

**St Peter's Residents' Association**  
**Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Annual General Meeting of the Association**  
**In the beer garden of The Cross Keys, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 7pm**

**Those present:** Steve Askins (Chair), Lou Devonshire (Secretary), Phil Back (Treasurer), Joanna Edmunds, Oliver Leigh Wood, Elizabeth Ryland, Charlotte Reed, and upwards of 30 members of the Association.

SA opened the meeting by welcoming the fantastic turnout of members new and old to the 45<sup>th</sup> SPRA AGM. He introduced the current SPRA Committee members, as well as Joanna Edmunds who was elected to the Committee in her absence at the last AGM, and Alessia Lichtenberg. JE and AL are Chair and Secretary-elect respectively, subject to tonight's nomination process. An attendance list was circulated to collect names and contact details of those present.

SA confirmed that copies of the Agenda, 2022 AGM Minutes, the 2022 Chair's Annual Report, and an (as yet) unaudited financial statement for the year 2022-23, had all been shared by email and were also available as hand-outs.

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received from: Angela Dixon, Angela Clarke, Richard Thom, Maggie Dobson, Karen Frazer, Nick Hennigan, Rae Perry and the ward councillors

**2. Approval Minutes of the 2022 AGM**

No amendments were noted. The Minutes were proposed (Gabrielle Leigh-Wood), seconded (Bill Stevens) and were formally approved. LD said she would upload them on spraweb.net ACTION

**3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 2022 AGM**

Shop Unit at Entwistle Terrace – SA reported that he had been in touch with the bespoke furniture company currently renting the space underneath the flats. In the past year they have made positive changes to the shop-front, replacing wooden hoardings with large window panels. However at present there is still no moving in date on the cards. The committee will continue to monitor the situation. ACTION

Cycle Highway – Since the last AGM the King Street section of the Cycleway has been opened and the construction of a two-way lane, on the south side of King Street is complete. The number of cyclists may be slightly up (although Richard Farthing said not quite as much as TfL would like), but unfortunately so too are the number of accidents.

Last year Ravenscourt Councillor Patrick Walsh had taken away various concerns expressed by members, and these were echoed at this year's AGM – mostly regarding the perils of turning in or out of Beavor Lane, Standish Road, Black Lion Lane and St Peter's Square at the corner of Entwistle Terrace. The new section of cycle lane that cuts into the path at the junction of Goldhawk Road feels particularly dangerous to many residents. Turning into the area is particularly precarious given

the number of blind spots. These concerns still remain despite some HFC efforts with signage in the past 12 months to alert drivers to beware at the most challenging junctions. Other attendees expressed a wish to see more signage around the pathway/cycle lane at the junction with St Peter's Square; to make cyclists use the actual cycle lane now it's dedicated to them; to enforce penalties for cyclists running red lights; and finally to address the issue of fast-moving electric bikes which are swifter and more silent than regular cycles.

SA said that SPRA would collate and pass onto our Councillors any specific concerns. ACTION

Leaning Woman – Since last year the statue's name has been settled. Various known as "Speed", "The Draped Lady" and "The Leaning Lady", she is now officially known as "The Leaning Woman." This year, renovation efforts by the Council-led team, including SPRA and the Heritage of London Trust, led to the discovery that the statue is both more solid but less structurally strong than first thought. It is therefore unwise to move or revolve her to face north, as was originally intended.

Since the Summer, Joanna Edmunds has been leading a restoration fund-raising drive, totalling £40.5k (including Gift Aid) to date. This is an extraordinarily impressive amount raised in a short length of time, but the target is just under £10k short with a month to go before the deadline of 23<sup>rd</sup> October, after which all donations will be returned if the target is not met.

