

THE DULWICH SOCIETY

MINUTES of the 57th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society held on 24th September 2020 via Zoom

Present: 46 members, four Southwark Dulwich ward councillors, Dr Andreas Köttering, Chair of Trustees of the Dulwich Estate, Adrian Brace and Karen Wood of the Dulwich Estate, Sally-Anne Jeffries.

Apologies: Cllr Catherine Rose joining meeting late.

1. Introduction by Chairman (Ian McInnes)

The Chairman introduced the agenda and informed members that five questions notified in advance would be aired under Any Other Business. The Chairman welcomed Dr Andreas Köttering, Chair of Trustees of the Dulwich Estate who will talk about the Estate and take questions after the AGM business is completed.

The Chairman made the following statement about the meeting.

“The Society had to postpone our planned AGM in April due to government Covid-19 guidelines.

Exceptionally the Executive Committee decided to hold the AGM digitally in September via ZOOM as we were unable to hold a normal meeting due to government guidelines.

This is in line with the Charity Commission guidelines for Covid-19.

The Society will record this decision in the minutes of its AGM and that we have done this to demonstrate good governance of our charity.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-the-charity-sector>

The meeting will be recorded for minuting purposes.”

2. Welcome by Dr Colin Niven, President

Colin welcomed members and guests to the meeting and thanked the Chair and the Executive Committee for their remarkable work over the past year. He drew attention to the retirement of Alastair Hanton as the Chair of the Traffic & Transport (T&T) Sub-Committee, thanking him for his input to the work of the Society for more than 40 years. Colin also welcomed the prospective new Chair of the T&T Sub-Committee, Harry Winter.

3. Minutes of the 56th AGM held on 7th May 2019 were approved and will be formally signed at the next in-person Executive Committee meeting.

4. Matters Arising - None

5. Chairman's Report and Review of the Year (Ian McInnes)

Written reports from the Chairman, Sub-Committee Chairs and Officers were made available on the Society's website (www.dulwichsociety.com). The Chairman presented his review of 2019 and highlighted the following successes during the year.

The Society:

- Has 1150 members and seven sub-committees
- Issues three publications – quarterly journal, e-newsletter (received by more than 700 members over email) and the Open Gardens booklet.
- Has an extensive digitised archive including old Dulwich maps.
- Made donations and grants for:
 - ❖ Old Dairy GP practice front garden planting.
 - ❖ Repaving of the front entrance area of the St Barnabas Parish Hall.
 - ❖ Dulwich Village Infants School Green Screen.
 - ❖ Defibrillator at Bell House.
 - ❖ Repairs to the Croxted Road bus shelter.
 - ❖ Contribution to the rivulet survey in Dulwich Park with further work planned
 - ❖ Burbage Road information sign.
 - ❖ Design costs of Burbage Road railway bridge Sports Mural.
 - ❖ New bench and repairs to other benches.
 - ❖ Ongoing repairs to posts and chains.
- Runs social media feeds on Twitter and Instagram including local history feed. Main feeds have more than 2000 followers.
- Produced tree map for the Dulwich Picture Gallery.
- Organised planting of new trees in key locations like the Library Garden.
- Organised litter picking and vegetation pruning on Gallery Road.

The Chairman highlighted local areas for improvement including the Gilkes development site where the Society has asked the Council to serve a section 201 notice on the developers to improve the condition of the site. He also noted the poorly maintained Grove Tavern site situated in a prominent position at the entrance to Dulwich which has lain unoccupied for several years. A skateboarding park has been permitted to open in the Grove car park as an interim measure.

6. Presentation of Accounts and Financial Report for year to 31st December 2019 by the Society's Hon. Treasurer, Russell Lloyd.

Overall, the independently examined accounts of The Society show a loss of £3,460 in 2019 compared to a surplus of £3,761 in 2018 i.e. an overall decrease in funds between the two years of £7,221.

Income was £24,702 in 2019 against a figure of £26,854 in 2018.

Expenditure in 2019 was £20,327 against £16,332 in 2018. The Society made donations and grants in 2019 totalling £10,035 against £1,852 in 2018.

The Society's consolidated net bank account balances totalled £52,368 in 2019 compared to £54,761 in 2018.

The Treasurer thanked all those members who pay by standing order since this saves the Society money and reduces the heavy burden placed on our Membership Secretary.

The Treasurer also thanked Sally-Anne Jeffries for her support of the Society and for her auditing and accounts preparation services.

