



## THE DULWICH SOCIETY

### MINUTES of the 60<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society held on 24 April 2023 at The Crown and Greyhound, 73 Dulwich Village, London, SE21 7BJ

Present: 48 members and two Southwark Councillors.

1. Introduction by the Chair and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Louise Wood, Michael Barnett, David Cianfarani, Julie Greer, Sarah Hammond, Laurie Johnstone, Rita Green, Peter Roseveare, Merrill Spencer, Harry Winter, Michael Colvin, Councillor Richard Leeming and Councillor Margy Newens (who were both at Council meetings. Margy Newens was able to attend the second half of the AGM).

The President, Kenneth Wolfe, welcomed everyone to the 2023 AGM and thanked the Officers, Sub-committee Chairs and the Independent Examiner for their endeavours over the year, which had increased the amenities in Dulwich and the benefits of membership. He gave particular thanks to Brian Green, who had stepped down as Journal Editor after 20 years and resigned from the Executive Committee. He felt sure Brian would continue to make a significant contribution to the work and achievements of the Society.

The Chair passed to James Thompson, who announced that the meeting had been duly called and was quorate. JT took the meeting through the agenda and said there would be 7 votes on a show of hands using voting slips (one had been issued per household) with two scrutineers.

2. Approve Minutes of the 59<sup>th</sup> AGM held on 9 May 2022 and Minutes of the Special General Meeting on 27 June 2022

JT said the Minutes of the 2022 AGM and the 2022 SGM had been approved by the Executive Committee, are available for inspection on the website and hard copies are available at the meeting.

The Minutes of the 59<sup>th</sup> AGM held on 9 May 2022 were approved by a show of hands:

For 22      Against 0      Abstentions 1

The Minutes of the SGM on 27 June 2022 were approved by a show of hands:

For 22      Against 1      Abstentions 1

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the AGM on 9 May 2022 and the Minutes of the SGM on 27 June 2022.

There were no matters arising.

#### 4. Chairman's Report and Review of the Year

The Chairman thanked the Executive Committee, Sub-committee members, volunteers, Independent Examiner and Webmaster for all their hard work during the year. He then presented a slideshow outlining some of the activities and achievements of the Society during the year, illustrated with photographs, some taken by Andrew Waugh.

The presentation included the following information:

- Mission statement
- Roles of the members of the Executive Committee
- Policy development. The Secretary reported that the Society reviewed the Investment Policy, the Privacy Policy and the Complaints Policy in 2022 and had developed a new Code of Conduct and Termination of Membership Procedure.
- Membership numbers have increased slightly over the year to almost 1,200. It is now possible to sign up and renew membership online. Members were encouraged to provide an email address to the Membership Secretary if they have not already done so in order to receive the eNews and other communications.
- Donations of between £100 and £5,000 have been made during the year towards a defibrillator in the Dulwich Village phone box, improvements to paths and trees in Sydenham Hill Wood and Dulwich Park and various memorial plaques, benches and information boards.
- Media and communications achievements
  - The Chair noted his thanks to Brian Green for his 20 years service as Journal Editor. Brian introduced colour and variety to the Journal and has written much of the copy. The Chair announced that in honour of Brian's most valued service, he would be awarded Honorary Life Membership of Dulwich Society. This announcement was met with prolonged applause from those present.
  - The new Journal Editors are Ian McInnes and Claire Richards
  - eNews continues to receive positive reviews
  - There are over 3000 followers on the Society's Twitter Account with similar numbers on the Local History account and a 20% increase in followers of the Gardens Twitter account.
  - The website has been enhanced, with new software, 200 extra pages and new branding and is receiving increased visitor numbers.
- The Local History Group is offering 5 walks as part of Dulwich Festival. The group hosted a series of Zoom talks in conjunction with Bell House, has contributed to Southwark's Local List of notable buildings and completed the huge exercise of translating and

uploading to the website the Dulwich Manorial Court Rolls, as well as continuing to respond to individual local history enquiries.

