

St Stephen's Conservation Area Residents' Association

Steering Group (SG) meeting 4 April 2024 Minutes

Present; Josephine de Souza (JdeS, chair), Jennie Sibley (JeS, secretary), Jane Joseph (JJ, vice chair), Jas Kumar (JK, Neighbourhood Watch), Kirstin Dean (KD, Neighbourhood Watch), Jo Smith (JoS, joint treasurer and social events), Chris Hern (CH, planning brief), Rajan Mendis (RM, planning brief),

Apologies were sent for Cheryl Young (CY), Tess Archbold (TA), Sharan Puri (SP)

- 1. Minutes of meeting 10 February 2024:** were agreed.
- 2. Constitution:** CH mentioned issues he had considered in drawing up the proposed new constitution. CH was thanked for the work he had done and the Steering Group were generally happy with the text.
 - a) Safeguarding clause:** was discussed and decided that it might be difficult to operate what had been proposed as under 16s might just decide to join in. Suggested that we should state that children under 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult and if children are not accompanied, we tell them they must be if they want to join in activity.
 - b) Acronym for the Residents Association:** agreed it would have double "S" i.e. it should be SSCARA.

Action: CH to amend the draft in line with the above and bring back to the next meeting.

- 3. Planning:**
 - a) Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):** Two properties are seeking to increase their accommodation as HMOs which is likely to significantly increase the numbers of people living in those houses. HMOs are required to have a licence. KD had counted 11 HMOs registered in the conservation area. 6 licences had recently expired. JdeS has written to the council to request what action is being taken on these.

JdeS said she would like the issue of the changing nature of the area through increased numbers in HMOs to be raised with Councillors and to be able to meet with Conservation Officer Sean Dorran and Enforcement Officer Matt Robinson with the Councillors about HMO enforcement.
 - b) Planning Requests**

JdeS has written to the planning department about the new requests for planning permission. They may be decided by Officers based on objections submitted. If a request is to be decided by the Planning Committee CH advises sending email to all members of that committee

RJ mentioned he knows of a professional who can help with objections and will circulate contact details. (action already completed)

b) Gas copper piping on the outside of houses where there are flats. JJ reported that the enforcement officer at Hounslow had investigated the issue of new gas pipes being installed on front walls of some houses turned into flats. It is going through the process of being considered.

Action: Agreed a sub group of CH, KD, JdeS, RM and Sunita Ambasna to keep across planning developments we want to track; requests for comments/objections on planning applications, what is happening about licences, whether they are being applied for and renewed, to comment on the licence applications and to work out ways of bringing this issue to the attention of the wider membership of SSCARA.

JeS to put the issue on the agenda for meeting with Councillors in June.

- 4. Letter to Estate Agents about responsibilities of residents in the Conservation Area:** We can include the leaflet about the Conservation area.

Action: RM to look out letter sent previously to estate agents and send to JdeS. KD to discuss content of letter with estate agent she knows and link with JdeS who will draft and send letter.

- 5. Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) ward panel with police and Councillors:** At the last meeting with Councillors the Residents Association was asked if we can send representatives to this meeting. KD and JK are willing to attend. RM has contact details.

Action: RM to write to the SNT to inform them of our representatives giving their contact details and arrange for them to be invited and ask for date of next meeting. RM to let KD and JK have details of contact for organising the SNT meeting so they can arrange their attendance.

- 6. CCTV:** JJ and KD and a representative from Jehovah's Witness church met with Dwayne Ewart from the Council to survey the site for CCTV camera in the alleyway leading to the station. The Council had hoped there would be a camera there within 2 weeks subject to everything being ready. However, there is a new sign but no camera yet. JJ has followed this up and it has been confirmed the post requires work to be done to the power supply. Camera at other alleyway leading to Nelson Gardens is on the list for consideration for a camera.

- 7. Church:** There was to be a meeting in March on the future of the church. It appears the meeting has not taken place.

Concern was expressed that a section of the church fence has been missing for a few weeks. JeS wrote to them and was told they have it in hand but will have to await repairs to roof before the fence is mended as a cherry picker will be used when repairing the roof.

