



Albert Square And St. Stephens Association

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 23rd June 2015, at St Stephen's Church

Introduction

1. The Chairman, Peter Edwards, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Councillor Alex Bigham, of Albert Square, to the meeting.

Attendance

2. A list of those who attended the meeting is attached. Apologies were received from Akbar Wajih, Tony Andrews and Simon Howes (Met. Police).

Minutes of 2014 AGM

3. The minutes of last year's AGM held on 15 July 2014 were approved.

Chairman's review of year

4. Peter described the past year as one where much had been promised but rather less delivered, despite pressure from the ASSA committee. It had also been a year where ASSA had managed to hold some excellent events and activities. In summary:

- We now had the build-outs in Aldebert Terrace to calm the flow of traffic on the busiest route through the area. But the grass was patchy and finding people willing to keep mowing it had not been easy. He thanked all those who had helped out, and particularly those who had planted bulbs in the grass in the early spring. The daffs when they came through looked a picture.
- But we were still waiting on Lambeth to come up with the copper beeches they had promised us for the grassed patches.
- It was a similar story with the communal wheelie bins in Albert Square. We had got agreement from Lambeth many months ago to move these on a trial basis to a new bay to be created in the approach road to Albert Square, at the side of No 1. Notices had been put up on lampposts about the suspension of the parking spaces. But we still awaited action to remove the bins to the new location. In the meantime, we continued to have to put up with the bins in all their unsightliness and with all the fly tipping they generated.
- Much the same could be said of our efforts to secure the provision of a couple of cycle hangars in or near Aldebert where people with bikes could store them safely and securely. So far we had nothing to show for all the work the committee had put into this. This was very frustrating as we had provided clear evidence of need.
- Peter accepted there was opposition from some residents to having a hangar outside their property, but believed there was scope for compromise solutions. He suggested we return to the charge in the coming year.



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- ASSA had continued to keep a close eye on planning issues. This covered both individual planning applications within the ASSA area and wider planning developments affecting Vauxhall, Stockwell, Kennington and beyond. There was nothing much to say about individual planning applications, except that we continued to monitor them closely.
- On wider planning developments, the committee had noted with concern that several current TfL/Lambeth projects seemed likely, because of various minor road junction adjustments they introduced, such as the no left turn for cars from Clapham Road into Harleyford Road, to divert more cars into the ASSA streets. We had written to the Mayor's chief cycling adviser to register our concerns and to ask TfL to study the issue and make proposals for additional measures, up to and including road barriers, to stop or limit the amount of rat-running. We had received a very disappointing reply which amounted to a brush-off. Peter asked whether people generally shared the committee's concern about the amount of rat-running we already had through our streets and our fear that this was only going to get worse as the junction adjustments that were being made bedded in.
- The committee had also been disappointed in its efforts to maintain close relations with our local policing team. Crime and policing continued to be an important dimension of our life as a neighbourhood community. Whereas in the past we would see a representative of our local team regularly at ASSA committee meetings, this no longer happened and we had to rely instead on one of us attending meetings of the Stockwell Ward neighbourhood policing panel and reporting back. The committee could understand the reasons why the Met had had to disengage from bodies like ASSA, but we regretted this.
- Another important issue for the neighbourhood over the past year has been filming. This could be quite a nuisance to local residents when parking bays were suspended in large numbers and there was all the disruption to daily life that a major film shoot could generate. We had been prepared to put up with this disruption when the production company concerned had given us plenty of notice of a shoot, sought to minimise the amount of disruption and offered us a suitable donation to community funds. But this had not always been the case and sometimes the donation offered had been very small.
- Peter said that, in an effort to gain better control of shooting plans affecting our neighbourhood, he had drawn up some guidelines which we were now trying to broker with the Lambeth Film Office, a company called FilmFlex. We would put the draft guidelines on the website so that people could have a look at them.
- Film shoot donations had been an important source of additional funding for ASSA for several years now and the committee had been keen to make the best possible use of them to promote local good causes. This year we had put in place a formal bidding process and, after consideration of the bids received, made awards of up to £300 or so to a number of deserving local organisations. The details were in the annual accounts we were presenting this evening.
- It had been a busy year for ASSA in terms of events and activities and Peter thanked everybody who had played a part. We had held two neighbourhood clean-ups, one in last autumn and one in the spring. Lambeth usually supported these events through their Community Freshview programme, providing tools, a skip, top dressing and



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pretty well anything else we asked for. They had supported the autumn event but completely failed to provide support for the spring one. We had nevertheless managed to get quite a lot done in terms of planting bulbs in the build-outs and tidying up the beds outside the church.

- In mid-May we had held another successful Trash or Treasure event. As well as helping residents de-clutter their homes, these events were, of course, a great opportunity for meeting new neighbours and socialising. The weather was kind to us on the day. A particular thanks to Rosemary for organising and publicising the event.
- Thanks were also due to Rosemary and Sundiatu for putting on the Community Big Lunch that took place in the gardens on 7 June. By all accounts, it had been a great and fun day.

