

Clapham Common Management Advisory Committee (CCMAC)

Minutes of meeting on Thursday 5 September 2024, 1900 - 2035 The Depot, Clapham Common

Attendees:

Joanna Reynolds (*Chairing in absence of AD*)

Cllr Linda Bray (LB)

Cllr Ben Curtis (BC)

Cllr Alison Inglis-Jones (AIJ)

Member organisations:

Michael Barry (Clapham Society) (MB)

Gareth James (Wild Clapham) (GJ)

Community Representatives:

Phil Carey (PC) (*and Secretary*)

Petr Kaiser (PK)

Michael Mooney (MM)

Carole Powell (This is Clapham) (CP)

Krishna Siva (KS)

Lambeth Council: Paul Smith, Head of Parks (PS); Lara Mifsud-Bonici (LMB)

Apologies received from Adrian Darley, Andrew Summers

CCMAC membership also includes: Ed Alnutt (Friends of Clapham Common) (EA), Charlee Boston, Kim Wiper

1: Matters arising from 1 August meeting

'Grassy Knoll': PS and GJ will meet next week to agree plans for early remediation and to identify causes of past failure to maintain effectively; the invite should be extended to CP (given This Is Clapham has part-funded), LB (as local councillor), MB and PK.

Action 1A: GJ to schedule meeting; CCMAC to consider broader strategy for the site this winter

Deckchairs for bandstand concerts: Performers and attendees have criticised the small number of deckchairs put out for this summer's concerts. CP offered to see whether her member businesses could provide spare stock, perhaps gifted to them by suppliers and branded accordingly. If insufficient come forward, CCMAC should consider itself investing in more. (One concert had also been affected by failure of the electricity connection; LMB undertook to check any problems were sorted in time for the FCC Christmas event.)

Action 1B: CP to report on response from her members; PS to check what further storage capacity is available

RASE 'Food & Farming Expo': still no progress since the July briefing, given absences over the summer.

Action 1C: PS to report by email on news from Lucy Zaman

2: Clapham Fair 7 September

PC set out the rota for the nine members volunteering to staff the CCMAC stall, and MM presented the new showcards he and PC had prepared, plus two banners he had purchased

which would be valuable in future promotions too. It was agreed CCMAC should make a £70 donation to the Fair organisers, as they suggested instead of charging a fee as in the past.

Action 2: PC to circulate short briefing note to the volunteers, and liaise with AD on his return, and KS, re the £70 payment.

3: Ongoing Clapham Common works update:

On the main areas of current CCMAC concern, PS and LMB advised as follows:

Windmill Drive: several problems have arisen from the new layout in practice. Many users are finding the shared space challenging, and juxtaposing 'bike' and 'pedestrian' symbols on the approach paths was failing to communicate the need to proceed with caution; this urgently needed addressing, and the preference of many to walk on the parallel path on the Common, perceived to be safer, needs to be accommodated. LMB reported that a short stretch of path needs to be reinstated. Some drivers parking on the prohibited part of the Drive are arguing that signing is unclear, and LMB is trying to find a mechanism to continue to allow permitted delivery vehicles to use the road: the enforcement process that will be set in train once cameras (from **October?**) capture a vehicle registration mark (VRM) needs to allow for many suppliers not being able to supply in advance the VRMs being used. Progress on these two highways issues has been complicated by the departure of a key Council officer.

Bowling Greens site: preliminary works on both the pavilion and kiosk are now complete, and lessees for both are now firmly on board. There will be further delay in restoring the collapsed pergola alongside: the nesting season is now over, but the repairs team is currently short-staffed. Two actions from the August meeting are yet to be dealt with.

Actions 3A: PS to obtain progress report, including planned opening dates for both facilities, from Kevin Crook. PS to assess what can be done this autumn to repair the pergola, and (action updated from August) LMB to confirm what appropriate explanatory notice can be displayed. (Action from August) AIJ to liaise with Wandsworth Councillor Jo Rigby to establish position with planning application for the Pavilion.

Enforcement activity: PS will now be directly involved in monthly management meetings for the enforcement function, and will report in time for the October meeting on outputs from the Enforcement Team to inform a discussion on further steps CCMAC wants to see, including publicising bylaws; LB would feed in any advice to be obtained from the Clapham Town Safer Neighbourhood Team. PS expressed his concern about the vulnerability of the Common to incursion by vehicles, and whilst work was progressing to install further bollards, he asked that he and LMB be advised of any new gaps CCMAC members notice. The failure to keep the gate from Windmill Drive padlocked was unnecessarily increasing the risk of incursion; members should alert PS or LMB by WhatsApp whenever they see the padlock has disappeared. As for tackling unlicensed ice cream vans in future, LMB is seeking to learn lessons from the Lambeth colleague managing the problem on Westminster Bridge.

Actions 3B: PS, with PC, to get data on enforcement activity ready for October meeting; all members to report to PS/LMB as appropriate re bollards and the gate padlock.

Litter management and broader effectiveness: PS has set up round table meetings with the Operations team to re-evaluate litter management and questions of broader effectiveness of day-to-day activity.

Action 3C: PS to report on what emerges

Tree works: PS has overseen a range of tree surgery activity in recent weeks, working on a number of alder, cherry and silver birch trees. All timber cut down is being retained on the Common for habitat purposes, or for blocking off access at vulnerable points. He has identified a particular problem now with the massaria fungal infection affecting London planes, usually out of sight; this will require a programme of remedial action, but it should not detract from necessary routine work.

