

Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC)

Minutes of meeting on Thursday 11 July 2024, 1900 - 2100 The Depot, Clapham Common

Attendees:

Joanna Reynolds (*Chair, in absence of Adrian Darley*)

Cllr Linda Bray (LB)

Cllr Ben Curtis

Cllr Alison Inglis-Jones (AIJ)

Member organisations:

Ed Alnutt (Friends of Clapham Common) (EA)

Alison Macnair (Clapham Society, for Michael Barry)
(AM)

Gareth James (Wild Clapham) (GJ)

Community Representatives:

Charlee Boston

Phil Carey (PC) (*and Secretary*)

Michael Mooney (MM)

Krishna Siva (*and Treasurer*)

Kim Wiper

Lambeth Council: Kevin Crook, Assistant Director Neighbourhoods (KC); Paul Smith, Head of Parks (PS); Lara Mifsud-Bonici (LMB); Lucy Zaman (LZ)

Apologies received from Adrian Darley (AD), Michael Barry, Petr Kaiser (PK), Carole Powell and Andrew Summers.

Attending for Item 1: Christine Knipe, Experience Director, Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE) (CK)

1: Proposed Royal Agricultural Society 'Farm and Food Expo'

RASE, a non-political registered charity, is planning, with the Lambeth events team, a large-scale exhibition which would 'take the farm to the city', aiming to showcase 'safe, humane and sustainable' farming; Christine Knipe summarised it as 'educational and entertaining, but not an entertainment'. It would occupy the Events space for 7 weeks in late August / September 2025 (2 weeks set-up, 4 weeks open, 1 week closedown), attracting up to 750k visitors. She responded to questions from FCC and others present on:

- *Aims and consent:* the Expo will promote the British farming industry, but not individual players. LZ stressed that it would have to pass the Secretary of State's approval process, and EA understood that the relevant statute¹ will require it to be classed as entertainment. AM noted that legislation might not permit the sale of goods other than food and drink.
- *Scale and transport impacts:* max capacity at any one time would be 15,000, with more than double that attending over the course of most days. An 'affordable' entry fee would be charged (potentially eg £25 for a family), with discounts for schools and lower rates on designated "residents' days". LZ recognised the need to liaise with TfL on the capacity of tube and bus services, noting that unlike most events the Expo would increase loading on working days, not just weekends. There was broad concern about the unusually large scale of the event, but CK indicated that a smaller

¹ Greater London Parks and Open Spaces Act 1967, s7

footprint or shorter duration, as preferred by CCMAC, might not be viable. CCMAC was later informed that the event as envisaged by RASE could generate substantial six-figure income for next year's PIL.

- *Funding and partners:* ticket revenue would be topped up by grants, including from charities, and commercial sponsorship. GJ and EA sought assurance that these partners would meet high ethical standards. CK committed to the concession holders on site working with the local community to source and sell quality products.
- *Farming policy challenges:* CK gave assurance that animal welfare was a core principle: livestock kept on site (for the duration) – cows, sheep, chickens, not pigs – would not be caged; AIJ alerted her to the risk that 'urban' noises such as fireworks and sirens might distress the animals. EA and GJ, concerned at the industry's record, urged RASE to present sustainable policies in respect of use of fertilisers and pesticides, and wanted the 'education' remit to include the slaughterhouse process and the environmental impacts of the beef herd industry. CK stressed there would be a strong net zero message overall.

Action 1: LZ will ensure RASE keeps CCMAC informed of progress in recruiting sponsors and concession holders; she will feed back RASE's further thinking on incorporating the sustainable policies highlighted. KC and LZ will report on progress more generally on reaching agreement with RASE, including the expected PIL receipts.

2: Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of 6 June were approved, and on matters arising not picked up elsewhere in this meeting:

- *Mud Club:* The Clapham Society had provided a helpful note on the origins of the Club's operation. **Action 2: KC still to provide an update on the planned Decision Report.**
- *Comms and marketing:* follow-up to discussion deferred to next meeting given PK's absence.

3: Parks Investment Levy: allocations for 2024/5:

KC explained that new PIL money available for investment in Clapham Common will now be much lower than previously expected: Burberry has cancelled its planned London Fashion Week event, so the forecast is now £43k rather than £68k. Some £36k of that is already committed in principle, including £20k for the wetlands project and now a small sum for replacing fishing platforms at Mount Pond. However, available funds should now be increased by a significant sum carried forward from 2023/4. CCMAC reiterated the need for clarity on what is available, to determine in particular what sum should be spent on enhancing paths, and where. It helps that now the repair of pothole damage on the paths close to Holy Trinity Church can be funded from the revenue account, not PIL money.

