

Albert Square and St Stephens Association

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting of the Association
held at St Stephen's Church
on
Tuesday, 2nd October, 2024 at 7.45pm**

Officers Present

Paul Mawdsley (Hon. Chair)
Matthew Leopold (Hon. Secretary)

Members Present

There were 21 Members of the Association present

Guests Present

Ros Halifax (FARA and St Stephen's Church)
Cllr Holland (left at 8.30pm)

1. Welcome

1.1. Paul Mawdsley welcomed attendees and, in his introduction to Cllr Holland, briefly outlined the three key concerns he put to the Councillor before the meeting: traffic calming on St Stephen's Terrace, the escalating crime - particularly at the Co-Op and the implications of the move to fortnightly bin collection.

2. Apologies for absence

2.1. Apologies for absence were received from Officers: Nick Harwood

2.2. Apologies for absence from Committee Members: Viv Aylmer, Ilya Kondratiev

2.3. Apologies for absence from Members: Neil Sanders, Susan Bewley.

2.4. Apologies for Officers and Committee Members accepted. Apologies for Members not required, but were noted with thanks.

3. Minutes of AGM on 6th June 2023

3.1. As per Item AGM06062023- 3.2 the minutes of the AGM were published following ratification at the following committee meeting. As such, approval of the minutes was not required.

3.2. It was noted that when Cllr Costa took questions from members, they were minuted. PM and ML followed up on all actions raised. The responses received were posted verbatim to the ASSA website.

4. Special Business - Address and Q&A with Cllr Holland

4.1. PH welcomed Cllr Holland and thanked her for joining the meeting.

4.2. The Cllr spoke to notes and covered a few general topics before addressing the points raised by PM in his introduction.

4.3. She urged attendees to read the newly published Borough plan that sets out how Lambeth will become a fair and equitable borough by 2030, through partnership with its residents. She highlighted the three key pillars:

- Making Lambeth neighbourhoods fit for the future
- Making Lambeth one of the safest boroughs in London

ACTION

■ Making Lambeth a place everyone can call home.

4.4. The Cllr spoke to the council's budget, predicting a £30m in-year deficit. She explained that the lack of funding from central government had impacted all councils and that they were not expecting additional funding from the new Government. She noted that the main expenditure is housing. She stated that 1:30 people in Lambeth are homeless and London's councils are spending a total of £90m a month housing the homeless. Adult and child social care was another substantial cost.

4.5. Cllr Holland reported that the Tate Library would be getting a refurbishment and a new toilet in the coming months.

4.6. The Cllr addressed the fortnightly waste collections. She explained that the intention was to increase recycling across the borough, as it is cheaper to dispose of recycling than normal waste. She explained how our household waste is incinerated and used to create electricity. She empathised with our concerns about the increase in litter and agreed it needed to improve. She urged all ASSA residents to email specific examples to her, Cllr Issa Issa and Cllr Costa, so they could address specific examples with the supplier when reviewing the contract. The Cllr acknowledged that she did not feel the supplier's performance was good enough at the moment.

4.7. Traffic calming of St Stephen's Terrace. The Cllr suggested that the works to St Stephen's Terrace would be started in January. She was surprised to hear that there had been no community consultation as yet. She promised to speak to her team and get a clear timetable for the consultation and start of the works. She thanked the residents for their patience and understanding on this issue.

4.8. Crime and the Co-Op. The Cllr shared residents' concerns about rising crime. She noted that the number of ward officers has increased over recent months, which has already made a difference. She explained that the council were concerned that the Co-Op may be breaching their licence, but cannot do a licence review, unless it is formally brought to them by a statutory service (the police). She urged ASSA to continually raise the issue with the police to push for a licence review. PM noted that we would continue to do so.

4.9. The Councillor took questions and comments from the floor

4.10. Bin operators are careless and throw food bins, breaking them and therefore replacements have to be arranged, wasting resources. Cllr Holland urged residents to email examples like this (with photos) to our Councillors.

4.11. It was suggested that the council should plant more fruit trees, or blackcurrant bushes - providing free fruit and educating children on the source of food. Cllr Holland noted that we were in a flood risk area, so the types of trees and bushes chosen were often to meet this specific need. However, she welcomed the comment and will speak to her tree team and share the response.

4.12. A progress report on the South Lambeth estate was requested. Cllr Holland noted that phase 1 is complete and that the council are engaging with residents in preparation for phase 2. The Councillor promised to share updated timelines.

4.13. It was noted that the weeds are terrible in the area and across the Borough, causing damage to pavements and blocking views. The Cllr explained that the council had previously used glyphosate, but a decision was made several years ago to stop using weed killer. She explained that there was insufficient budget to pay for the labour required to mitigate the impact of not using weedkiller. She said that the primary solution is for local volunteers to weed their area. However, the Cllr agreed to speak to her team and report back on how things can be improved.

4.14. Q - Are councils given a limit on council tax increases? The Cllr explained that there is governance around this and if the council wishes to raise taxes above a certain threshold, a

Cllr Holland

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referendum must be called. In her view, no one would vote to pay more tax and the cost of running a referendum meant it was not a route she was considering.

