

Bedford Park Society

Minutes of the 55th Annual General Meeting of the Bedford Park Society held in St. Albans Church on Thursday 9 May 2019

The President, Nigel Woolner, opened the meeting of the 55th AGM of the Society. He was full of admiration for the amount of work undertaken by the Society's committees in the past year and he was confident that the challenges ahead would be effectively tackled. He then handed over the meeting to the Chair, Helen Jameson.

In attendance: 45 members of the Society.

1 Apologies: Sheena Abbott-Davies, Ruth Clarke, Kevin Cummings, Johanna Farrer, Patrick Grattan, Robert Gurd, Mr and Mrs Paul Hopper, Sir Donald Insall, Eileen and Gerald McGregor, Justin Morris-Wyatt, Alice Reid, David and Alison Watson, Elisabeth Whittaker and Michael Wilson.

2 Approval of the minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting

The Executive Committee had approved the minutes of the 2018 AGM and proposed the motion for the members to approve those minutes. The members present approved the minutes unanimously.

3 The Chair's Annual Review and Questions

The Chair highlighted some of the Society's achievements in the past year and a selection of the issues which had been addressed. The proposed 3rd runway at Heathrow came to the fore this year and was quite rightly of major concern to the majority of members.

The membership of the Society increased again in 2018 to 604 and had risen further in first few months of the current year to 627. It was pleasing that some 70 members were volunteering with the Society working across the Society's whole programme of work.

The Chair thanked Hilary Atherton who was standing down from her various roles with the Society. Hilary had brought tremendous enthusiasm and energy to organising and inspiring the fantastic team of Road Reps and leading the Events Committee in staging so many successful and enjoyable events. Nick Cowell was welcomed to the role of Road Reps co-ordinator and Ruth Clarke as Interim Chair of the Events Committee. Members were thanked for responding on the Heathrow consultation and Ealing parking and other issues; the engagement of members in supporting the efforts of the Society was critical in making an impact.

The Chair acknowledged the contribution made by two members who had sadly died recently, David Budworth and Ted Holloway. Both David and Ted had made a tremendous contribution to the Society over many years, and they were a great loss to the Society.

Planning

The Society's work to protect and enhance the architectural heritage of Bedford Park remained at the centre of the Society's remit. There was concern about the lack of Conservation Officers who had been important in ensuring conservation issues were considered properly. Previously there were two specialists in Ealing, now none. There was concern that the Council might not take adequate account of the architectural heritage of Bedford Park when considering planning and listed building applications because there would not be any officers who were trained specifically in this field. The Council said it was training all case officers on conservation issues and would use external specialist help. The Society endeavoured to put pressure on Ealing to re-instate the conservation officer posts but recognised that in the current financial climate for local authorities this may be difficult. The Society's next step was to consult Heritage England to establish if it was a statutory requirement for a Council to have qualified conservation officers to deal with listed buildings in their borough. Continuing budget constraints emphasise Heritage England's warning that the onus for protection and conservation of architecturally important areas would increasingly fall on local organisations. The Society was very fortunate to have a strong expert team in the Planning Committee able to meet the considerable workload as well as the distinguished members of its Planning Steering Group who advise and act in support of the Society and Bedford Park.

Planning decisions rest exclusively with Ealing and Hounslow Councils. There were 64 applications in the year down from 84 last year; 50 were approved (78%), seven refused and seven withdrawn. 33 applications also required listed building consent. Five appeals were made, but only one allowed by the Inspector the others being upheld.

The Society was pleased that there had been an increase in pre-application questions and would encourage owners to contact its planning team if they had questions. There was guidance on the Society's website and residents were encouraged to make use of it.

The Society had taken legal advice to seek clarification of a point of principle related to the requirement for listed building consent on a particular application. Ealing subsequently required that the applicant make a Listed Building Consent Application. This application raised an important point of principle beyond the individual application and the Society was concerned to have clarity on this point.

Infrastructure and Environment

There had been a large volume of infrastructure matters some particularly crucial and complex which had taken time and effort. However, the Society had a strong Infrastructure Committee who tackled these issues admirably on behalf of members.

Ealing Parking

The Society has worked intensively to influence Ealing's plans for shared parking bays and raised again the need to clarify the policy for providing paper vouchers in special circumstances. It has also endeavoured to clarify the transfer of visitor parking to *PayByPhone*, which was causing confusion.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points

Moves by both Councils were welcomed to introduce electric vehicle charging points and Ealing has been lobbied to use heritage lampposts as in Hounslow and it seemed that the Society might succeed.

Dockless bike schemes

Dockless bikes had begun to appear in numbers in Bedford Park, especially around the "Welcome to Bedford Park" sign. Members were informed about surveys by the Councils and how to report concerns.

Trees, pavements and lighting

The Society has worked with both Councils on maintaining trees. Empty tree pits have been checked in Ealing and the Society had discussed requests for replacements with the Council and had reminded Hounslow about timely pruning and the contractual obligation to replace dead trees. Issues had been raised about problems of uneven pavements in Addison Grove and Rupert Road. Hounslow also agreed to redo horse chestnut pruning.

Cycle Superhighway

The Society was continuing to work with groups across Chiswick to ensure that the Cycle Superhighway was safe for all and promoted both cycling, walking and use of public transport within Chiswick and the Bedford Park area.

Heathrow

The Chair asked Raj Parkash, Chair of the Infrastructure Committee, to report on expansion proposals at Heathrow. He said that there was considerable confusion about the expansion proposals and also the recent legal challenges. These had not succeeded, the court deciding that the objections raised were not appropriate for their consideration. The next stage was the planning permission process and these objections could be raised again. All parties who lodged the appeals had indicated that they wished to continue their opposition in the courts and elsewhere and the Society would discuss with them the next steps. There would be a further consultation by Heathrow in June about the various proposals for expansion.

