

## Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC)

Minutes of meeting on Thursday 6 June 2024, 1900 - 2100 The Depot, Clapham Common

### Attendees:

Adrian Darley (AD) (*Chair*)

Cllr Alison Inglis-Jones (AIJ)

*Member organisations:*

Michael Barry (MB) (Clapham Society)

Gareth James (Wild Clapham)

*Lambeth Council:*

Paul Smith, Head of Parks (PS)

Lara Mifsud-Bonici (LMB)

*Community Representatives:*

Phil Carey (PC) (*and Secretary*)

Petr Kaiser (PK) (*and Comms*

*Officer*)

Michael Mooney (MM)

Carole Powell (CP)

Joanna Reynolds (JR)

Krishna Siva (KS) (*and Treasurer*)

Apologies received from Charlee Boston, Cllr Linda Bray, Cllr Ben Curtis, Andrew Summers and Kim Wiper. Membership also includes Ed Alnutt, for Friends of Clapham Common (FCC)

Attending for Item 1: Marie McCarthy, Artistic Director, Omnibus Theatre

### **1: Clapham Fair**

Marie McCarthy outlined the plans for the Fair on the afternoon of Saturday 7 September, which Omnibus is organising in conjunction with Clapham BID (represented here by CP); CCMAC has already agreed to run a stall. The scale and mix of events will be similar to previous years, and there should be no new impact on the Common. LMB asked that her team be reminded close to the date of the need to cut the grass. CP alerted all to the continuing availability of sponsorship opportunities, to top up the BID's own funding for the event.

### **2: Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

The minutes of 2 May were approved, and on matters arising not picked up elsewhere in this meeting:

- *Mud Club*: JR will chase Kevin Crook for an update on the planned Decision Report, and will advise on whether she has any outstanding concerns. MB is checking if the Clapham Society can provide a paragraph on how the Club has come about.

**Action 2A: JR, MB**

- *Parks Investment Levy and paths*: PC explained the remit the Paths Access & Signing working group had been given on 21 May by the Masterplan Delivery WG to set out its priorities for spending up to £30k of PIL money in 2024. CCMAC noted the list he had shared just ahead of the meeting, and had no substantive comments.

**Action 2B: PC to submit list to PS, who will check how far priority repairs can be funded from existing Lambeth capital provision rather than PIL.**

### 3: Ongoing Clapham Common works update:

CCMAC welcomed Paul Smith as the new Head of Parks, the role previously filled by Ian Ross. PS and LMB reported developments as follows:

- *Bandstand condition*: holes in the decking may constitute a safety risk, so the deck may need to be temporarily closed off when not in use for events.

**Action 3A: LMB to advise on plans as they firm up**

- *Benches*: members welcomed the installation of further replacement benches, from the total of 80 new benches being delivered in batches. LMB proposed a major new installation, up to 10 benches on the eastern approach to the Temperance Fountain, where the path is already wide enough not to need new hard standing. CCMAC was concerned about the aesthetics of so many benches together (although there would be gaps), and felt that just three at most on each side might be a better starting point; it will confirm its view on the proposal following a site visit.

**Action 3B: AD to coordinate a small ad hoc group to assess the opportunity; the Access Paths & Signage WG to consider what other new locations might be worthwhile.**

- *Cycle paths*: repainting of surface markings now under way, along with installation of 'pedestrian priority' signing.
- *Green waste site*: LMB is assessing the case for Heras fencing, with hessian screen, to demarcate the site better before the new hedging matures
- *Kiosk by central playground*: recruitment of team almost complete, and attention will then turn to getting the 'ice cream trike' into operation.
- *Litter*: an early priority for PS is addressing the problem of overnight litter: more bins will be provided, and he will launch a new campaign with banners exhorting more responsible behaviour.
- *Pavilion & kiosk by bowling greens*: good progress in contractual negotiations with the preferred lessees for each of the buildings. CCMAC was concerned at the very visible deterioration of the site during this protracted process: the pavilion has been broken into and will need to be boarded up more robustly, and the collapsed pergola has been left so long that re-erecting it will be more challenging, and not possible until autumn, after the nesting season, as birds have taken advantage of the period of neglect. It would help to explain this delay to the public.

**Action 3C: PS to report asap on prospects for granting the leases; AD and MM to work up a draft text of explanation for the delay in addressing the deterioration, to be posted by the Council as a joint message.**

- *Sports pitches*: LMB has been working hard to reduce the intensity of use of the pitches recently set up on West Side and has already been able to relocate one pitch back to the central Common. She is in direct communication with the resident leading the objections, such that there proved to be no need for CCMAC to explain its own position to him (and it now welcomes this resident's wish to help Wild Clapham invest in further enhancements on West Side). CCMAC will continue to monitor the impacts on local residents.
- *Temporary toilets*: provision to meet peak summer demand will again be made at the same central Common site as last year; GJ requested a small adjustment to the location to prevent damage to tree roots.

**Action 3D: GJ to give LMB the precise location**

- *Trees*: the Council's team and the FCC / Wild Clapham-led volunteer group are carrying out regular watering.

