

CLAPHAM COMMON MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CCMAC)

Minutes of Annual Meeting: 8 February, 2024 Omnibus Theatre, SW4

Chaired by Simon Millson, Chair of CCMAC, supported by Joanna Reynolds, Vice-Chair; Adrian Darley, Treasurer; and Phil Carey, Secretary

Attending for Lambeth Council: Kevin Crook, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods; Lara Mifsud-Bonici, Senior Parks & Sports Development Officer; John Gandhi and Ikram Syed, Engagement & Enforcement Team

A further 8 members of the 2023-24 CCMAC took part, along with c25 members of the public.

1: Treasurer's Report

Adrian Darley presented summary accounts for the year to 31/12/23 approved by Penny Ward FCA, which showed a surplus of income over expenditure of £11,752; the main expense was £4,825 for bandstand concerts staged, but receipts from Lambeth also included delayed cover for 2021 and 2022 concerts. In addition, CCMAC received £6,267, 10% of Lambeth's income from filming companies using the hard-standing area for parking, for both 2022 and 2023 (and a further £4,500 has been received after year end). The end-year bank balance of £11,945 provides a healthy starting point for planned expenditure in 2024.

2: Chair's Report

Simon Millson explained there had been significant improvements across the Common since 2020, and highlighted specific successes in 2023, including the new Waterplay facility, very well-received by users; the stepping up of work to improve ecology and biodiversity, including the designation of the new 16 hectare Local Nature Reserve (LNR); and another successful season of bandstand concerts. He thanked the tremendous contribution from volunteers, including from the Clapham Society and Friends of Clapham Common. Historic under-investment however means there is still much ground to make up, and he identified as a priority for 2024 investment in improved paths and signage. CCMAC's ambitions will be constrained by Lambeth's capacity to deliver as well as by the limited funding available.

Unlicensed music events ('UMEs') had been a major challenge through the summer of 2023. The Chair welcomed the Council's new Engagement & Enforcement Team, but its leader John Gandhi recognised its effectiveness in stopping UMEs is limited until the required police officer team member can be recruited.

Constitution Updates

Wild Clapham, until now one of CCMAC's Working Groups, has now obtained charitable status and so the Chair proposed it be formalised as an affiliated organisation instead; Item 3 records the introduction to Wild Clapham by Gareth James, whose place on CCMAC hitherto representing Friends of Clapham Common will be taken by Ed Alnutt.

The Meeting approved this change; Phil Carey will publish an updated CCMAC constitution, recording the addition of Wild Clapham to the section on Membership; other changes include the removal of Bandstand Beds as an affiliated organisation, following its resignation from CCMAC in January, and referencing Lavender rather than Shaftesbury ward following boundary changes in Wandsworth.

New Community Representatives

The Chair set out other changes in membership of CCMAC, including his decision to stand down after this Meeting from the Chair and from the Committee. This reduces the number of Community Representatives appointed at the last meeting to six; he obtained approval from the Meeting to appoint Charlee Boston as a seventh Representative, confirming her de facto membership since July 2023. In introducing herself, Charlee, Chair of the Tenants' and Residents' Association of the Notre Dame Estate, highlighted her commitment to getting broader engagement in activities on the Common for residents in her and similar estates.

The Constitution provides for up to ten Community Representatives; three further candidates who had submitted nominations introduced themselves to the Meeting:

- Petr Kaiser runs the social media account Best of Clapham, and is keen to increase involvement and accountability for young people who use the Common
- Andrew Summer has been a member of CCMAC for some years as the representative of the Clapham Society, but has recently handed that role over to Michael Barry. Andrew's priorities will include targeting litter and making usage of the Common more community-oriented.
- Kim Wiper is keen to apply her experience in the property and hospitality sectors to boost sustainability of activities on the Common.

The Meeting confirmed the appointment of all three candidates.

3. Reports from affiliated organisations

Clapham Society: Michael Barry referred to the Society's long history of campaigning to preserve and enhance the wider Clapham area.

Friends of Clapham Common: Samantha Walker set out how FoCC rounded off a very active 2023 by gaining charitable status. It had led a big campaign against the Festival Republic proposals, presenting evidence to the Public Inquiry, and its members have worked hard throughout the year on tree-planting, litter-picking and running events raising funds for other local causes.

Wild Clapham: Gareth James explained that now it has charitable status, Wild Clapham is able to apply for grants and can step up its work implementing ecology and biodiversity projects across the Common, including the wildflower meadows. It is working closely with FoCC to deliver the wetland project by Eagle Pond, the largest single nature enhancement scheme.

4. Report from Lambeth Council

Kevin Crook introduced the services for which his Neighbourhoods teams are responsible, all being developed within the borough's strategic context (including obligations arising from the Environment Act 2021) and manifesto commitments. Budget pressures are becoming more intense, and the Council must pursue income generation to avoid cutting services.

Around £1m was spent on the Common in 2023, the bulk of it funding the new Waterplay Area. Tackling anti-social behaviour has been a management priority, with, beyond action on UMEs, the Council preparing to make Public Space Protection Orders for the purposes of dog control.

A key objective for 2024 is improving sports facilities, with a focus on better football pitches and the redevelopment of the Redgra pitch alongside The Avenue. Kevin outlined five priorities in the capital investment programme:

- converting the derelict toilet block north of Battersea Woods into a café, now that planning consent has finally been granted by Wandsworth (Lambeth has secured £150k of extra funding);
- improvements to the Bowls Pavilion in preparation for leasing the building for new leisure uses (£80k has been secured for investment);
- exploring options for a Westside Sports Hub alongside, potentially introducing new sports;
- finessing the Waterplay Area ready for a full successful summer season;
- reconfiguring and landscaping Windmill Drive in a Low Traffic Neighbourhood project, with work now scheduled for March to June.

Events are crucial to his teams' work, both in respect of impacts on the Common and its users, and in the revenue raised from them. 20% of the Council's net receipts are ring-fenced for investment in the Common under the Parks Investment Levy scheme. Expected income in 2024 has reduced, with the withdrawal of planned events by Festival Republic and Secret Cinema; but a varied programme remains, including new events such as the Vegandale food market in July, a London Fashion Week event in September, followed by a four-day Oktoberfest – all though subject to the Council's decisions following objections to its application for consent for event structures.

A lively Q&A session then followed: topics covered included: the unacceptable impacts of UMEs for participants as well as local residents; the need to back up Dog Control PSPOs through clearer signing; the need to repaint worn safety markings on the north-south cycle path; and the scope for community sports on Westside such as croquet and bowls.

The Meeting concluded with the Vice-Chair and Cllr Linda Bray expressing the gratitude of all who had worked with Simon for his dedication and skill in steering

CCMAC's successes through his nine years on the Committee and seven years in the Chair.

Minutes prepared by Phil Carey, Secretary