

Bedford Park Society

Minutes of the 53rd Annual General Meeting of the Bedford Park Society held in St. Michael and All Angels Church on Wednesday 17 May 2017

The President, Nigel Woolner, opened the meeting of the 53rd AGM of the Society. He welcomed the Bedford Park Community Group joining forces with the Society and that there were now three members on the Society's Executive Committee. He also paid tribute to the contribution by Peter Eversden to his work for the Society over 19 years. Helen Jameson then took the Chair.

- 1 Apologies for absence: Michael and Linda Ambrose, Louise Brown, Chris Carrington, Di Coia, Kevin Cummings, Torin and Carol Douglas, Johanna and Mathew Farrer, Louise Grattan, Robert Gurd, Sarah Haimendorf, Ted Holloway, David and Sarah Houston, Hugh and Sue Johnson, Lynne Metherall, Duncan Ouseley, Felicity Palmer, Vanessa Pearce, Sir Michael Pownall, Victoria Provis, Caroline Villiers and Alan and Harriet Weavis,
- 2 Minutes of the 2016 AGM: the minutes were approved.
- 3 Annual Report: Helen Jameson reported that considerable time had been spent on the way in which the Society worked and communicated with its members. There was a new website, the introduction of regular e-news, improvement in the ways in which the Society could be contacted and the embedding of the new working groups structure, which makes it easier for additional members to become involved in the work of the Society. The Constitution was in the process of amendment to bring it into line with modern practice which might necessitate a special general meeting later in the year.

Several members of the Bedford Park Community Group had worked with the Society during the year which has made it possible for both organisations to join forces to secure a single voice for Bedford Park. They had put in a huge amount of effort across all aspects of work and the Society was very grateful for their contribution. This single voice has been used to improve engagement with Ealing and Hounslow about trees, street lighting, street signage, waste and recycling, the state of the pavements and street cleaning.

The issue of the third runway at Heathrow was likely to be detrimental to members' quality of life and to result in the degradation of buildings. Members had therefore been alerted to the government's consultation on its Airports National Policy Statement and had provided them with information to help oppose the proposal if they wish to do so.

The planning information on the website had been improved. The Planning Committee had considered 75 applications during the year. A Planning Steering Group had been established to support the Planning Committee by providing a strategic overview on the issues relating to planning legislation and conservation in Bedford Park in the context of its unique heritage and aspirations of today's residents. The Society was grateful to Sir Donald Insall for agreeing to chair the Group.

A number of events for members were held during the year, organised by the Society's Events and Merchandise Committee.

There were 32 road representatives providing a link between residents and the Society. The Society now provided more frequent opportunities for them to meet as a group and to discuss and feedback issues that residents were raising. It was desirable to increase the membership of the Society which stood at 544 and to identify those who can help with particular issues.

For the coming year the Society was planning a drive to increase membership, to do more to provide information about the architectural heritage of Bedford Park including the forthcoming 50th Anniversary Exhibition by David Budworth MBE, the Society's Historical Adviser, and to prioritise time and effort on issues which were considered most important.

Particular thanks were due to Peter Eversden for his unstinting service over 19 years as the Society's Chair, for the time and commitment he had made to Bedford Park and its community, and for the many significant achievements of the Society under his leadership.

In answers to questions, it was confirmed that having worked together for some time the Bedford Park Community Group and the Society had now joined forces and the Community Group had been formally dissolved. The potential membership for the wider Bedford Park area was approximately 2,500 households.

- 4 Hon. Treasurer's Report: Simon Baddeley reported that in the year under review Income of the Society during 2016 amounted to £8,965. Expenditure had been £6,705 giving a surplus on ordinary activities of £2,260. During the year a transfer of £2,500 was made from the Society's Revenue Reserve to the Strategic Reserve, bringing the Strategic Reserve to £20,000. The Society held this Strategic Reserve in order to be able to deal with any exceptional expenditure which might be needed to protect the architectural heritage and amenities of Bedford Park, for example the legal or consultant costs of contesting a particular scheme. It was believed this was an appropriate level, taking account of the estimated likely costs, the funds similar organisations had set aside and the value of the Society's total assets.

Over a period of years the Society has accumulated a stock of unsold items. During the year a full review was conducted of these items and it was concluded that a provision of £9,750 should be made to write down the value of this stock to a more realistic value, taking into account the quantity of each of the items sold in the past few years. This related largely to three publications about Bedford Park of which there were still large quantities. As a result of the transfer to the Strategic Reserve and the stock write off, there was a reduction in the Society's revenue reserves of £9,990.

The Society also held £15,037 in the Tom Greeves Fund, which arose from a legacy given by Tom Greeves to be used to support and promote one-off projects for the benefit of Bedford Park and the surrounding area. Income of £618 was earned during the year on the Fund assets, which were held by the Charities Aid Foundation. A contribution of £500 from this Fund was to be given in connection with the mural to be installed under the Turnham Green tube station bridge but this falls in the 2017 accounts.

The Society had at the end of 2016 net assets of £47,721. These comprised the strategic fund of £20,000, the Tom Greeves Fund of £15,037 and the general revenue reserve of £12,684.

The accounts had been reviewed by the Society's independent accountant. Her review did not constitute a full audit, which is not required under charities law for a charity of the Society's size.

Dick van den Broek congratulated the Society on the upgrading of the website and suggested that the £1,000 cost of the up-grade should be shown as a separate item. The Treasurer said that he preferred not to exclude this cost from the normal activities of the Society particularly as the cost was likely to be repeated in connection with further improvements. The Treasurer also confirmed that it was not planned to increase the Strategic Reserve above £20,000.

- 5 Adoption of accounts: The adoption of the Hon. Treasurer's report was proposed by Charles Henderson and seconded by Nick Haimendorf and passed unanimously.
- 6 Appointment of independent accountant: the Hon. Treasurer paid tribute to the help received from Caroline Roughton. Her reappointment was proposed by Carol Woolner and seconded by Nick Haimendorf and passed unanimously.
- 7 Elections to the Executive Committee: Hilary Atherton, Simon Baddeley, Kate Bowes, Helen Jameson, Wendy Williams and Carol Woolner had been nominated. Their election was proposed by Justin Morris-Wyatt and seconded by Bridget Asprey and passed unanimously.
- 8 Questions and answers: Nick Asprey asked whether there was still more than one organisation representing Bedford Park. Hilary Atherton explained that the Community Group had joined forces with the Society and that there was therefore only one organisation representing Bedford Park. Following a question about what happened to the profit made on Green Days it was explained that it was shared with the Church; this year the amount given to the Church was £175. A further question concerned the writing-down of the stock to £6,000. It was explained that this sum was an estimate of what would be sold within the next 3 or 4 years. Dick van den Broek asked why the reserve had not been increased to £20,000 over a longer period. This, it was explained, followed the desire to bring this figure up to the maximum amount the Executive Committee considered necessary to be held in this fund at the same time as writing down the unsold stock. There was concern that more was not being spent on opposing the third runway at Heathrow. Patrick Grattan commented favourably on the number of people now involved with the work of the Society. Justin Morris-Wyatt asked that members let him or Margaret Kirkham know if they would open their gardens during the Festival. Johanna Farrer ask about any sightings of hedgehogs and expressed the need to encourage them. This also raised the issue of foxes and Sue Ouseley pointed out there were legal means of getting rid of them if there was a problem. These issues would be referred to the Society's Infrastructure Committee.