SA & JE repeated the appeal for donations, and promised that SPRA will remind members again of the deadline as it approaches. ACTION

SPRA Reserves – Picking up last year's question from Maggie Dobson to come up with plans to spend some of SPRA's healthy reserves, SA said that the Committee had managed to spend a good £4.5k or so this year (as detailed in the financial statements). As usual, SPRA subsidised the Winter Party, held this year at Haweli, provided 50% of the funding for a defibrillator at the Cross Keys, made a £1.5k donation to refurbish the church windows, and co-hosted both Platinum Jubilee and Coronation parties in the Square.

SA said that the Committee felt that all of these things hit the benchmark for SPRA working for the benefit of the community. He added that subscriptions are not SPRA's main income stream; it is filming fees that give the Association financial flexibility. However these are never predictable and following a good flow of productions into the area, we experienced more of a drought this year.

#### **4. Chair's Report (circulated in advance) 2023**

SA presented the Chair's Report, which was summarised at the meeting. The Report is appended to these Minutes.

He started by reflecting on the year's highlight being for him the in-person events that SPRA hosted. Over 300 people attended the Platinum Jubilee party in May 2022, and even more came to the Coronation party, co-hosted with St Peter's Church and the school. These were great joint efforts and many good lessons were learned, not least that table planning is a bad idea! The Winter Party 2023 was for the first time held at Haweli Indian Restaurant. This was a packed and lively

event, with excellent food. Finally Shakespeare in the Square returned in June with *As You Like It*, and was widely reported to be their strongest show yet.

Another important highlight this year were the two well-attended gardening events run by Oliver Leigh-Wood in October 2022, at which over 1000 bulbs were planted. Thanks to Charlotte Reed's encouragement via the PTA, many attendees were children and their families from the school. The resulting blooms kept the Square looking beautiful right the way through to Summer. This year the Square retained its Green Flag award. SA gave special thanks to Oliver Leigh Wood for his continued efforts to champion the Square in many ways.

SA reminded the meeting that SPRA hosts the Garden Fund made up of donations from residents. This money provides all the garden "extras" beyond the basic management provided by the Council. He said that this year's letter requesting donations will go out by the end of the year. ACTION

## **5. Presentation and Adoption of Accounts**

### **Accounts for the years ending 31 March 2023**

PB referred attendees to the printed summaries of the unaudited accounts for the 2022-23. He echoed SA's earlier remarks regarding SPRA's extra spending this year, including on two extraordinary royal events.

At the year end, unrestricted reserves (i.e. excluding the garden funds) were £7.2k, down from £11.4k at the previous year-end.

PB reported that apart from Events, SPRA's single biggest outlay every year is dog poo bags (around £1.5k per annum, or 30% of this year's expenditure in the context of an irregularly expensive year). Whilst some extra donations occasionally come into SPRA, these are paid for out of regular SPRA reserves. Selma Van De Perre noted that the bags are taken by all-comers to the Square, regardless of whether they are resident or not.

One attendee asked whether the Council could pilot a designated exercise area for dogs in the Square? SA said that this idea had already been explored and rejected, on the basis that the Square is too historic and small. Another attendee suggested that the signage at the dispensers could be refreshed to suggest that the bags are paid for by residents, and should only be used "in an emergency" - not regarded as a free supply. SA agreed that the time was right to review the signage and wording. ACTION

PB added that the accounts were provisional and needed to be audited by Richard Thom before being approved at the AGM next year. ACTION

## **6. Election of Officers and Committee Members**

Nominations for the election of SPRA Chair 2023-24: Joanna Edmunds. Proposed (Avril Grundberg), seconded (Alessia Lichtenberg), and approved.

Nomination for the election to the Committee & office of Secretary 2023-24: Alessia Lichtenberg.

Proposed (Bill Stevens), seconded (Selma Van De Perre), and approved.

Nominations for the re-election of Committee members 2023-24: Steve Askins, Lou Devonshire, Phil Back, Charlotte Reed, Oliver Leigh-Wood, Elizabeth Ryland. Proposed (Georgina Askins), seconded (Christina Karady), and approved.

