

Minutes of meeting of St. Stephen's Conservation Area Residents' Association with councillors 5.6.24

Present: Cllr Samia Chaudhary, Councillor Afzal Kiani, Cllr Farhaan Rehman, Josephine de Souza (Chair), Jennie Sibley (Secretary), Kristin Dean (Neighbourhood Watch), Chris Hern (planning brief), Tessa Archbold (joint Treasurer and social sub-Committee), Cheryl Young, Sharan Puri, Jane Hering.

Apologies: Jas Kumar, Sunita Ambasna, Ratna Chatterjee.

1. Grant for community cohesion: The Chair thanked the Councillors for arranging the grant for community cohesion and said we planned to spend it wisely. A subcommittee had made outline plans for events during this year.

- A Community Big Lunch on 13 July in the Church Grounds. They are planning to involve residents who do not have a formal role in the Association to help plan and run the event.
- A possible contribution to the London wide scheme for an open City event in September where residents can open their gardens to visitors and we can possibly organise a tour or two of the conservation area, pointing out significant details that will bring visibility to historical buildings. We could possibly map trees in people's gardens. There would be nibbles and drinks for residents who participated in this event. There would also be a litter picking event just before to make sure the area was clean.

ACTION: Cllr Chaudhary said that Heston did this with Open City and she would give Kristin details. Councillors supported the idea.

- In November/December a festival of lights on houses and trees in the area.
- A Quiz in February
- A community yard or garden sale in May.

The subcommittee was open to other suggestions.

2. Conservation Area at Risk: The Chair pointed out that many unsympathetic changes to properties, boundary walls and gardens have taken place in our area. Particularly by landlords and those that own Houses of Multiple Occupation [HMOs]. Everyone in the Residents' Association is in agreement that our conservation area is at risk.

Hounslow Council's 2018 conservation area appraisal document for the St. Stephen's Conservation Area, has used guidance from Historic England's guidance document Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, Historic England Advice Note 1, May 2016 (originally March 2011).

The Chair reached out to Historic England recently to find out if we can receive support and guidance and were told by Historic England that we can register our conservation area as being at risk. This should mean that Historic England would try and work with Hounslow Council in order to protect all the heritage assets of our area, including the trees.

The Chair is waiting to hear from Historic England on the next steps.

The Appraisal document says that the Council proposes to consider a further level of protection to our conservation area in the form of an Article 4(2) direction. (Para 10.3, page 27). Other conservation areas have this. There is no article 4 (2) direction for the St Stephens Conservation Area and the Residents' Association would like one to be considered. Cllr Chaudhary pointed out there would have to be consultation about this.

ACTION:

- Cllr Chaudhary proposed that after the General Election the councillors visit the area with the enforcement team and suggested that a member of the Residents' Association is identified to join them.
- Chair to further explore registering our Conservation Area at risk with Historic England and to keep Councillors informed about this action.

3. Environmental and Health Safety Issues: A resident appears to have had a breakdown of communication about a 'rotten' tree in their neighbours' garden, which could be potentially dangerous. The Residents' Association was contacted to see if we could offer guidance as to what can be done. Upon further investigation, the Chair has since discovered that the tree in question doesn't appear to be rotten [discussed with a qualified tree surgeon who has visited the property] and we are waiting on further confirmation of this.

4. Policy on underplanting Trees: The Council does not have a policy on underplanting trees. Kristin has worked with local children and residents to start underplanting trees and maintain the plants. Other residents have done this for a few years. She feels it would be helpful for the Council to have a very short policy on underplanting to say it is OK and that Council maintenance of the area under the trees would allow these plants to thrive. Kristin agreed to send details of policies of other local authorities to Cllr Kiani who would then follow up on this.

ACTION:

- Kristin to send to Cllr Kiani examples of policies of some other councils.
- Cllr Kiani to then follow up.

5. Cameras: A Council camera has now been installed in the alleyway leading to so the station. More tree trimming is required so the camera has a view of the full length of the alleyway.

The camera has already had the effect of moving drug dealing from the main part of the alleyway round the corner of the alleyway and into Argyle Road which the camera does not cover. This shows there needs to be more extensive use of cameras to reduce the amount of drug dealing in the area. Residents feel unsafe where this is happening.

A resident commented that there is still criminal drug dealing and fly tipping at the other end of the road and that she does not feel safe where dealers and users are hanging around. She says that actual deals take place very quickly so there is not much to report, they move off very fast afterwards. Fly tipping is reported but there seems to be more of it since the camera by the bend in St Stephens Road was removed.

It was suggested we could have dummy cameras. Kristin had followed this up when Dwayn Ewart visited the alleyway to consider whether a camera could be provided. She has been told that neither dummy cameras or cameras paid for by the community are available. Kristin agreed to send the reply she had from Amoy Gray to Cllr Chaudhary who agreed to follow up this item.