Approval of the accounts was proposed by Adrian Hill and seconded by Kenneth Wolfe. The Accounts were duly approved by Zoom Poll (Approved by 95%, Abstentions 5%)

7. Appointment of Hon. Independent Examiner.

Sally-Anne Jeffries was proposed for re-election by Caroline Lloyd and Sue Badman and was duly approved by Zoom Poll (97% Approved; 3% Abstentions)

8. ELECTIONS for 2020/2021

(a) Officers:

The following, having been proposed and seconded, and whose roles were uncontested were duly elected until the following AGM: (No Zoom Poll)

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Chairman: | Ian McInnes |
| Vice-Chairman: | Kenneth Wolfe |
| Hon. Secretary: | Susan Badman |
| Hon. Treasurer: | Russell Lloyd |
| Membership Secretary: | Diana McInnes |

(b) Members of Executive Committee (and Chairs of Sub-Committees where indicated)

The following, having been proposed and seconded, and whose roles were uncontested were duly elected until the following AGM: (No Zoom Poll)

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Brian Green | Editor of the Journal |
| Harry Winter | Traffic & Transport |
| David Roberts | Planning & Architecture |
| Angela Wilkes | Wildlife |
| Jeremy Prescott | Gardens |
| Bernard Nurse | Local History |
| David Beamish | Trees |

Patsy Bramble
Adrian Hill

Licensing
Committee Member

Officers and Executive Committee members are Trustees of the Dulwich Society Charity.

(c) Honorary Officers:

President: Dr Colin Niven OBE
(Zoom Poll, 86% approved and confirmed, 11% Abstentions, 3% No)

9. Any Other Business

The Chairman read out the questions from members notified beforehand and the Executive Committee's response to the questions.

See Appendix 1 for the record of the questions and the Executive Committee's responses.

There was a discussion after the questions comprising questions from one member and comments/questions from several members on Zoom Chat. The Chairman responded to the points made.

As agreed at the meeting, the Chat transcript is included verbatim at Appendix 2.

In summary, a view was expressed that the Society should not have responded as it did to the Phase 1 emergency traffic measures and should have consulted its members beforehand. This action was against the Society's constitution. A member asked for the response to Phase 1 to be retracted. A resolution was called for that in future there should be a consultation and survey of members about major contentious issues.

The Chairman made the point that the management of the Society is vested in the Executive Committee and there is nothing in the rules requiring the Committee to conduct surveys of the membership. Committee members are volunteers and if surveys are required on a range of issues then members are welcome to volunteer and assist with the matter. The Chairman said he had received several letters covering a wide range of opinions and not all members were against the traffic measures. The Chairman also said that Executive Committee support for Phase 1 had been given with reservations and had listed several caveats including the risk of unintended consequences and the need to do a full public consultation. It was a national emergency under Government mandate and Southwark Council would have proceeded with the measures in any case. The Executive Committee had discussed the matter before the meeting and was not in favour of conducting a poll of members.

It was agreed that the Executive Committee would consider the views and suggestions of members expressed at the meeting, would decide on further actions and report back to members as soon as possible.

10. Next Annual General Meeting

The date for the 2021 AGM will be confirmed in due course. It is likely to be 26th April 2021 (subject to government Covid-19 guidelines).

11. End of AGM Business

Guest Speaker

After the AGM there was a talk by Dr Andreas Köttering on the Dulwich Estate.

Minutes by Sue Badman, Secretary, 31st October 2020

Appendix 1

Minutes of the Dulwich Society Annual General Meeting 24 September 2020

Item 9: Any Other Business

This Appendix lists the questions notified to the Society's Executive before the AGM on 24th September 2021 and the Executive Committee's response to the questions. It also contains the Executive Committee's response to Southwark Council's emergency Covid-19 measures.

DULWICH SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSE TO PHASES 1, 2 & 3 OF SOUTHWARK COUNCIL'S PROPOSED COVID-19 MEASURES

PHASE 1 – COVID-19 TEMPORARY HIGHWAY SCHEMES BATCH 1 INCLUDING

Permeable filter at the Dulwich Village junction and Melbourne/Tell Grove

The Dulwich Society Executive Committee has reviewed the Council's recently published report on its plans for the implementation of temporary emergency measures in Dulwich Village and Melbourne Grove and is supportive of them as a means to improve social distancing to directly mitigate Covid-19. These are part of a Southwark-wide programme financed by public funding, and part of a national response to the Covid-19 pandemic

<http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50023147&Opt=0>

We also note that the proposals reflect much of what has recently been consulted on in the Council's 'Healthy Streets Initiative' and that the measures proposed could have a beneficial impact on promoting active travel and reducing air pollution.

There may be unintended consequences and some areas will be positively or adversely affected more than others. It is essential that the measures are seen as being flexible and easily reversible and/or extendable if need be, and that the Council responds positively to residents' experiences of the schemes in operation. The Dulwich Society expects the full impact on the surrounding area will be properly evaluated and that the changes should not, at the end of the period, de facto stay unaltered or unimproved as a permanent change without a full public consultation.