**Action 3E: GJ to provide PS with details of one defective Gator bag**

- *Unlicensed Music Events*: several instances during May of successful and prompt action to shut down UMEs as they were being set up; the Enforcement Team is finding ways to work round the continued delay in appointing the s92 police officer to the team, and is pursuing charges in respect of the 12 May incident; AIJ is assisting in the court case. The recent uprooting of the gatepost by UME organisers forcing access for their vehicles on to the Common (since recovered from Mount Pond and reinstalled) highlights the need to use security cameras on Windmill Drive once the current works are complete.
- *Windmill Drive reconfiguration*: work is progressing, and further measures have had to be taken to mitigate the problem of short cut diversions damaging the Common. An extra four weeks will be needed to install an anti-slip surface, including a waiting period before application. CCMAC urged Lambeth to ensure contractors post an explanation of what is happening. LMB confirmed that Windmill Drive is scheduled to re-open at end July. The Committee agreed that if necessary fencing should stay up for another 1-2 weeks if necessary whilst Wild Clapham complete phase 1 of the Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) planting. LMB has agreed that Bandstand Beds should be consulted on the plan for post-completion planting.

**4: Approach to CCMAC communications and marketing**

CCMAC thanked PK for the flurry of recent news postings now that he has obtained administrator access to the website and Instagram account. He stressed his primary aim of being speedy in posting content, and CCMAC confirmed he should use his own judgment in selecting material, without needing to wait for formal Committee approval. The next wave of news stories should cover: benches; the litter campaign; the temporary toilets; and progress with Windmill Drive, in each case giving due credit to Lambeth.

**Action 4: PK, and all CCMAC members to propose content direct to PK (NB WhatsApp preferred to email)**

**5: Progress reports from Working Groups**

- 1) *Access, Paths & Signage*: (see Item 2)
- 2) *Bandstand Concerts*: AD has worked intensively to finalise the programme of 17 concerts, with a successful start on 2 June; deckchairs should have been set out, but their absence in fact helped the atmosphere for this dance-focused ska performance. Some future performers may also prefer not having a seated audience – their views should be sought. The priority now is to step up promotion of the programme: MB has prepared a poster and is seeking further sites to display it. He will prepare revised versions as the programme progresses, adding a brief description of the act where this would help. AD is compiling a rota for the minimum of two stewards required for each concert.

**Action 5A: MB to take forward publicity, with oversight from AD; all to offer dates for when they can volunteer as steward** (Linda Bray has since circulated the draft rota with this request)

- 3) *Bowling Greens & Pavilion*: (progress to await Action 3B)
- 4) *Ecology & Biodiversity*: GJ awaits the biodiversity report from the London Wildlife Trust, which will determine next steps for the Group.

**Action 5B: PS to find out when the report might be available**

- 5) AD has been carrying out a weekly survey for the Butterfly Trust, and may wish to publicise later in the summer this work to increase butterfly species.
- 6) *Events*: MM reported on the Group's 3 June meeting seeking to drive progress on the Events Strategy proposed by the Council, aiming still to have it in place for 2025; it had identified lots of additions needed to the outline strategy initially provided by PC. PS confirmed the great value he saw in having a strategy in place, and undertook to bring the necessary parties together. Recent input from FCC was appreciated, but AD stressed that what is needed is a framework for action by Lambeth, not a legal document.

**Action 5C: MM to rework outline strategy, and PS to take forward with the Group, and with Lucy Zaman**

- 7) *Governance*: (on hold until mid-year review)
- 8) *Masterplan Delivery*: (see Item 2 above)
- 8) *Sports*: (as noted at May meeting, the Group will follow up pitch allocation issues, and future plans for the Redgra site, as and when appropriate.)

## 6: Member Group updates

- *Clapham Society*: MB will share for CCMAC consideration the detailed proposal for CS-funded history signs (suggesting they be located on lecterns around the bandstand) before the next meeting. The Society is undertaking bulb planting by Clapham Common tube station, and will liaise with PS and John Mackie to get advice on precise siting.
- *Wild Clapham*: From a busy month, GJ highlighted WC's bidding to lead on the Windmill Drive planting; and his work to set up its own website, seeking an early meeting with PS. He requested a review of management practices across the Common by the Operations Team: he had come to the view that there was a need to instill, in the team, enthusiasm for the opportunities and challenges arising from eg the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status. PS agreed, and suggested briefing team members in groups.

**Action 6A: AIJ to be invited to website meeting with PS; GJ to support PS in setting up team briefings**

- *Friends of Clapham Common*: GJ referred to the Summer Party on 20 June, and the near-finalisation of funding for the Wetlands Project; this would include £20k from CCMAC (PIL money), which was needed to unlock funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. He was concerned to learn that planning permission procedures could delay the start on the project.

**Action 6B: AD to provide a letter confirming CCMAC's commitment to fund; GJ to recirculate explanatory note re the project to CCMAC for the benefit of new members.**

**7: Any other business**

- KS expressed concern at the lengthy delays in progressing the new regime for tennis licensing; PS hoped the legal detail would be finalised in the next 6 months.
- LMB reported on the unauthorised hacking back of trees in Battersea Woods, understood to be on behalf of an LGBT group seeking to remove obstacles to outdoor sex. This was agreed to be directly contrary to the Woods' LNR status; LMB will engage afresh with Cllr David Robson, as a possible intermediary with the group in question.

**8: Date of next meeting:** The planned date of 4 July clashed with the General Election, so it was agreed to shift to Thursday 11 July, with JR in the Chair in AD's absence. It was also agreed to schedule an August meeting this year, given the level of activity on many fronts over the summer – Thursday 1 August; both meetings at the Depot, 1900.

Minutes drafted by Phil Carey, Secretary