- The Gardens Sub-committee distributed 5,000 copies of the Dulwich Gardens Open for Charity booklet and organised talks at Bell House and trips to gardens in London and beyond. The Group maintains strong links with the London Woodland Trust and Sydenham Hill Wood and has contributed to path improvements both through matched funding and publicity.
- The Travel and Environment sub-committee focussed on monitoring public transport and local e-Scooter/eBike initiatives and also responded to the London City Airport expansion consultation.
- The Planning and Architecture Group works with the Dulwich Estate Scheme of Management to maintain a pleasant architectural amenity in Dulwich. In 2022, they commented on over 200 planning applications and major local projects and contributed to Dulwich Estate's planning guidelines on solar panels and extensions.
- The Wildlife Sub-committee conducted a census of birds and focused on the effects of climate change.
- The Trees Sub-committee has developed local tree trails, contributes regular Journal articles on trees and organised a fungi-themed walk. Dulwich Society planted a tree in the Dulwich Picture Gallery gardens to commemorate the reign of Queen Elizabeth II.
- The Licensing Sub-committee is a recognised stakeholder for the London Borough of Southwark in considering applications for licenses for events, festivals, shops and restaurants to ensure that the interests of local residents are considered.
- Other Notable Achievements
  - Ian McInnes and Brian Green received the London Borough of Southwark Civic Award of the Liberty of the Old Metropolitan Borough of Camberwell.
  - Sharon O'Connor was a winner of the National Archives 20s Streets Local History competition for her Journal article on Bernie Sheldrake.
  - 2 members of the Executive Committee are members of Dulwich Estate's Scheme of Management Advisory Committee.
  - Representatives of the Society are working with other stakeholders on public realm issues in Dulwich Village.

5. Approval of Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022

The Treasurer spoke to slides summarising the Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. The full Annual Report and Accounts are available on the website and copies were available at the meeting. The Treasurer made the following commentary on the 2022 Accounts:

Overall, the audited accounts of the Society show a deficit in the net movement of funds for the year of £(8,689), compared to the previous year's surplus of £1,798. The main differences between the two years are lower advertising revenue and higher costs associated with expenditure, donations and grants.

Page 2 of the Statement of Financial Activities shows an overall decrease in income between 2021 and 2022 of £(1,649), i.e. £24,210 in total for 2022 against £25,859 for 2021. Income for subscriptions and gift aid were similar for both years. The main decrease was in advertising revenue of £(4,167), otherwise the categories are broadly in line in both years.

With regard to expenditure, there has been a rise in costs of printing and distributing the quarterly Journal. New costs were incurred of £1,000 for the defibrillator and circa £1,200 for the Society's new logo design. Otherwise expenditure categories were similar between both years. Expenditure was £22,523 in 2022 compared to £19,711 in 2021.

The Society made donations and grants totalling £10,376 in 2022 against £4,350 in 2021, i.e. an increase of over £6,000. The details of these amounts are shown in Note 5 on page 5 of the accounts.

The bequest from Mary Boast, some years ago, of £10,104 has a remaining balance of £4,571 within the Society's overall reserves. Monies spent to date from the bequest include the digitising of maps and court rolls and local information signage.

Overall net bank account balances were £42,308 in 2022 compared to £46,798 in 2021.

The Treasurer thanked all those who pay by Direct Debit, which saves the Society money, and reduces the administrative burden on the Membership Secretary, and all those who have completed the Gift Aid form, enabling the Society to claim back tax. He also thanked Sally-Anne Jeffries, the Independent Examiner.

The Chair said that the Accounts had been approved by the Trustees and by the Independent Examiner. On behalf of the Executive Committee he proposed the motion to approve the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The motion to approve the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022 was passed on a show of hands:

For 44      Against 0      Abstentions 0

6. Re-appointment of the Independent Examiner: Sally-Anne Jeffries, Chartered Accountant

The motion to re-appoint Sally-Anne Jeffries as Independent Examiner for 2022 was proposed by James Thompson on behalf of the Executive Committee. The motion was approved on a show of hands:

For 42      Against 0      Abstentions 0

Sally-Anne Jeffries was duly appointed as Independent Examiner for 2023/4.