PHASE 2 – COVID-19 – POST LOCKDOWN HIGHWAY SCHEMES BATCH 2 INCLUDING

Permeable filters at Melbourne Grove, Derwent Grove and Elsie Road.

Given the apparent diversity of views among its membership, it would be inappropriate for the Dulwich Society to take a position either for or against the proposed Phase 2 traffic amendments. <http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=50023482&Opt=0>

PHASE 3 – COVID-19 – POST LOCKDOWN HIGHWAY SCHEMES BATCH 3 INCLUDING

Timed cameras and bus gates at Dulwich Village, Burbage Road & Turney Road, Townley Road, plus double yellow lines in Dulwich Village

Given the apparent diversity of views among its membership, it would be inappropriate for the Dulwich Society to take a position either for or against the proposed Phase 3 traffic amendments. <http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7153>

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO THE 2020 AGM

Question 1:

Does the Dulwich Society agree that, whatever the views of its sub-committees, the Executive Committee should, before presenting an official Society position in public and to Southwark Council, canvass the views of its membership on important local issues that affect the daily lives of its members, particularly Emergency Traffic Orders that close roads?

Answer:

Historically the Society has not surveyed its members. It is a volunteer run organisation managed via a group of subcommittees made up of members who have a particular interest or specialist knowledge. In 2012 and 2014, at the behest of two of the subcommittees, we did ask members for their views on solar panels and CPZs but the response was extremely small.

The Society Executive uses its Journal, eNewsletter, website and social media to let its members know what is happening and what is planned for the Dulwich area. In the case of the emergency traffic changes, these were first mentioned in the eNewsletter at the end of May under the heading of 'Potential Southwark Covid-19 traffic measures.' We reported that Southwark Council had asked local residents for suggestions as to how they could help with ensuring that our streets are safe for walking and cycling and enable social distancing as long as is required – and gave this link which appeared in all subsequent eNewsletters: <https://southwarkstreetspace.commonplace.is/about>.

The Society has not given unconditional support for the current junction trial – it has said very clearly that there has to be a full consultation and evaluation of the impacts before the measures become permanent, that the measures need to be flexible and easily reversible and that the council responds positively to residents' experiences of the schemes in operation. The Society has pressed the council continuously to publish the OHS Phase 3 results, an FAQ (which arrived after several weeks) and modify the Commonplace survey site to reflect a balance of views. We have also requested traffic and air quality monitoring.

Question 2:

If members have concerns over sub-committee aims and policies, and perceived conflicts of interest of sub-committee members, what procedures are in place to provide a full, open and entirely independent response to members' concerns in a timely manner?

Question 3:

If members have concerns over sub-committee aims and policies, and possible conflicts of interest of sub-committee members, what procedures are in place to provide a full, open and entirely independent response to members' concerns?

Answer:

The Society publishes a list of declarations of interest for its Executive Committee which is published on every Executive agenda and every set of minutes available at <https://www.dulwichsociety.com/about-the-dulwich-society>

The Society has a conflict of interest policy at <https://www.dulwichsociety.com/about-the-dulwich-society> which starts " All executive committee members, volunteers and organisation members of The Dulwich Society will strive to avoid any conflict of interest between the interests of the Dulwich Society on the one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding actual conflicts of interest as well as the perception of conflicts of Interest." Sub-Committee Chairs are responsible for checking conflicts of interest and noting them in their minutes.

Should a member wish to complain about a sub-committee, the member should write to the Chairman in line with the complaints policy for the matter to be investigated. The Complaints Policy is available at <https://www.dulwichsociety.com/about-the-dulwich-society>

Question 4:

If there is a contentious matter to be discussed, on any committee, which affects the amenity and day-to-day life of members of the Dulwich Society and the general population of the area, how can a committee make a decision to support or object to something coming before it without asking the membership? For example, the Dulwich Society's Executive Committee supporting the Covid-19 road closures at Calton Avenue/Court Lane. The Council's decision, and supported by the Society, has brought splits in the community and an unpleasant atmosphere of 'us and them'?

Answer:

The Covid-19 Road closures (Phase 1) were presented to the Society as a fait accompli as part of a national emergency programme, and that they were to be introduced exceptionally and without the usual consultation with a view to being implemented via an experimental traffic order in a very short timescale. The Society Executive Committee supported them with reservations, noting that there could be unintended consequences and some areas could be positively or adversely affected more than others. It also said that it was essential that the measures were seen as being flexible and easily reversible and/or extendable if need be, and that the Council responds positively to residents' experiences of the schemes in operation. The Dulwich Society still expects the full impact on the surrounding area to be properly evaluated and that the changes should not, at the end of the period, de facto stay unaltered or unimproved as a permanent change without a full public consultation.

Question 5:

Does the Society support a temporary trial of timed restrictions at the Calton Avenue /Court Lane/Dulwich Village junction, so there can be a properly informed comparison with the current temporary 24/7 closure of this junction before any final decision is made by Southwark Council?

