

MINUTES

South Woodford Society AGM and Neighbourhood Plan Update 28/02/2024 – Salvation Army Hall

Committee Members present: Pearl Arbenser-Simmonds (Co-chair), Rena Pathak (Vice-chair), Andy Pike (Treasurer), Elaine Atkins (Secretary), Sue Brown, Alice Bound, Patricia Darvell and Suzanne Nolan.

Attendees: There were 23 attendees, including the Committee members. The meeting was quorate (over 4 attendees).

1. Welcome and Apologies

Pearl welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies: Louise Burgess (Co-chair), Cllr Rosa Gomez, Cllr Joe Hehir, Linda Highton, Cllr Guy Williams.

2. Minutes of previous AGM & matters arising

Notes of the last meeting were agreed as accurate. No matters arising.

3. Presentation and adoption of Accounts

Andy presented the accounts for the 12-month period ending 31 December 2023. Those present voted to adopt the accounts.

4. Presentation of Annual Report

Pearl read out highlights of the Annual Report and the report was adopted.

The Annual Report and Accounts will be available on the South Woodford Society website.

5. Adoption of Constitution

The 2018 version and the proposed 2024 version of the Constitution had been circulated prior to the meeting, with general explanation of changes made. No queries or comments had been received.

The 2024 Constitution was adopted.

6. Election of Committee Members

Faizul Hoque (previous Treasurer) had stepped down during 2023 and Andy Pike had been appointed as Treasurer. Patricia Darvell was stepping down at the AGM after many years on the Committee. Both Patricia and Faizul were thanked for all their hard work. All current committee members introduced themselves then stood down. No other nominations had been received.

Pearl Arbenser-Simmonds, Elaine Atkins, Alice Bound, Louise Burgess, Sue Brown, Suzanne Nolan, Rena Pathak and Andy Pike were elected en bloc as committee members for the coming year.

It was explained that additional members can be co-opted throughout the year and that the officers of the Society are voted in at the first Committee Meeting after the AGM.

The previous committee members were thanked for their contribution during the preceding year.

7. Current initiatives and looking forward

This had been covered within the Annual Report presentation.

We continue to support the South Woodford Community Market on the third Sunday of the month and are aiming to encourage local start-ups and entrepreneurs to take a stall to increase the community character.

We shall also continue with our annual events, including the 'Christmas Light Up' and a Summer Market/street party, hoping to close the road again for the latter and for future Summer Markets.

The South Woodford Business Forum continues to grow and is coordinated by Elaine and Rena.

We liaise with our local councillors, the London Borough of Redbridge (LBR) officers and other local community and faith groups, as well as having a presence on the Churchfields and South Woodford Ward Panels, where we meet with our local Safer Neighbourhood Police Teams and Neighbourhood Watch.

We have adopted several green spaces and hold regular garden sessions at 'Eastwood Green' (by the George Lane roundabout), the Community Orchard (corner of Mulberry Way and Primrose Road) and 'Bell Green' (opposite the 'Railway Bell'). Benches are now installed in Eastwood Green and additional seating will soon be installed in the Orchard.

We collaborate with the South Woodford Gardeners who look after the gardens in the central reservation in George Lane, the raised beds on the bridge over the A406 and the strip of garden outside Regency Court in the High Road. Some rail planters are also looked after by both groups.

We hold regular litter picks and support the successful Repair Café, in collaboration with St Mary's Church, and the LBR. The next one is planned for Saturday, 20th April.

We are planning to hold our first 'Blossom Day' in the Orchard on Sunday, 21 April, but the content of the day is still to be confirmed.

The calendar with dates for all future events will be available on the website.

We continue to apply for funding for our various projects and welcome new volunteers to help with all aspects of the Society's work.

8. Update on Neighbourhood Plan/Design Code

Pearl had provided a summary of the progress with the Neighbourhood Plan (NP)/Design Code within the Annual Report.

Further funding has been received from the Department of levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to finalise our draft design in a digital format. We will continue to engage with the community.

The website will soon be overhauled so that all aspects of the Society (community, Neighbourhood Plan, Design Code and Business Forum) will all be in one place.

We shall soon be moving to Phase 3, comprising publicity and consultation, the submission of the draft plan to LBR, independent examination, a public referendum and formal adoption.

An attendee expressed concerns at the additional traffic that would be associated with development of the two sites, the Station Estate and the Station car park and asked if that has been considered. Pearl answered that this would certainly be taken into account when preparing the draft plan. She also reassured the meeting that there would be more opportunities for commenting on the Plan.

Another attendee expressed concerns about the provision of parking spaces if the car park was going to be developed, especially for people with limited mobility. Pearl said that there would be car parking provision available but that she did not have precise details at present.

A further attendee observed that an advantage of South Woodford was the convenient bus routes passing through the centre and she wondered if these would be maintained if there were plans for pedestrianisation. Pearl said that there were no immediate plans for pedestrianisation and she reiterated that such concerns would be taken into account.

An update was requested on the previous plan to create a quiet zone in the area between the tube station and Hermon Hill, along with the introduction of a one-way system for buses. Those who had attended a meeting about this proposal recounted that there had not been adequate consultation at the time and that it had been shelved for now.

9. Any Other Business

A vote of thanks was expressed for all those who had been involved in restoring the Post Office to George Lane. Efforts are ongoing to have a more centrally placed postbox installed in George Lane.

Attendees were thanked for coming to the meeting and the AGM was concluded.

Date of the next Annual General Meeting: To be confirmed.