7. Appointment of President – Dr Kenneth Wolfe

Kenneth Wolfe is standing again as President and is the only candidate.

The motion to appoint Kenneth Wolfe as President was passed on a show of hands:

For 41      Against 0      Abstentions 0

Kenneth Wolfe was duly re-elected as President for 2023/4

8. Elections for 2023/2024 - Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

The Chair put up a slide with the names of the nominated officers together with their proposer and seconder. The Secretary had checked that all Officers had signed their nomination form and the Membership Secretary had checked that all proposers and seconders are members of the Dulwich Society.

Chair: James Thompson (Susan Badman; Heather Stubbs)

Vice Chair: Sue Badman (Penny Stern; James Thompson)

Honorary Treasurer: Russell Lloyd (Andrew Gould; Dr Gardner Thompson)

Honorary Secretary: Heather Stubbs (Sharon O'Connor; Peter Roseveare)

The re-election of the Officers named above was approved on a show of hands:

For 37      Against 2      Abstentions 1

Elections for 2023-2024 – Members of the Executive Committee

The proposed Executive Committee Members, (with Proposer and Secunder in brackets) are:

Membership Secretary - Diana McInnes (Susan Elias; Pauline Way)

Journal Co-Editor/Chair Local History Group – Ian McInnes (Susan Elias: David Way)

Journal Co-Editor – Claire Richards (Ian McInnes: Jane Jones)

Gardens – Jeremy Prescott (Katherine St.John-Brook; Ann Rutherford)

Planning & Architecture – Penny Stern (Peter Hogarth; Heather Stubbs)

Licensing – Patsy Bramble (David Beamish; Ian McInnes)

Travel & Environment – Harry Winter (James Thompson; Heather Stubbs)

Trees – David Beamish (Patsy Bramble; Susan Badman)

Wildlife – Peter Roseveare (Dr Tyrrell Evans; Andrew Fletcher)

The Chair said that no position was contested. He noted that Claire Richards, who has been appointed as Journal Co-Editor, was co-opted to the Executive Committee in March 2023.

A question from the floor asked for Executive Committee members to be voted on individually rather than as a block. The Chair confirmed that the Society had used the block voting method in recent years and will review it as part of the consultation on new Society Rules.

The appointment of the Committee Members named above was put to the vote and they were re-elected on a show of hands:

For 24      Against 6      Abstentions 10

The Executive Committee Officers and Members were duly re-appointed.

## 9. Any Other Business/Questions

### a. Rules Review

The Chair said that proposed new Rules were not agreed at the SGM in June 2022. Whilst the majority voted in favour, the necessary 2/3 majority had not been achieved. The Executive Committee had since undertaken a full review of the Society's Rules, using a Charity Commission template, to bring them up to date and facilitate online voting, meeting by Zoom, etc. The new draft Rules are now on the website and copies are available at the meeting. There will be a 6 month consultation period until 23 October 2023, and members are encouraged to comment. The Executive Committee will review all consultation submissions and having taken account of them, will bring the draft Rules to the 2024 AGM for approval.

### b. Diamond Anniversary

The Chair said the Society is 60 years old this year and a party will be held, with drinks and canapés, in the James Caird Hall at Dulwich College from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July. Calista Lucy, Dulwich College's archivist, will give a short talk on Shackleton's voyage on the James Caird. Tickets are £20 each on Eventbrite. A weblink and QR code were available at the meeting. The Chair hoped members present would attend the event.

### c. Grove Tavern

Anne Stanesby had raised a question in advance about the future of the Grove Tavern. She felt strongly that the site should remain as a public house. She understood, based on a Journal article, that the Dulwich Society felt a public house was not a suitable use for the site. The Chair said the Society considers the Grove Tavern a very important site and has no fixed view on whether it should remain as a pub. The Society has been urging the Dulwich Estate (the freeholder) to progress matters with the lessee (Stonegate), as it is currently an eyesore at the entrance to Dulwich. When proposals are made for the site, the Society will play a full role in the consultation on its future. There was lengthy discussion with considerable support for the site to be developed, (not demolished), and some support for it remaining as a public house. There was overwhelming support for the Society to pursue the development of the site as a matter of urgency and seek alternative accommodation for the skateboarders.