- 8. a) Litter picking date and activity with children:** KD has arranged activities to include children on the 2nd Saturday of every month. This will include litter picking and other things e.g. seed planting, underplanting trees and having their names on a ribbon laced onto trees they have underplanted. The children have expressed interest in judging winter/December decorations/lights on houses.

b) Underplanting trees: Currently neighbours already underplant trees in places and KD would like to get Councillor support for underplanting trees project and for having a policy on underplanting.

If this all happens KD was asked to arrange photos that could be used in publicity.

Action: KD to notify residents when the next litter picking date is (Now happened)

JeS to arrange for underplanting to be put on agenda of meeting with councillors.

- 9. Meeting with Councillors:** Agreed the whole meeting to be open to any residents who wished to attend as well as the Steering Group. Agenda to be drawn up in advance including items notified by residents.

Action: JeS to fix date of next meeting with Councillors and ask for feedback from Councillors on items raised with them at the last meeting. Also, to notify Councillors of items the SG wishes to raise with them and ask them and residents for any other agenda items.

- 10. Website:** It has not been possible to arrange photos so far. Other contacts may be able to help.

Action: JdeS and JK to discuss and identify someone to help with photos.

11. Treasurers' report:

- a) Bank account opened
- b) successful grant application for Thriving Communities - £1,000
- c) funds as reported at last meeting plus the above grant
- d) suggested activities take place every three months, ideas included quiz, beetle drive, community lunch or party, possible concert.

e) KD mentioned Open City Festival where people agree to open homes to public or we could offer a tour of the conservation area – KD has sent link for SG to consider arranging this activity.

f) KD also mentioned we could participate in the London Festival of the Arts to help build the community.

Action: JoS, TA, JJ and JK to plan next activities. What fundraising will take place to be decided event by event. (If fundraising for other organisations to be included we have to show how it furthers the aims of SSCARA or an amendment has to be made to the revised constitution to allow it.)

JoS to map out funds required to run SSCARA and to research other funding opportunities.

12. Visits to residents to raise the profile of SSCARA and establish how they want us to communicate with them: It was suggested we were all busy and visits could be done at a later date. Possibly a newsletter could be delivered to all residents. No plan made.

13. Lime bikes: Council consultation has been extended by 6 months. The results of the consultation will be gathered and considered during May.

SSCARA response: There seems to be a majority view among residents who have expressed an opinion which includes the following:

No warning given that there would be a trial period for Lime bikes in the Conservation Area and no consultation about siting of bays.

People hack the bikes.

The bikes fall over easily. They need a better stand.

Bikes are often left on pavements anywhere causing obstruction and bays are rarely used

Bays are poorly lit and positions of the ones in St Stephens Road and Parkside Road are too close to the Hanworth Road causing a hazard to cars turning off the Hanworth Road.

If Lime bikes are to continue after the consultation period the bays need to be sited further from the junction. Suggested the one in St Stephens Road could be put in the slip road to Nelson Gardens as no cars are allowed to park there.

Action: JJ to write to Council (c.c.to Councillors) with our response and encourage all residents to also write with their views on Lime bikes to the Council at traffic@hounslow.gov.uk and copy to Councillors before the end of April - the weight of numbers is important as SSCARA's letter counts as only one response.

14. Any Other Business.

a) RM mentioned the idea of **low traffic neighbourhood (LTN)** where only residents can park in the road or visitors registered by residents. (RM has written to Council to find out how to apply)

- b) RM has reported **2 residences being used for business purposes where the business encroaches on the use of the road**. RM asked that others also write to the council.
- c) RM mentioned that it is possible to get a **Tree Protection Order (TPO)** where anyone knows of a tree under threat. (RM has written to Council to find out how to apply for TPO)

Action: RM to circulate to SG a copy of his email requesting enforcement action on businesses carried on from houses that is affecting the use of the street.

Date of next meeting: confirmed 23rd May at 7-10pm in the Church.