



THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY

Minutes of the **40th Annual General Meeting** held on **Thursday 31 March 2022** at **7:00pm** online on Zoom.

Welcome

[Slide 2] Rebecca Tee, Chair, welcomed everyone to the AGM and, in particular, all new members. There were 38 attendees.

The housekeeping rules for the meeting's conduct were outlined with a particular request to members to use the Chat facility to ask a question or make a comment.

[Slide 3] Apologies for absence were received from Peter Bradley, David and Ann Cianfarani, Jeff Doorn, Annie and Dave Gelly, Jackie Plumridge, Lin Proctor and Val Suebsaeng.

[Slide 4] The agenda was shown on screen.

1. Minutes of the 2021 AGM and matters arising

[Slide 5] The draft minutes had been posted on our website. The Chair reminded those attending that only paid-up members of the Society were eligible to vote. The minutes of the 2021 AGM were adopted as a true and accurate record by a clear majority and the motion was carried. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2. Retiring Chair's Report on 2021

Rebecca's key points were:

[Slide 6] Membership had increased to 350 at the end of the year which may well be the highest in our history. A targeted recruitment campaign resulted in 50 new members and this upward trend continues. Efforts to collect email addresses resulted in only 10 members remaining for whom we do not have addresses, plus 9 who do not appear to use email. The Society has also been ensuring that as many members as possible are signed up to Gift Aid, which generates additional income of 25% from subscriptions. This Gift Aid scheme came to an extra £300 in 2021.

[Slide 7] Covid restrictions continued but we have begun to reinstate face-to-face events. One example in July 2021 was a stall at the Ruskin Park Summer Fete. We were pleased that Helen Hayes MP visited us as shown, with volunteers Ros Glover, Henry Ferguson and John Brunton, in the photo.

Helen Hayes MP was in attendance at the AGM and took the opportunity to congratulate the Society on its 40th anniversary for its important contribution to making Herne Hill a special place with a thriving community. The Society's work for

four decades on planning, the public realm, the parks, our heritage, has made a wonderful contribution to community and civic life in our area.

[Slide 8] Rebecca continued that the Society also had a stall at Carnegie Community Trust Christmas Fair where our new publication was on display. This book, *Sunset Over Herne Hill- John Ruskin and South London* was published and launched in October last year. It represented a major premium product. Six months after printing half the stock has now been sold. This slide shows the two authors, Laurence Marsh, Vice Chair of the Society and Jon Newman from Lambeth Archives.

[Side 9] Laurence Marsh, Vice Chair, conducted an interesting Zoom talk in September on “*Crime and Punishment in Herne Hill*”, to an audience of 50 people.

[Slide 10] The Society laid a wreath next to our plaque honouring those who lost their lives in World War I, for Remembrance Day 2021.

[Slide 11] At the invitation of the Herne Hill Forum, banners printed with extracts from our *Herne Hill Heritage Trail* book, were displayed in Herne Hill station underpass. The Society is represented on, and has links with, many other local societies and organisations. An informative article was written on Southwark Council’s controversial Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme and a meeting with Helen Hayes MP was held on this issue. The proposed abolition of the Dulwich and West Norwood Constituency by the Boundary Commission resulted in a review of the proposal and the submission of our strong objection, in conjunction with the Herne Hill Forum.

[Slide 12] Three issues of the magazine were produced in 2021, hand-delivered to all local members and posted to those further afield. Back issues are available to view on our website. Thanks were given to the Editor, Laurence Marsh and to Sophia Marsh, for their work as well as to those who wrote for, took pictures for, and helped distribute the magazine. We also issue monthly electronic newsletters to all members and thanks go to Colin Wight for producing these for us. Our social media presence is substantial for an organisation of our size and we continue to use this tool to send out messages about our work.

[Slide 13] The **Planning Group** was as active as ever last year, evaluating planning applications affecting the local built environment, transport issues, licensing applications, and changes in business activity and civic amenities. The group submitted detailed, authoritative objections on a number of controversial applications and in 2021 its most important activity related to:

1. Appearing at Lambeth’s Planning Applications Committee objecting to the demolition and redevelopment of Roper’s Walk, part of the Cressingham Gardens Estate.
2. Supporting the enlargement of the Brockwell Park Conservation Area.
3. Making further submissions in relation to the long-running Dorchester Court planning application.
4. Engaging in aspects of the major electricity infrastructure scheme at Bengeworth Road.

Thanks were given to everyone on the Group, all planning and building experts, which was led by Laurence Marsh. There were very few licensing applications of concern last year but this may become a major issue in the year to come.

The Chair thanked the many people who had offered help and advice over the year including to the Committee. Colin Wight, Pat Roberts and Val Suebsaeng who stepped down from the Committee last year have continued to actively assist the work of the Society.

3. Treasurer's Report

[Slides 14]

The Treasurer, Martyn Hall, presented slides of the Society's income and expenditure over the last year compared to 2020. The draft accounts had been posted on our website. Pie charts of income and expenditure were shown.

Points of note were:

Income -

[Slide 15] Income almost tripled last year and membership continued its steady growth. We received gifts from the Timothy Franey Charitable Trust, some of which was for our publication *Sunset Over Herne Hill*. Sales of all publications did very well and magazine advertisements made a substantial contribution.