Answer:

The Society cannot at this point say whether it supports the use of temporary timed restrictions at the Dulwich Village junction as this is not an option on the table and there has been no discussion of this option by our committees. It is clear that many of our members who are both in favour of and against the current Covid-19 temporary measures. In response to the clear diversity of opinion amongst the membership, the Society has decided to take a neutral response to the Council's proposed plans for Phase 2 and Phase 3, neither for nor against.

Appendix 2

Minutes of the Dulwich Society Annual General Meeting 24 September 2020

PUBLIC CHAT from Dulwich Society AGM September 2020 (excludes private 1-1 discussion and admin, and questions on the Estate). Anonymised.

- 19:43:00 I had an Anderson shelter in my garden when I was a child ...
- 19:43:10 (not in Dulwich)
- 20:02:21 Hi, If you want to raise a question after Ian's presentation, pls raise in the chat.
- 20:10:39 The point under discussion is about the Society's responsibility to consult with its members. The Civic Trust Starter Pack for civic societies states that "Civic Societies are... required ... to be transparent, professional, inclusive and democratic". The cost of an online survey is likely to be small
- 20:11:03 can you put a resolution to the members that DS will not take a public position without consultation then please
- 20:11:10 Surveymonkey is free and quick to set up
- 20:11:23 Seconded.
- 20:11:42 Yes you should have done more
- 20:11:43 I believe that the OHSD Phase 2 summary from Council does say it has DS support
- 20:12:55 Could we propose and second a resolution about consulting members in future?
- 20:13:20 If speakers are making points about the constitution, can they provide specific references to the relevant section of the constitution. If not, should we assume that these claims are incorrect?
- 20:13:23 It is too late to do a poll now
- 20:13:32 I am happy for the committees to speak for me.
- 20:13:40 If you are volunteers then DS needs a clear policy that it does not take a view surely?
- 20:14:08 Will you poll your members on their views on this then please
- 20:14:41 It does feel that you have overstepped the mark
- 20:14:44 The point is about the governance of the Society, not the merits or otherwise of the road closures
- 20:15:06 Yes agree.

20:15:16 Most issues are NOT contentious

20:15:31 Then if you cannot survey how can you justify taking a view.

20:16:01 Perhaps submissions from the Society to the Council and others should carry a rider: "This submission represents the views of the Dulwich Society Committee [or a sub-committee] and may not necessarily represent the views of the membership of the Society."

20:16:06 Why would DS be entitled to the results more than members of the public?

20:16:21 From Cllr: Full results of OHSD consultation are promised this month. We have been chasing officers however they have been very busy.

20:16:51 We are speaking to D and the Councillors at the AGM please

20:17:03 sorry - not the Councillors here please

20:18:00 I would prefer the society did not use its funds to run surveys that replicate the democratic processes that are in place within the council and residents associations. It is very clear that those calling for surveys have a particular position that they wish to labour through the Dulwich Society.

20:18:04 Southwark cite DS in a number of their consultations and the subcommittees - this cannot continue

20:18:44 I agree with [point at 20:18:00]

20:18:55 I do not agree - nor do many members

20:19:15 Can we put forward a resolution to this meeting, please. How can we do this?

20:19:30 Yes I agree - we want a resolution

20:20:39 How can a society be bound by a resolution that prevents any position on a matter? Can I please ask for this to be confirmed by reference to the constitution?

20:21:11 That's the right call Ian.

20:21:12 Because it is an amenity society - not one representing its members. No-one signed up on that basis

20:21:39 very unsatisfactory

20:21:52 Agreed.

20:24:26 Could timings of next exec and report back to members be confirmed in outline please? Thanks

20:26:15 If the Burbage Road Residents' Association can canvas all its members on their views on the DV closure so can the Dulwich Society. This is a highly divisive issue and it is essential the DS knows and represents the views of its members. All the people who have stood tonight for a committee position should be committed to this.

20:28:39 The surveys done by some of the residents associations were so biased and misleading they would make Sir Humphrey Appleby proud. They were highly divisive and not representative.

20:31:27 Trustees have very clear obligations under the Charities Committee - regardless of being unpaid

20:33:08 It is disrespectful to Andreas to continue the conversation about governance of the DS or the closure of DV, people

20:38:20 Hi all, just to confirm we will discuss the matters raised at the meeting at our Executive. Our next meeting is in November but we will discuss it before then. We will report back in the enewsletter initially and keep members informed as things proceed.

20:38:59 How does [] know "The surveys done by some of the residents associations were so biased and misleading they would make Sir Humphrey Appleby proud. They were highly divisive and not representative."

21:03:57 can we please publish the chat with the minutes

21:04:09 as a true record

21:04:13 Thank you, very well organised