Other works issues (listed in alphabetic order) were reported on or raised by members:

- *Battersea Rise scrubland:* some Leathwaite Road residents have complained that the current annual cutting back by Lambeth is insufficient to maintain access to back gardens.
- *Bins:* the bin store temporarily displaced during the Windmill Drive works will be returned to alongside the Green Waste site. LMB would like to use £3k of PIL funds to acquire additional bins for the Common, but AD is not ready to sanction this until we have clarity on the costs of paths restoration (see Item 4, Paths & Access)
- *Changing rooms / 'Old Toilet Block' café:* the renovated changing rooms will be available for use from this weekend. In the old toilet block, asbestos has been dealt with but now a weak roof structure needs to be addressed; LMB is confident that works will be complete by November. As the presence of tree roots mean it will not now be possible to host 'pop-ups' in front of the café, there is no need now to move the 'sports container' storage unit. LMB reported the intention to remove the redundant drinking fountain by the barrier; CCMAC confirmed it has no objection.
- *Cycle lane markings:* no progress yet in improving labelling on the north-south cycle route because of problems tracking down the appropriate stencils
- *Eaton House School:* LMB noted that their activities were damaging some of the pitch markings, and CCMAC reminded her of the need to reach an agreement with them about payment for use of the Common.
- *Jody Dobrowski bench:* CP passed on a report of deterioration of this memorial bench; it would have to be repaired, perhaps by reverting to the original funder, as LMB explained that new benches sourced from the current programme she is managing cannot have plaques attached (a condition of the legacy gift).

Action 3D: LMB to check with Ian Boulton how the bench had initially been funded

- *Nightingale Walk – access to Common:* JR mentioned the disappearance of one of two stepping stones enabling the metal fence to be scaled.

Action 3E: PS to check what replacement could be made, possibly a stile

- *Toilets at Pear Tree Café (PTC)*: Lambeth has advised, in response to the member's enquiry that LB tabled, that the need to improve maintenance will be included in lease renewal negotiations, led by Trevor Virtue in Commercial Licensing.
- *Rough sleepers*: LMB and team have had to deal with a number of cases this summer; the individuals concerned all have varying needs, and Lambeth will have been able to move them all, without force, within the next week.
- *Weeds around the tennis courts*: PS explained to KS the split in responsibility for removing weeds, depending on whether growing on the tennis pitches or the other side of the fence; he understood that, with no chemicals being used now, they had to be removed manually.
- *West Side parking*: senior enforcement colleagues are now seeking to resolve a dispute with a resident at the north end of West Side claiming the right to park on the access road.

4: Progress reports from Working Groups

- 1) *Access, Paths & Signage*: resumption of activity still awaits advice from Hanna Radlowska on costings for the agreed set of priority paths. LMB is already liaising with Hanna in respect of the urgent repair work to the path near the Holy Trinity Church. JR expressed her interest in considering priorities for signing as well as paths.
Action 4A: JR to chase Hanna Radlowska re overall paths requirement
- 2) *Bandstand Concerts*: Group should identify lessons learned from successful 2024 season when AD is ready.
- 3) *Bowling Greens & Pavilion*: next steps to be determined following Action 3A
- 4) *Ecology & Biodiversity*: the biodiversity report from the London Wildlife Trust (LWT) is now overdue, and the action from August is outstanding. **GJ expects to meet LWT on 25 September.**
Action 4B: PS to liaise with Kevin Crook to ensure that LWT engage with the relevant Community groups in formulating the Management Plan section of the report.
- 5) *Events*: MM still awaiting next draft of Strategy from Lucy Zaman.
Action 4C: PS to chase LZ (alongside Action 1C)
- 6) *Governance*: PC reported the Group had reviewed the three papers (EDI; anti-harrassment; conflicts of interest) one year on and determined no changes were needed, but future meeting agendas should include a reminder to members to declare any new conflicts of interest emerging. PC had also reviewed the Plans & Strategy paper that has been on the website for some years; he proposes it be replaced by a simpler statement of CCMAC's 'Mission'.
Action 4D: PC to circulate the review findings plus draft Mission Statement for comment and approval at October meeting
- 7) *Masterplan Delivery*: (AD to advise on next steps at October meeting)
- 8) *Sports*: (AD to advise on next steps at October meeting)

NB not mentioned Oktoberfest / Park Run clash

5: Member Group update

- *Clapham Society*: MB reported the main focus coming up on autumn bulb planting. He is also researching potential new suppliers for the Society's website.
- *Friends of Clapham Common*: GJ referred on EA's behalf to the Pumpkin Patch event planned for 13 October, and the forthcoming deep clean of the Waterplay facility.
- *Wild Clapham*: GJ awaits final authorisation to start work on the Sustainable Drainage planting along Windmill Drive. Progress in getting consent for the Wetlands project has resumed, focusing now on building control. GJ has agreed now with PS the 'cut and collect' regime for the Wildflower Meadows, to take place by mid-October, and the plan to deposit sand or sandy loam on the path through the northside Meadow to address the winter flooding problem. He obtained CCMAC's agreement (i) to use stock fencing to block off bike access to the path cutting through the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) west of the Spinney, and (ii) to plant 5 to 7 scrub islands in the triangular LNR between Eagle Pond and the Windmill, whilst retaining the surrounding amenity grassland. GJ confirmed otherwise that there should be no more large-scale planting, given the scale of the watering burden already.

6: Any other business

PK revealed he has been working on a new-look website, seeking to make it easier to administer.

Action 6: PK to send round link to draft site when ready; CCMAC to review before it goes live

7: Date of next meeting: Thursday 3 October, 1900, at the Depot

Minutes drafted by Phil Carey, Secretary