## **7. SPRA Heroes**

Lou Devonshire – for over 10 years in the role of SPRA Secretary. LD thanked SA in turn for his support over the years, as well as the other 4 Chairs she has outlived!

Mark Levesley – once a resident, Mark has continued to support SPRA's entire digital operation despite moving to Spain three years ago! His loyalty goes above and beyond. SA repeated a request for any member with the skills to step into Mark's shoes.

Oliver Leigh-Wood – for his consistent leadership and gardening expertise in and around the Square, not least for his mastery of flags and bunting!

SA gave thanks to all three SPRA Heroes and awarded them all a bottle of not-so-local-anymore produce (aka Sipsmiths gin), to rounds of applause from the AGM.

## **8. AOB**

St Peter's Square park pathways- Selma Van de Perre said that the pavement on the east side of St Peter's Square park is very uneven and needs to be urgently repaired. SA said that SPRA would report this to the Council. ACTION He added that the Square paving was on a rolling programme of repairs in which the entirety of the pavement would be re-laid 3 years... but only 2/3 has been done to date.

Wheelie Bins – Many attendees (but not all residents) had received Council leaflets through their letterbox telling them that wheelie bins were coming to the area. There were mixed feelings, given that some streets (e.g. Standish Road) do not have the layout to accommodate them. Richard Farthing said that there were different sized bins to get around planning restrictions on wheelies. Brackenbury Village residents were also challenging Council plans, and might be worth making contact with. Alastair Jackson reported that the Council had told him that on streets where there was no space there would be no wheelies, making dual collections inevitable. Ferry Lichtenberg reported a conversation with the Council where he was told there were no firm plans, just a period of consultation. SA reported that a new contractor was doing things differently, with black and recycling bags now being picked up separately. Amidst this uncertainty, SA said that the Committee would seek clarification from the Council. ACTION

Leaning Woman – JE urged attendees to consider making a donation to the restoration fund before the 23<sup>rd</sup> October deadline, if they hadn't already.

Crime Matters – SA said that there is a dedicated police officer for Ravenscourt Ward but that as the local police are under direction from Westminster police, what little local resource there is, is often diverted. He added that Ravenscourt Ward has 2-3 times higher rates of petty, mostly car, crime than adjacent Wards. The Met's Ward Panel is a relatively new point of liaison between enforcement and community, designed to spot patterns and areas of concern from the grassroots. He said that SPRA could feed residents' concerns up to the Panel. ACTION He reported that there is an ambition to revive Neighbourhood Watch, which has lacked police support in recent years. He suggested that since the Council funds the Local Enforcement Teams, and therefore by our local taxes, residents could petition canvassing Councillors on the doorstep about particular concerns about crime.

SA added that SPRA would ask for an update about the installation of CCTV since we are a hot-spot for petty crime. He had been told the issue was not availability of camera but of officers to watch the footage. It was generally agreed that cameras do have an impact, even fake ones as a deterrent.

Scott Hall rental – LD said that in recent months there had been a ramping up of events in the Hall that contravened if not the letter then the spirit of the agreement with residents regarding non-school hours rental to 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. The original agreement, drawn up between community and school governors, was unilaterally re-written in 2018 to allow more bookings, and residents had grudgingly tolerated the change until this summer. There was no respite for the summer; parties and events run most weekends and throughout the holidays; ball games are often played directly against a party wall; and the notion of "local renting for local benefit" is stretched with summer camps offered to anyone with cash to spare. She said that a group of residents will be asking to discuss a way forward with the school governors, and that anyone affected and living on Standish, St Peter's Road, St Peter's Grove and Chisholm House should please get in touch via spraweb.net. ACTION

Steve Askins – Bill Stevens and Margaret Lind-Smith both commended Steve's excellent leadership of SPRA over 8 years, and thanked him on behalf of the whole community for his commitment, attention and expertise well beyond the call of duty. This was met with a warm round of applause.

**There being no further business, SA called the 45th AGM to a close, and attendees were invited to stay and socialise for the rest of the evening.**