Action 3: KC and LMB urgently to confirm carry over, commitments and available headroom so that CCMAC decisions can be made by 1 August meeting.

4: Ongoing Clapham Common works update:

PS and LMB reported on:

- *Bandstand flooring:* work is being programmed to repair holes in the decking, but need to identify precise colour used in past.
Action 4A: AM to see if Clapham Society can advise on the colour
- *Benches:* AD and GJ had advised in a walkabout on additional sites for up to 20 new benches
- *Bowling Greens site:* Lease negotiations are proceeding slowly, for the kiosk in particular, but the agents SW indicate that lengthy negotiations are quite standard; there is no indication of when they might conclude. KC was alert to the strong concerns from residents in the houses immediately opposite about noise impacts, particularly if alcohol sales were to be permitted in the kiosk into the evening. He stressed that discussions on the lease have not been about the nature of operations at the kiosk; any conditions to be imposed on that would be for Wandsworth Council to determine as the planning and licensing authority, once the new lessee had made the appropriate applications. PC undertook to report back to the resident coordinating the objections, but urged Lambeth to press for early resolution of the kiosk negotiation, or promptly engage with alternative bidders. Lambeth has carried out some preparatory work on both buildings, but repairs to the collapsing pergola must still await the end of bird nesting.
Action 4B: AD and MM to follow up June commitment to provide text explaining the delays to action on the site, to be posted by the Council as a joint message.
- *Operations:* PS is now focusing on ways of improving the team's effectiveness and awareness of opportunities.
Action 4C: PS to report to August meeting
- *Signing:* new 'no parking' signs are now installed at the north end of West Side, and signs highlighting the ban on unlicensed music events are about to be put up. Further work is needed on refreshing white lines on the north-south cycle path, to ensure the markings are fully durable.
- *Windmill Drive:* the reconfiguration is close to completion. GJ highlighted the need, now that the temporary fencing has been removed, to prevent cyclists cutting across the wildflower meadow area, and got agreement to place logs and stock fencing to block the entry points. It was noted that the Lambeth Cyclists organisation has, disappointingly, expressed dissatisfaction with the new slalom layout on the Drive itself.

5: Progress reports from Working Groups

- 1) *Access, Paths & Signage:* Group will resume work on paths priorities once PIL funding is clarified.
- 2) *Bandstand Concerts:* LB reminded us that several gaps remained in the steward rota; she will recirculate to prompt further sign-ups.
- 3) *Bowling Greens & Pavilion:* (progress to await Action 4B)
- 4) *Ecology & Biodiversity:* still awaiting the biodiversity report from the London Wildlife Trust, which will determine next steps for the Group.

Action 5A: PS to press for news on timing

- 5) *Events*: MM reported the Group had met last week, and Lambeth is now working up a draft Strategy. GJ asked that it seek to learn from how the Brockwell Park strategy has failed, and in particular challenge the presumption from senior Lambeth management against any cap on cumulative duration of events. MM understood that AD already has this in hand.
- 6) *Governance*: PC undertook to initiate the planned one-year-on review of the three policy statements (EDI, anti-harassment, and conflict of interest), with the WG also assessing the continued relevance of the Strategy document published on the website.
Action 5B: PC to convene meeting of WG
- 7) *Masterplan Delivery*: (AD to advise on next steps at August meeting)
- 8) *Sports*: (AD to advise on next steps at August meeting)

6: Member Group updates

- *Clapham Society*: AM outlined the diverse range of current activity, including saving a derelict cottage on North Side from demolition, bulb planting in Old Town and continued work on the planned CS-funded history signs.
- *Wild Clapham*: On the Wetlands project, GJ reported that a 6-week period will be needed before planning permission can be secured. AD had written confirming CCMAC's commitment to part-fund, but there is some question now over the expected grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund; however, an alternative private funding source is lined up in reserve. Wild Clapham has now submitted to Lambeth its SuDS proposal for planting the rain gardens along Windmill Drive.
- *Friends of Clapham Common*: EA referred to successful fund-raising at the Summer Party last month.

7: Any other business

- PK had raised in correspondence the scruffiness of the 'grassy knoll' site, an important gateway to the Common from Clapham Common tube station. Possible options for investment to tackle this should form part of the 2025/6 PIL round.

8: Date of next meeting: Thursday 1 August, 1900, at the Depot

Minutes drafted by Phil Carey, Secretary