease to a Life Sciences developer who they hope to select by the end of this year.

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.

#### Transport Strategy

For both of these initiatives we are pressing the Council to take the initiative and define an overall holistic transport strategy for the area rather than a number of piecemeal proposals, one for each planning application submitted.

We understand that this is what will happen if a firm stance is not taken and we have the support of our local Councillors to try and make this happen.

#### 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.

#### Parking

We continue to contribute to the Council's long running programme of parking changes and we hope to see a number of new parking changes implemented in both Cheam and Belmont in the next few months.

#### ULEZ

Another big subject impacting our area is the proposal by the Mayor of London to implement the Ultra Low Emissions Zone throughout most of London (but not South Cheam) on 29<sup>th</sup> August. While we have expressed our views on the proposal during the consultation carried out last year, little notice was taken of this (along with the views of many thousands of other Londoners). Our recommendation now is to make your objection known by signing the 2 petitions we have mentioned in our e-Bulletin 206.

**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.**

I am delighted that both of our current Treasurer and General Secretary have agreed to stand again.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank them personally for the hard work that they do for the Association.

Paul Arnold, has been our Treasurer now for 8 years and has really got the accounts under control. I am sure he will be very modest during his report, but I would like to thank him for the phenomenal amount of work he has done to rationalise our membership records and to capture details of electronic payments made via our website. We have also linked the subscriptions database with our email database so we can spot and resolve differences more easily.

Managing our cash is a vital role, without which we cannot run meetings like this, so my great personal thanks to Paul for what he has done so far and for agreeing to stand for another year.

I would also like to thank our General Secretary, Tony Butler for helping keep us organised and for arranging all of the logistics that keep the Association running smoothly. Tony's advice and guidance to me on a number of tricky issues has been invaluable – thank you.

I would also like to thank 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).

During the year Jon Jackson resigned from the committee as he has relocated to the South Coast. We will miss Jon who was always willing to volunteer to help put with the various events that we have run in the past, for example the Belmont Festival.

I am delighted that Paul Sarfaty, a resident of South Cheam has agreed to stand for election to our committee to fill the vacancy left by Jon. Paul has experience both with the NHS and with charities and I am sure his experience and knowledge will benefit our committee.

While on the subject of thank you's, I would also like to thank all of our Ward Councillors for their support during the year and with whom we could not make many things happen. Thank you all.

I would also like to thank you, our members, for your 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, I must thank my wife Helen for her patience and endurance of the time I spend on Association business. Thank you all."

### **Treasurer's Report (Paul Arnold)**

PA explained that he would cover the following areas in this update.

- The 12 month financial period ending 31 December 2022.
- An update on the success of online payments portal
- Thank colleagues for their support.
- Proceed to the election of officers and our independent examiner.

12 month financial period ending 31 December 2022.

"In 2022 we once again asked for payment of subscriptions although this was only via our newsletters and e-bulletins. During 2022 we did not ask our Road Stewards to knock on doors, encourage people to pay online or collect subscriptions. However, with the roll forward of payments received in advance and the increase of our annual subscription to £2 our income comfortably exceeded our expenditure.

For the 12 months to 31 December 2022 BSCRA had a surplus of £672, and overall, our total net assets remain over £9,700.

Our 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 we believe it is reasonable to use a membership number from an earlier year of approximately 2300 members. Our e-bulletins also go to around 2100 members plus another 200 are sent to interested parties / neighbouring Residents' Associations.

In March 2022 we introduced an online subscription payment process. This was in response to road steward feedback about not finding residents at home, residents not answering doors even when at home and residents no longer using cash. Since we launched this in March 2022 over 700 payments totalling over £4,600 have been received via our online payment portal from Square. In November 2022 Square made significant changes to the charging model which meant that subscriptions for 1 year costing £2 were no longer deemed cost effective by your committee and we withdrew the little used 2 and 4 year subscription options at the same time. Basically a 1 year payment of £2 that used to cost us 2% or 4 pence was from last November going to cost us 14% or 28 pence.

With the increased subscription in 2022 and more payments being received in advance we are of building up funds that mean 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 Chapter 4.2 titled "Our Community Projects", alongside other projects for the wider geographical area covered by that plan. We are not suggesting that BSCRA funds should be used to pay for all of these items, but your committee may decide that selected projects warrant funding if other funding sources are not available.

Before we move to the election of officers I want to say thanks to a few people:

1. A huge thanks to our road stewards. We have asked you to do a lot recently. Delivering the AGM flyers, encouraging people to pay online or collect cash from them and keep us up to date on resident changes and email addresses. I do not underestimate how time consuming this is. My wife, Anne, is a Road Steward for several roads close to where we live.