It is clear that to reduce criminal activity in the area more cameras are needed and the ones the council have for the borough are insufficient to deal with the problem. We need to try to build a plan that involves a joined-up response between the Residents' Association, The Council and The Police. The Met Police have some funds that are not currently fully used. (this will need to be discussed at SG)

Cllr Chaudhary asked if the Association had organised representation on the Ward Panel. It was confirmed that our representatives are Kristin Dean and Jas Kumar. It was confirmed PCSO Male had been informed and arrangements made to invite them to the next panel, thought to be 8 July.

ACTION:

- Kristin to send to Cllr Chaudhary the email she had received from Amoy Gray about decoy and community funded cameras.
- Cllr Chaudhary said she would follow up this item with officers.
- Residents' Association Steering Group to make a plan so that the Council and Police come up with an effective plan to deter drug dealing in the Conservation Area more comprehensively and reduce fly tipping and other anti-social behaviour.

6. Lighting: Cllr Chaudhary reported that the warm white bulbs requested could not be provided for one street alone.

Longstanding members of the Steering Group reported that heritage lamp posts were designed with the Steering Group and installed in the Conservation Area. When the new

lights were installed, there was no consultation and we were informed we must have the new lights.

The chair agreed to send a photo of the heritage lamps to Cllr Kiani and he would raise this issue and find out when the contract will come up for renewal with a view to getting the heritage lights reinstalled.

ACTION:

- Chair to send a picture of the heritage lamps that were installed to Cllr Kiani.
- Cllr Kiani to find out how the heritage lights could be reintroduced.

7. Leaf Cleaning

Extra leaf clearing took place last year.

Councillors will raise the issue of giving better and longer notification of deep clean and that residents would like one side of the road to be done at a time to make parking of cars easier.

Cllr Chaudhary fully supported residents augmenting regular Council leaf clear when leaf fall was at its height and resident safety was at risk due to not being able to see uneven pavements and slipping on wet leaves after rain. She reported that when leaf fall is heavy the leaves residents are willing to sweep from pavements around their homes can be picked up by the Council. Purple bags can be delivered for the extra leaves cleared. 7 days' notice is required for pick up. Agreed the Residents' Association would arrange this.

ACTION:

- Cllrs would pass on the request for better notice to be given of deep clean.
- Residents Association will organise getting purple bags for residents to put leaves in that residents have swept up and arrange for the council to collect them from the road side giving 7 days notice.
- Kristin has since agreed to follow up with Council on how to get the leaves cleared by residents to be composted rather than sent to landfill.

8. Corner of Argyle Road and The Avenue:

The narrow footpath with cars parked partly on the pavement and overgrown hedges make it difficult for residents to pass on the footpath forcing them into the road by a bend on the corner of these two roads.

Action:

- Agreed that Cllr Rehman would progress the request for the extension of double yellow lines beside the narrow footpath and ask the Council to remind/ask residents/landlords to keep their hedges trimmed by that part of narrow footpath so residents can more easily pass on the pavement.

9. Lime Bikes Consultation:

The Residents' Association has put in a formal response to the consultation with a copy to Cllr Chaudhary

Cllr Chaudhary thought there would be about 5 months delay before a decision is made about Lime bikes. The more emails she receives about the issue the stronger the evidence she has for her to make a case about our requests.

ACTION:

- Any further emails on Lime bikes to be sent to Cllr Chaudhary.

10. Further Litter Clearing Activity:

Kristin is arranging further litter clearing with children and adults and will let Councillors know when it is happening. Cllr Kiani was invited to the litter clearing on 8 June at his request.

Cllr Chaudhary said she knows some people want rubbish bins returned. She said rubbish bins had been provided in the past but there is concern that they attract anti-social behaviour e.g. drinking around bins. Agreed the Residents' Association would put rubbish bin provision on a Steering Group meeting Agenda to decide whether to request them again.

It was reported that human excrement has been seen in an alleyway near Maswell Park Surgery (and) and the council would not come out specifically to clear it up but would only remove it in a regular cleansing that happens every fortnight. Councillor Chaudhary said she would follow up with Cleansing. There are other reports of the area by the utility boxes in St Stephens Road (Tesco end) being used as a toilet.

ACTION:

- Kristin to let Councillors know when there is a litter clearing date.
- Jennie to put the issue of rubbish bins on a Steering Group agenda.
- Cllr Chaudhary to follow up with the lead member highways to see what action can be taken about human excrement on pavements/paths.

11. Vehicles abandoned in Parkside Road:

The two cars have now been removed.

12. Bend of St. Stephen's Road, towards Tesco end

It's a blind spot for drivers and dangerous. This is due to the heavy parking on both sides of the road. Residents have asked for double yellow lines to be put on the bend to reduce congestion and the risk of accidents.

ACTIONS:

- Jane Hering agreed to send a photo showing the congestion that occurs on that corner and send it to Councillors.
- Councillors would look in to putting double yellow lines at this bend.

13. Date of next meeting to be fixed for September. Meanwhile Councillors will come to the Big Lunch on 13 July.

Meeting ended at 8.30pm