

(DRAFT) **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL OPEN MEETING**

**THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2016 at 7pm,
OMNIBUS, 1 Northside, Clapham Common, SW4 0QW**

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Alison Macnair (AM - Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting including Cllr Jane Edbrooke (Executive Cabinet Member and President of CCMAC); Joe Lewis, Parks Manager; Greg Knight, Parks & Recreation; and Olivia Pearcey, Events at the London Borough of Lambeth (LBL).

Sixty people were present at the AOM. See attached list.

AM invited each member of CCMAC present to introduce themselves. Special thanks were given to Diana Linskey, Treasurer, who was standing down from CCMAC.

Apologies of absence were received from the following CCMAC members: Cllr Nigel Haselden and Peter Schmidt.

ANNUAL OPEN MEETING (AOM)

- 1. Minutes of the Annual Open Meeting held on Thursday 19 February 2014:** approved with a minor amendment.
- 2. Matters arising from the minutes:** none.
- 3. Chair's Annual Report for 2015:** see attached.
- 4. Treasurer's Report for 2014:** Diana Linskey spoke to the accounts that had previously been circulated. The balance sheet was available for inspection at the meeting.

Cllr Jane Edbrooke , President of the CCMAC, was elected Chair of the AOM.

- 5. Election of community representatives:** out of the three candidates standing Amrit Hamechan Madhoo was elected to the one vacant position in a secret ballot.

(The following CCMAC members two-year terms will come to an end in 2017: David Dandridge, Lyndsay Jones, Diana Linskey, Alison Macnair, Simon Millson, Alex Nickson, Helen O'Malley, George Owen, Peter Schmidt and Fred Uhde.)

6. Adrian Wikeley (AW), Land Use Consultants (LUC): LUC were the authors of the Clapham Common Masterplan commissioned by LBL in 2007 to provide a plan for future development of Clapham Common. (LUC were the designers of the Eden Project in Cornwall.) AW went through the history of the Common and its changing purpose over the years. He outlined the genesis of the Masterplan, the extensive consultation that took place with the Clapham Common community, and the main recommendations, including improving facilities for sport and play activities, ways in which to improve the ecology of the Common, and means to improve the experience of cyclists and pedestrians on the Common including a recommendation to close Windmill Drive.

After the presentation there was an open Q&A session at which member of the audience asked a series of questions to representatives of LUC, CCMAC and LBL.

In answer to one question JE said that due to Government cuts the parks budget had been reduced by over 50%. LBL had responded by dividing the fee for events on the Common so that one third is to be invested in projects for Clapham Common and the remainder being available for other LBL parks and open spaces to use for improvements. This was on top of the Environment Impact Fee.

The meeting concluded at 9pm.

7. Date of next AOM meeting: Thursday 2nd February 2017.

CHAIR'S REPORT TO CCMAC ANNUAL OPEN MEETING 4 FEBRUARY 2016

The Chair welcomed those attending the meeting and introduced herself and Cllr Edbrooke. She explained that CCMAC was the umbrella group for organisations and individuals concerned with Clapham Common, which co-ordinated the work of those people and groups, but also acted on its own initiative.

Members of CCMAC present at the meeting, together with Joe Lewis and Olivia Pearcey from LBL, briefly introduced themselves.

After last year's AOM, there had a been complete change of officers. The Committee was to lose Diana Linskey as Treasurer, and the Chair thanked Diana for the professionalism and patience she had shown in her role. Although the Committee's budget was small the records were not necessarily simple and Diana had managed them superbly.

The Chair took the opportunity to mention Deryn Watson who left CCMAC during the year. Deryn had put the functioning of what had been the Trees Sub-Committee on an organised footing, ensuring that decisions about planting were not only discussed among the right people, but also accurately recorded and followed up.

The report went on to record **some improvements to state common was in and its management**. There were problems with the condition, which would only change when the Common got major investment. But CCMAC could, and did, focus on what needed doing and on solutions in order to have an effect.

Along South Side, **the Paddocks**, people had been parking where they should not. There were unsightly bins in the wrong place and the throughway was obstructed. LBL had ordered new bins and fencing, the design of which had been considered by CCMAC, and work starting Monday. The Chair gave credit to George Owen and Cllr Bernard Gentry for their role in getting attention to this problem and getting the work done.

At **85 West Side**, where developers had encroached onto common land, largely because of persistence of FoCC supported by CCMAC, LBL had identified a solution. The Chair recorded her admiration for the persistence shown by FoCC over this issue.

CCMAC had agreed with FoCC plans for **planting 14 trees** in the next couple of months, with support from Trees for Cities. FoCC was also developing plans for 2,000 square metres of **wildflower planting**.

The **Green Waste Site** was being upgraded to accommodate very much-needed improvements in way waste is converted to compost. The site had become very neglected: it was known as the Dump with reason. Bandstand Beds had developed a Community Food Growing Space on the site. They had brought in funds for raised beds and a polytunnel, and a water supply. This was in addition to the regular crops and sunflowers at the Bandstand, and blackcurrants and gooseberries at the Spinney.

People of all ages were now out there in all weathers gardening together. This was perhaps especially valuable for children and older people. Area of neglected land had become a tremendous resource. The Chair acknowledged the great work done by David Dandridge and Diana Linskey.