Heritage programme

The Chair resumed her report by referring to the Society's aim to reinforce its commitment to developing knowledge about and appreciation of Bedford Park with research, exhibitions, publications and talks. Oral histories were being collected to enrich the understanding of earlier times.

Log books

Consideration was being given to improving access to the growing body of information about Bedford Park and looking at how to update and build on the ground-breaking 2002 log books, possibly providing individualised information to a broader group of householders.

"Mainly About Bedford Park People" book

Copyright now resided with the Society and a team was working to include additional residents with a view to publication on demand.

Photographic project

Investment was being made in a photographic record of the architectural heritage with the aim to record and raise awareness of the rich detail of the Bedford Park buildings. Details of porches and stained glass had already been published in the Journal and website, and it was planned to extend this to other aspects of internal and external detail.

The Society's archive

The late David Budworth's archive was a tremendous resource, and the Society would be working out how it could continue to access this source of Bedford Park knowledge.

Events

This year the Society continued to innovate its traditional programme of events, organised and staged with enthusiasm by its energetic events team and with an additional Spring lecture. The 2018 Betjeman lecture was delivered by Colin Harrison, Senior Curator at the Ashmolean, about the Pissarros in Bedford Park, especially the life and work of Lucien Pissarro and his wife Esther Bensousan, and the beautiful books they produced in their studios at 62 Bath Road and Stamford Brook House and the 7 paintings produced by Camille Pissarro during his stay at 62 Bath Road. There would be a future programme of two talks a year, the Betjeman lecture in the autumn with links to the Society's heritage projects by focussing on the architects who created Bedford Park and the broader architectural context, and a Spring lecture with a broader than pure Bedford Park focus. Lloyd Grossman delivered the first of these lectures in early 2019 which was much enjoyed by the audience.

Winter Party

Another successful Winter Party was held for members. They were entertained by the talented students of the ArtsEd School with rousing renditions of numbers from their show 'Newsies'.

Green Days

These were a valued opportunity for the Society to be visible in the local community and to showcase its work and encourage new members. As in previous years a range of Bedford Park memorabilia was for sale.

Quiz Night

This year a new event was held, a Quiz Night, to offer another opportunity for members and potential members to get together.

Road Representative and Volunteers get together

Several meetings were held for Road Reps during the year to update them on issues and also a social evening for them and volunteers to get to know each other and help communication between the various committees and groups.

At the conclusion of the Chair's report there was a question about the number of planning applications granted by the councils after objections had been raised by the Society.

Carol Woolner explained that in many instances applications were modified in the light of the Society's comments and subsequently granted approval.

A further question concerned enforcement action. Carol Woolner explained that it was often difficult to get the Councils to take enforcement action but that the questioner might wish to supply her with further details of the case he had in mind.

4 Treasurer's Report, Questions and Adoption of the Accounts of the Society for the year ending 31 December 2018

The Treasurer, Simon Baddeley, said that the Society's surplus on ordinary activities in 2018 was £1,175. This was lower than the previous year. There were a number of reasons for this. Annual subscriptions, totalling £4,977, were £951 lower than in 2017. This was because the 2017 figure was inflated by subscriptions due in 2016 which were not collected until 2017 because of problems processing standing orders. The number of members at the end of 2018 was actually an increase over 2017. The level of donations fell by £1,350. Donations were unpredictable and depended to a large extent on the amount of filming in Bedford Park.

In 2017 there were more than the usual number of film productions located in Bedford Park. The Society began to build its photographic record of the architectural heritage of Bedford Park, which increased costs by around £600. The net income from events was £1,140 lower in 2018 than the previous year. This was partly because the Society held a particularly well attended lecture in 2017 which increased its net income to an unusual level that year. Two events were held in 2018 for which the Society's net income was nil, as explained in the notes to the accounts.

The Society maintained a Strategic Reserve of £20,000. The purpose of this reserve was to deal with any exceptional expenditure that might be needed to protect the architectural heritage and amenities of Bedford Park. The Executive Committee had reviewed this reserve and believed that it was adequate and appropriate at present.

The Society also held £14,121 of accumulated income from capital held by the Charities Aid Foundation and donated by Eleanor Greeves in memory of her late husband Tom Greeves. The purpose of this fund was the appreciation and preservation of Bedford Park, including historical and present day architectural and design matters. The Fund was administered by an Independent Advisory Committee and the accumulated income was therefore shown as a Restricted Fund on the Society's balance sheet.

As at the end of the year the net assets of the Society amounted to £50,443, comprising the Tom Greeves Bedford Park Society Fund of £14,121, the Strategic Reserve of £20,000, and the Revenue Reserve of £16,322.

The Treasurer thanked Caroline Roughton for her review of the Society's accounts. There were no questions to the Treasurer.

The Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2018 and the Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2018 were approved unanimously.

5 Approval of the appointment of Caroline Roughton as independent accountant of the Society

The appointment of Caroline Roughton was approved unanimously.

6 Election of members of the Executive Committee of the Society

Following proposal and seconding by paid up members of the Society, Ruth Clarke and Simon Hillyard were elected unanimously to the Executive Committee.

7 Conclusion of formal business

Martin Landy reminded those present that payments from film companies whilst filming in Bedford Park were useful in, for instance, restoring plaques and it would be helpful if members would let him know if filming was taking place so that he might approach the company for a contribution. There being no further questions the meeting was closed.