2. Finally a thanks to Alison Griffiths for being our Independent Examiner.

PA then handed back to PM for the Election of Officers and Committee saying "Peter has kindly agreed to stand again for election as Chairman. I am sure we all appreciate what Peter does, and simply the amount of time he devotes to your Residents' Association. What you may not always see is Peter's knowledge of planning rules, how to obtain funds from various sources and his knowledge of the local area is immense".

### **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.

Election of Chairman

PA seconded the nomination of Peter Matthey as Chairman for the coming year. Vote carried unanimously.

Election of Treasurer

Margaret Bentley seconded the nomination of Paul Arnold as Treasurer for the coming year. Vote carried unanimously.

Election of general Secretary

Jim McAllister seconded the nomination of Tony Butler as General secretary for the coming year. Vote carried unanimously.

### **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 2023-24 are: -

Lyonel Bell	Sesi Katakam
Margaret Bentley	Rashid Khan
Catherine Clarke	Christopher Noon
Paul Lincoln	Paul Sarfaty
David Riley	Arran Sutherland
	Phil Vennard

As with the election of Officers, PM explained that as the meeting was held via Zoom all Committee Members had previously been proposed and seconded and therefore he would simply request members to vote to re-elect them en bloc. The vote was carried with a substantial majority with no votes against.

### **Election of Accounts Examiner**

PA confirmed that Mrs. Alison Griffiths is willing to continue in the role of Accounts Examiner. PA values Alison's role and independence. It is not just him saying this is what our financial position is but a level of assurance that the accounts have been independently reviewed and agreed. Alison was unanimously elected as Accounts Examiner for the coming year.

PM advised the meeting that the 2024 AGM would be held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2024.

### **This brought the formal motions and procedures to a close.**

PM went on to introduce the guest speaker.

Trudy Richards, Trading Standards, Kingston and Sutton Shared Environment Service

PM observed:

- You are twice as likely to fall victim to fraud than any other type of crime.
- The internet is the delivery channel for 84% of identity fraud in the UK.
- More than 5m people a year fall victim to scams.
- Only 5% of scams are reported.

Trudy will be giving advice and handing out Scam packs for:

- Scams and Doorstep Crime
- Tips on how to spot and stop scams and how to help consumers tackle them.
- Scammers are clever and all kinds of people from all walks of life get duped.
- Fraudsters can be very convincing so it's important to stay vigilant.

Trudy gave a helpful, informative and useful talk covering:-

The types of scam that are prevalent

The cost to the general public of scams

The means scammers use to gain the confidence of targets

The methods of verifying doubtful calls

Help that is available from Trading Standards

Trudy explained that no-one should be worried about asking for I/D or other confirmation from cold callers. Always hang up and check any number that is given before responding. NEVER give work to "passing tradesmen" without professional advice. (Copies of slide show presentation available from TB).

PM thanked Trudy for her attendance and very helpful words of advice and wisdom.

PM invited Paul Scully MP to address the meeting on items of interest

### **Fraud**

On the subject of scams etc PS mentioned he is the Bill Minister responsible for the Government's Fraud Bill aimed at protecting children and protecting against fraud.

A new Fraud Squad is being set up and Banks are being asked to slow down payments that are of concern. The Government also intends to work with phone companies over "cold calls" and "cold texts".

### **New Acute Hospital**

£75m has been injected into St Helier in recent years and investment continues.

An announcement is expected within 7 days concerning the new acute hospital. PS expects approval of the business case so that planning permission may be sought. Modular building techniques are being investigated to reduce build costs.

PM again expressed his concern that agreement has to be reached across 40 hospitals. His advice was to build the first 8 and then look at the remaining 32

NB Subsequent to the meeting it was announced that the Sutton Acute Hospital would be built but, probably, not before 2030.

### **ULEZ**

PS noted that the proposed ULEZ extension affects lower income earners, smaller businesses and smaller charities most. The scrappage scheme is set too low. People who live outside the London Boroughs but who will be affected by ULEZ have no voice or say.

Current proposals opposing the extension include

- a) Judicial Review to see if the proposals are legal
- b) Review of the GLA Act to see if the mayor has the power to act in this way
- c) Reviewing the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill to ascertain any conflict with the proposals

PS Advised the meeting that the following morning he would formally be launching his bid to be elected Mayor of London in May 2024.

PM concluded the meeting by thanking PS for his insights and all attendees for their presence. Feedback on the meeting would be welcomed.

Minutes prepared by TB 05.05.2023