Comments and questions

5. In the ensuing discussion on Peter's report, the following comments and questions were noted.

(a) Bins and refuse disposal

- The delay in re-locating the Euro bins at the East side of Albert Square was partly due to the need for a formal traffic Order to be laid removing parking places in the entry road to Albert Square, with corresponding new parking places added to Albert Square. But the timing for these Orders to lie had long expired and we should now be seeing the bins moved to their new home. Frequent phone calls and e-mails had met with no success. This might have been because cuts to local government funding had added new work to existing roles, and people were very stretched, and stressed, so not easily able to help. Meanwhile, there was no obvious way to get a response from Lambeth. Cllr Alex Bigham agreed to chase up.
- The Euro bins were necessary because some houses had multiple occupants living in rooms and flats where there was no space for personal wheelie bins.
- One resident asked for street cameras to be installed in order to deter fly tippers and capture evidence of offending sufficient for Lambeth to prosecute.
- An alternative solution would be an underground storage facility, regularly emptied, but ASSA had not previously been able to raise the estimated £30k to £50k capital costs. Suggestions welcome.

(b) Trees

- Viv Aylmer reported that it had been equally difficult to get progress on the promised trees, which had been selected for the build outs.
- In answer to a question why the build-outs had happened so quickly by contrast, Alex explained that the money for them had come from the ring-fenced budget for Lambeth's Neighbourhood Enhancement Programme, and had had to be spent by a certain date (the end of the Council's financial year).



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(c) Stockwell Post Office

- Alex reported that, sadly, we were to lose the Stockwell Post Office, despite his own objections and objections from other quarters, including ASSA. In future, local residents would have to use the sub-post office in Wandsworth Road, or the main post offices in Brixton Road or Kennington, the last having been newly refurbished.

(d) Stockwell underground businesses

- The meeting noted with regret that Brenda, who runs the stall selling fruit and flowers at Stockwell underground station, having had to vacate her pitch next to the entrance, would not be able to use the side wall of the station in Binfield Road, which London Underground had earmarked for development.
- Alex suggested we might one day have scope for a more permanent market at Stockwell Cross, part of which was going to become a pedestrian area following the re-routing of traffic at the junction.

(e) Vauxhall Bus Station

- Alex said that there would remain a bus station at Vauxhall Cross when the existing one-way gyratory system became two-way, but the bus station would not necessarily be in its current form.
- Some residents present deplored the likely loss of an iconic piece of modern architecture that fulfilled its purpose as a transport inter-change very effectively.
- Others questioned the need for a new High Street to be created as part of the re-development of Vauxhall Cross.
- It was agreed that safety and ease of use for passengers changing buses or changing to or from other modes of transport would be key considerations, and that compromises might have to be made.
- Alex offered to organise a meeting with TFL and the Lambeth councillor responsible for the Vauxhall plan, but residents feared it might be too late to influence the final detailed design (about which we are still ignorant).

(f) Parking on meters in Albert Square

- One resident mentioned how difficult it was to use the coin machines and asked for the council to consider a credit/debit card-based system. Alex promised to note the request and take it forward if possible.

(g) Stopping “rat-running” and maintenance of build-outs

- One resident objected to Peter’s use of the term “rat-running”: people using our streets as a cut-through were entitled to do so and should not be demonised. The build-outs had made no difference to overall traffic levels and queuing traffic caused additional vehicle fumes.



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- Peter said that while he accepted that the build-outs had probably not reduced the overall volumes of traffic using Aldebert Terrace, he believed there was some evidence that they were causing vehicles to slow down, thereby reducing the risk of accidents, which was an important point of their existence.
- In answer to a request from Sue for help with planting up the build-outs, one resident offered to investigate sponsorship for their maintenance.

(h) Filming

- Strong views were expressed about the disruption caused to the neighbourhood by filming, what with the noise film shoots generated and the obstruction they caused to traffic and pedestrians. Production companies' recent derisory contributions to neighbourhood funds were no compensation at all.
- Peter said that the committee would need to return to this subject in the coming year in order to negotiate acceptable limits to the amounts of disruption that could be caused and levels of fees which offered adequate compensation.

Treasurer's Report

6. Sid presented his report to the meeting. The figures had been checked by Tony Andrews as Honorary Auditor and found to be correct. In answer to a question, Peter explained that the committee felt it should maintain a reserve of at least £2,000 in case of need. The report was approved.

Election of officers and committee members

7. The following members of ASSA were duly nominated and seconded as officers and committee members: Briefs for committee members are shown in brackets.

Officers:

Chair: Rosemary Smith

Treasurer: Sid Stiles

Secretary: Danny Williams

Hon Auditor: Tony Andrews

Committee Members:

(a) Re- elected from last year

Paul Mawdsley

Sundiata Dixon-Fyle (larger planning matters)



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Neil Sanders/Viv Aylmer (local planning matters and street trees)

Peter Edwards (crime and policing)

Bill Wilson,

Leo Pilkington (refuse collection)

(b) Newly elected or re-elected after a break:

Charles Glanville (liaison with the Albert Square Garden Trust)

Darshak Shah.

Nick and Yum Halls-Holmsen

Any other business

8. There was no other business.

Date of next committee meeting

9. This will be on Tuesday, 21st July, at 5 Albert Square.



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List of those who attended the AGM

Peter and Sue Edwards
Sid Stiles
Neil Sanders
Viv Aylmer
Martin Gray
Brian Laframboise
Michael and Olga Leapman
Charles Glanville
Yum Yum and Nick Halls-Holmsen
Lesley Stiles
Sam Low and Virginia
Rose Kingscote
Olly Hicks
Paul Orssich
Ian Craig
Nick Cheel
Danny Williams
Leo Pilkington
Andrew Downes
Darshak Shah
Councillor Alex Bigham