CCMAC was now working with LBL to develop a **plan for the whole site** including a surround that would screen the less attractive features. Bandstand Beds had already bought, and either planted or heeled in, native trees that would be used. The plan would enable everyone to be involved in the decisions being made. It also needed to accommodate the Quietway, if that went ahead, work on Spinney, and the Windmill playground area (of which more followed).

Other work had focussed on making CCMAC more effective. The **website** had gone live with its distinctive dot.london domain name. The website was designed with a more modern look than that of many similar organisations, such as parks friends' groups. Postings were keeping people updated with what was going on with the Common and CCMAC. CCMAC wanted people generally to post and the meeting was asked, if they had an event or development they wanted to draw attention to, to let CCMAC know. The only limit was that the website was not to be used for commercial advertising.

Also game-changing, the CCMAC now had a **twitter** account. More people than ever were aware of who we were and what kind of things we were doing. A recent story had been retweeted 30 times and liked by 25 accounts. The Chair acknowledged the work done by Alex Nickson, David Dandridge again and Simon Millsom.

Much of CCMAC's work had always involved **commenting** on, and trying to **influence**, others' initiatives. In relation to **events on the Common**, CCMAC's role was becoming clearer, as helping to ensure that large-scale events went ahead with minimum damage to the Common and that where damage was done it was repaired. CCMAC was not a residents' association, and could not take up the concerns of people who living around the Common, such as noise.

In relation to each planned event, CCMAC had made written representations, and visited the site with Olivia and colleagues on set-up and take-down. Income from events went into an Environmental Impact Fund, which CCMAC tracked each month, and decided on spending from. This is how new bins and fencing and for water supply to the Green Waste Site had been funded.

Planning: CCMAC had been consulted on three exciting developments.

The Spinney, the former One O'Clock Club building, was undergoing a re-design to become a greater resource for local parents and children, particularly for outdoor activities bringing children into contact with the natural world.

The **Polygon WC** building, which had been standing empty for years. CCMAC had been able to bring the intended use for the building back to what the Masterplan envisaged. When an application for planning permission for the right use class was submitted, CCMAC persuaded LBL's Planning Committee to insist that we were consulted before work starts.

CCMAC intend to use this opportunity to realise our ideas for this area, especially to fulfil the original planting scheme for the site, which had not been fulfilled when the Old Town was redeveloped.

There had been a planning application by London Transport for the London Transport Museum, for convert the Clapham South **Deep Shelter**. Peter Schmitt had submitted a detailed appraisal for this significant site. It supported the view that the proposals fulfil what the Masterplan envisaged.

Among the concerns CCMAC had raised was the risk to the trees potentially affected. On CCMAC's behalf Peter had submitted suggestions for what conditions might be imposed. Even before the planning application was submitted, the architect Mark Owen of POW had taken steps to protect the trees. Lengthy planning conditions reflected our suggestions. CCMAC would continue to be involved as work progressed and a decision was made on the contractors to do the fitting out.

The Quietway: the Chair argued that in relation to an initiative like this, where there would be wide consultation, CCMAC's view was unlikely to be decisive. This was especially true where the policy support for cycling to replace road traffic was engaged. CCMAC could, however, be influential on the details of the proposals and on benefits that could accrue in consideration of the disruption to the Common and its users.

Simon Millsom had put together the CCMAC's response and kept in communication with the people at Sustrans and LBL. CCMAC would be alongside these agencies and Lambeth in the detailed planning and implementation, if the initiative went ahead. In the Chair's view, Simon's work on this had been a masterclass.

Most importantly for the Common, two **investment applications** were soon to start. Dr Iain Boulton, LBL's Environmental Compliance Officer, had begun a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) bid for **Battersea and Nursery Woods**. The programme was for grants of up to £100,000 and covered wet woodland creation and restoration. The aim was to prepare and submit a costed application for works to start in Autumn 2016. Iain was very knowledgeable and experienced,

as those who had attended his presentation to the Clapham Society the previous week would know. This initiative was in very safe hands.

LBL's Capital Investment Programme included £450K for **play facilities** on Clapham Common. Thanks to Lyndsay Jones' drive and energy, the project was now pencilled in for Stage 2 of the implementation of the programme. CCMAC members had visited the site behind the Windmill with Jennette Emory-Wallis from Land Use Consultants (LUC), to begin thinking about what could be built there.

So that plans for the Windmill play area were not seen as a one-off, CCMAC had asked LUC to prepare a play strategy for the whole of the Common. There was also an acute need for work on Battersea Rise and the Paddling Pool.

The Chair finished by commenting on the **parks budget** and its implications. Because central Government has little difficulty with cuts falling on local government, and local government had some things it had to pay for, such as child protection and adult social care, savings would have to be found in the budget for open spaces.

Budget for maintaining Lambeth's parks was being roughly halved. The maintenance contract was to be taken in-house from Veolia to LBL: this would inevitably involve redundancies. Other staff had had to work with a long-drawn-out restructuring - which involved difficulties for members of the community, but a different kind of difficulties for the staff whose jobs were potentially disappearing or being regraded.

The Chair expressed CCMAC's recognition of how well the staff they worked with had borne up under the pressure. Members of the Committee were consistently impressed by the positive approach staff were taking to their work and their resilience. While CCMAC did not always agree with LBL staff, they wanted them to know that they did appreciate their work.