[Slides 16, 17 & 18]

Expenditure -

Over half of our expenditure was on printing. Magazine printing was higher, as the year before, one issue was in electronic format only. *Sunset* printing costs were £4,300. We bought some publications for resale. There were no successful Small Grants awarded. Publicity costs were for the banners in the underpass and the launch of the *Sunset* book.

[Slide 19]

Overall -

The Society's finances are strong and 2022 has started well in terms of both membership and publications income. Recorded Income in 2021 was £10,284 and Expenditure was £8,758, giving a surplus of £1,526.

However, six cheques (total value £2,008) were written in 2021 for work/activities carried out in 2021, but were not taken from our account till 2022.

As these cheques relate to 2021, it makes more sense to include them together with other 2021 Expenditure. If we do this, then 2021 gave rise to a deficit of £482.

We also still have stocks of *Sunset* to sell. The overall figures are broadly comparable to 2020.

Deepak Sardiwal asked, “*Has there been any sign of inflationary pressures that will impact the Society in 2022?*” The answer was no, not much and our reserves are a cushion of any increase in inflation. Colin Wight contributed that printing costs are increasing but we are not planning to produce a new publication of a substantial size in the imminent future.

[Slide 20] Thanks were given to Sally-Anne Jeffries for checking the accounts for the Society for the third year running.

It was proposed by Robert Holden that the statement of the Society’s financial accounts should be adopted and this was seconded by Juliet Cooper. A poll took place and the accounts were adopted unanimously and will be posted on the website.

4. Committee retired

[Slide 21] The 2021/22 Committee stood down pending the election of a new Committee. Thanks were given to Carol Boucher who had been Secretary.

5. Election of new Committee for 2022/23

[Slide 22] The elections were conducted by Sheila Northover as Returning Officer. The Committee Officers were nominated and seconded as follows:

Chair: Rebecca Tee nominated by Colin Wight, seconded by Juliet Cooper
Rebecca Tee was elected.

Vice-Chair: Laurence Marsh nominated by Rebecca Tee, seconded by David Williams
Laurence Marsh was elected.

Treasurer: Martyn Hall nominated by Robert Holden, seconded by Patrick Roberts
Martyn Hall was elected.

Secretary: There were no nominations, so there is a Vacancy for this position.

All nominees for election as Officers of the Society were elected by a clear majority. Anyone interested in being Secretary on the Committee is invited to contact Rebecca Tee, Chair.

[Slide 23] The Committee members were nominated and seconded as follows:

Rosalind Glover: nominated by Patrick Roberts, seconded by Robert Holden

Henry Ferguson: nominated by Rosalind Glover, seconded by Colin Wight
Nigel Thorpe: nominated by Jeff Segal, seconded by Rebecca Tee
Lin Proctor: nominated by Matt Tee, seconded by Victoria Barber

These were taken as a block and all nominees were elected. Sheila thanked all those elected for their willingness to run the Society for the coming year.

6. Any other business

[Slide 24] There were no items under any other business.

7. The Year Ahead

[Slide 25] The Herne Hill Society Excellence Awards will be launched in one month to shine a light on local contributions from individuals, organisations or businesses who are contributing to the Society's three areas of Community, Heritage and Environment. The Awards will be open for nominations and applications from April 2022 to September 2022. Three Herne Hill Society judges from previous Committees, Sheila Northover, Colin Wight and Pat Roberts, will judge in December 2022 and the awards will be presented at the next 2023 AGM at the end of our 40th anniversary year. Each of the three categories will have a winner and two runners-up. Winners will receive a crystal award and a certificate and will be featured in a Herne Hill Society magazine. Members were encouraged to think of people or groups who could apply for an Excellence Award.

The newly re-elected Chair, Rebecca Tee, outlined the progress that had been made over 2021 as the Society has gone from strength to strength. After experienced members of the Committee stepped down in 2020, the Society was in a difficult position. Covid encouraged people to focus on their local area and the Society continues to be relevant through our key areas of work, namely local history research, articles and talks, publications, providing a balanced view on changes to the built environment, traffic, environmental and licensing issues and linking with other voluntary organisations and businesses where appropriate.

Help in running the Society is always needed so we are open to offers, particularly from those with finance, social media, website and licensing expertise as well as more generally. There is a current vacancy for a Secretary. Increasing membership and volunteer help will be important in carrying out our plans, so do make contact if you are interested in getting involved. Thanks were given to all present for their continued support of the Society.

Questions -

Robert Holden announced the Local History Walks that he will be leading, to be held in September 2022 in conjunction with Lambeth Local History Forum. He added his thanks to the current Committee and their background supporters.

Laurence Marsh asked if nominations for the Excellence Awards could be made on

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behalf of other people, as some people might be too modest to apply themselves. The answer was yes although at some point during the process, the person/group being proposed would have to be asked if they were willing for their nomination to go forward.

Colin Wight added that his period spent on the Committee was very enjoyable. It enables you to find out about the area, meet many new people and it does not need to take up a lot of your time, so is well worth doing.

[Slide 26] **The 2021 AGM closed at 8:00pm.**

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