4.15. Residents on Aldebert Terrace do not have council bins and are required to put their recycling into clear plastic bags. Residents complained that they were no longer getting a delivery of bin bags - leading to distress and littering. The Cllr emphasised, and explained she has the same issue at her home. She has raised this as an inquiry and will feedback.

Cllr Holland

4.16. A resident complained that the waste contractor had taken their privately owned bins and were refusing to return them. The Cllr said she was aware of the issue and would continue to pursue resolution.

4.17. The state of the communal bins on Albert Square was raised. Residents passed on thanks to Cllr Costa as, whenever fly-tipping or litter issues were flagged to him, he ensured prompt resolution. However, the issue is systemic and no long term solution has been proposed. Cllr Holland thanked residents for the feedback on Cllr Costa and promised to speak to him and feedback on what might be possible.

Cllr Holland

4.18. Concerns were raised about the escalation of drug dealing and antisocial behaviour on Albert Square (the roads around the square, not inside the square). More help needed on a systemic solution. The Cllr explained that drugs are a big and growing issue in the area. It is a police issue, but they are resource stretched. The Council has outreach workers who are working to reduce drugs, but again, they have limited resources. She said she would speak to her team and the Councillors and come back with thoughts. Otherwise, she urged residents to call the police if they see a crime being committed and for ASSA to flag concerns at Safer Neighbourhood meetings.

Cllr Holland PM & LP

4.19. It was reported that the number of mopeds (mostly delivery drivers) going on footpaths at Albert Square to avoid the NPR is increasing. Additionally, the number of vans and cars that obscure their number plates before driving through is increasing. The Cllr offered to speak to Cllr Costa to understand the issue in more detail and report back.

Cllr Holland

4.20. A resident thanked the council for their tree planting programme. It was noted by several residents that it was an impressive programme and the best that had been seen in many years.

4.21. The Cllr was asked if there was a plan indicating the locations of new trees in our area, and if there would be consultation on the types of tree and their locations. The Cllr was unsure if there would be a consultation, but will investigate and feedback. It was suggested that the tree officer might be willing to engage with the community and discuss ideas. Again, the Cllr will come back to us on this.

Cllr Holland

4.22. It was noted that there are a lot of uneven pavements due to existing trees, and a number of trees in dire need of pruning or coppicing. The Cllr promised to find out what the local plan was and report back.

Cllr Holland

4.23. The Cllr ended her forum by thanking residents for their support and community volunteering. She asked for her email address to be included in the minutes so that residents could contact her directly. cholland@lambeth.gov.uk

5. Chairman's report

5.1. PM spoke to his report.

5.2. The attendees passed their condolences to Ben Leapman on the passing of his father Michael, one of the longest-serving residents of the ASSA area.

5.3. ML gave a brief communications update. He explained the intention to move the WhatsApp Group to a WhatsApp Community - creating new sub-groups to manage chatter. He asked if there was any concern from residents in doing this. The move was enthusiastically supported.

6. Adoption of new ASSA constitution

- 6.1. ML explained that the current constitution dates from 2003 and is no longer reflective of society, ASSA or our intentions. As such, following last year's AGM, the constitution had been updated. The Committee has reviewed it and agreed to put it forward to residents for adoption.
- 6.2. As per the constitution, the draft had been circulated by email and WhatsApp to residents in advance of the meeting.
- 6.3. Broadly, the new constitution includes the following broad changes:

- The language and format has been updated to make it simpler to read and understand.
- The role of the Committee and its Officers has been clarified.
- The non-political aims of ASSA have been made explicit.
- The process to appoint Officers to ASSA has been simplified. The current constitution requires Officers to be directly elected at the AGM. There is no provision for the appointment of an interim Officer. It is proposed that the election of committee members be held at the AGM and subsequently, the appointment of Officers be made by the elected committee.
- We have included the ability for the Committee to co-opt new members on an 'acting' basis, pending election at the next AGM.

- 6.4. Matthew Leopold proposed the new constitution be adopted. Elizabeth Gibson seconded. Carried Nem Con.

7. Hon Treasurer's Report

- 7.1. In the absence of NH, PM spoke to the accounts.

5. Election of the Committee

- 5.1. Under the new constitution, PM continues as Chair until the next ASSA Committee meeting, when he will either be reappointed or a new Chair proposed.
- 5.2. The new Committee were elected: Paul Mawdsley, Matthew Leopold, Viv Aylmer, Ilya Kondratiev, Darshak Shah, Nick Harwood, Sundiatu Dixon-Fyle, Charles Glanville, Elizabeth Gibson and Blake Klein.

6. Any other business

- 6.1. Elizabeth Gibson asked if there might be a suitable way to collate local tradespeople contact details. Ros, from FARA, suggested that the Resident Associations could work together rather than duplicate efforts. It was agreed to raise this at the next ASSA Committee meeting.
- 6.2. It was flagged that the "All's well that ends well" banner is still hanging up outside the Co-Op. Blake said he would remove it shortly.

The meeting ended at 8.45pm.

Attendees were invited to stay for drinks.

ML

BK