It was noted that the site used to be a school attended by Bryron, that the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death is imminent and that the Society should mark this. Brian Green said that the Society is in the process of installing a listening post with historical information opposite the Grove Tavern in Cox's Walk.

Councillor Andy Simmons (Dulwich Wood Ward) said the Council had been doing everything it could to progress matters, but Stonegate has not answered correspondence. He said the current planning designations are for an affordable pub and also other options such as an old people's home. He was optimistic of progress on the issue in the near future.

d. Dulwich Estate's Green Strategy

Barbara Richardson had lodged a question in advance about the Dulwich Estate's Green Strategy. She considered it was not specific to Dulwich and could go much further to encourage sustainable living, solar panels, etc. She urged the Society to put pressure on the Estate to develop the guidelines further and hold a public meeting. She referenced useful meetings held by the Herne Hill Forum. The Chair agreed the Herne Hill events were excellent and said that Executive Committee member, Penny Stern, had contributed as a panel member. He agreed there was a need to help residents operate within the guidelines, and to balance the need to update insulation and power generation with the preservation of our architectural heritage. He saw this as a key element of his Chairmanship and raises the issue at every opportunity with the Dulwich Estate. The Journal and eNews will be used to promote the Green Strategy.

The meeting was very supportive of the proposal to progress and prioritise the Green agenda. Andy Simmons, Councillor, said that the Council was fully supportive and will be working with the Dulwich Estate. Margy Newens, Councillor, (Dulwich Village Ward), said that as Chair of the Sustainability Division, she could confirm there is significant activity to streamline the process for homeowners wishing to retrofit their homes and she is seeking feedback from residents.

e. Lifts at Dulwich Stations

Maggie Brown restated a question from 2021 concerning the lack of lifts at Dulwich stations, which hinders transport for people with pushchairs and the less mobile. JT said the Society has taken this up with Southwark and Helen Hayes and is still urging action, but it is a national rather than a Council issue.

f. LTN

There were a number of questions and comments from the floor on the Low Traffic Neighbourhood including: lack of time to cross the road safely at the Calton Avenue/Dulwich Village Junction; pollution in boundary roads; speeding cyclists; lack of public transport alternatives, (Dulwich has the lowest possible PTAL public transport ratings of 1 and 2), lack of access for blue badge holders, signage issues and the apparent contradiction between Dulwich Society's neutral stance on the traffic proposals and support for LTNs in the Traffic and Environment Sub-committee minutes. A number of members urged the Society to

reconsider its neutral stance on the LTN, or at least to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of the LTN.

The Chair confirmed that the Society maintains its neutral stance on the traffic measures comprising the Dulwich LTN, as any other approach would be divisive. The Society has participated in public realm discussions with Southwark and the Dulwich Estate on matters such as surface materials, seating and planting, with those attending meetings on behalf of the Society having expertise in relevant areas. He said it is now urgent to progress the work to improve the look of the area. The Vice Chair said the apparent inconsistency on the Traffic and Environment Sub-committee section of the website was in the terms of reference not the minutes and dated back to a time before the pandemic, when the Society supported the aims of low traffic neighbourhoods before any specific proposals had been put forward.

g. Pedestrian Crossing near Grove Tavern/Cox's Walk

Pat Reynolds asked about progress on the pedestrian crossing from the Grove Tavern close to Cox's Walk. Andy Simmons, Councillor, said plans for a pedestrian crossing are funded and ready for implementation and awaiting only a response from Stonegate on permission to put equipment on a small strip of land in the Grove Tavern site. He said the Dulwich Estate is also supportive.

h. Net Zero Progress

Tristan Honeybourne asked whether the Society could collect statistics on how Dulwich complies with the Government's and Southwark's Net Zero plans including insulation of properties and installation of solar panels, as progress appears to be slow. The Chair said this action was in line with the Society's plans.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The meeting ended at 21.57pm

**Heather Stubbs, Secretary, Dulwich Society**

**30<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

**Signed: *James Thompson***

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**James Thompson, Chair**