

THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY



Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 30 March 2023 at 7:00pm online on Zoom

Rebecca Tee, Chair, welcomed everyone to the AGM and, in particular, new members. There were 20 attendees.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Victoria Barber, Sara Bristow, Jeff Doorn, Ros Jones, Lin Proctor, Cllr Deepak Sardiwal, Helen Hayes MP, Jeff Segal, Matt Tee and David Young.

The Agenda was shown on screen.

1. Minutes of the 2022 AGM and matters arising

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 2022 AGM were accepted as a true and accurate record. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

2. Retiring Chair's Report on 2022

Rebecca's key points were:

Membership had increased to 386 at the end of the year which is the highest in our history. This included 64 new members who joined during the year. 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. Gift Aid brought in an extra £511.38 in 2022.

A bar chart showing the increase in membership was shown.

We had stalls at various events, one example being at the Ruskin Park Summer Fête. Lucy Hadfield, Chair of the Friends of Ruskin Park, Sheila Northover, a former Chair, Mayor of Lambeth, Cllr Pauline George and Ros Glover our Membership Secretary were shown on a slide. We were pleased that Helen Hayes MP visited us at the Carnegie Autumn Fayre,

Helen Hayes was unable to attend the AGM owing to a prior commitment, but sent the following message:

“Thank you to all the officers and volunteers at the Herne Hill Society for all of your hard work this year. I am really sorry that I can't be with you at your AGM this year. The Society has had another successful year of working on issues of heritage, environment

and community on behalf of local people. Congratulations on your 40th anniversary and I look forward to celebrating with you all, at the Herne Hill Society Excellence Awards Celebration next month.” Thanks were given to Helen for her words and continuing support.

We also had a presence at the Charter School North Dulwich’s Christmas Fair and at the Herne Hill Sunday Market Community Stall. These events take a lot of volunteer time and effort, but are a good opportunity to meet with members, recruit new ones and sell our publications.

Most of the stock of the first print run of our most recent publication, *Sunset over Herne Hill: John Ruskin and South London*, has now been sold. We sold a total of 394 books during 2022 both direct through our website and via local bookshops, principally Herne Hill Books.

For Remembrance Day 2022, Laurence Marsh, our Vice-Chair, laid a wreath on behalf of the Society by the plaque honouring those who lost their lives in the First World War.

Three issues of the magazine were produced in 2022, 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 designer Sophia Marsh, for their work, as well as to those who wrote and took photos, and helped distribute the magazine. We also issue monthly electronic newsletters to all members.

Our social media presence is substantial and we continue to use these tools to send out messages about our work and spread information about local history, environmental and community issues.

The Planning Group was as active as ever, evaluating planning applications affecting the local built environment, transport issues, licensing applications and changes in business activity and civic amenities. This volunteer group submitted detailed, authoritative objections or support on controversial applications.

In 2022 the most important activities were:

1. Enabling the modernist house at 10 Dorchester Drive to be listed with English Heritage and Historic England.
2. Making a submission in relation to the proposals from the Boundary Review Commission, in conjunction with the Herne Hill Forum.
3. Objecting to specific design features of the proposed football pitches in Brockwell Park. The proposal was withdrawn and is being amended.
4. Making submissions to Southwark and Lambeth Councils with regard to domestic properties where planning concerns were raised.

Thanks were given to the eight members of the Group, all planning and building experts and those interested in these issues, which was led by the hard-working Laurence Marsh.

Rebecca thanked the many people who support our work, giving expert transport and traffic advice, writing articles and sharing photographs. Special thanks were due to Pat Roberts, Bil Harrison, Val Suebsaeng and Sheila Northover. All of them have continued to actively assist the work of the Society. Colin Wight continues to be a great support in terms of our website, electronic newsletter and social media.

Members were invited to get in touch if they wished to get more involved.

3. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer, Martyn Hall, presented slides of the Society's income and expenditure over the last year compared to 2021. The draft accounts had been posted on our website. Pie charts of income and expenditure were shown. Points of note were:

Income

"Once you strip out donations to the publication *Sunset Over Herne Hill*, income was broadly comparable to 2021 and membership continued its steady growth. Sales of all publications did very well and magazine advertisements made a substantial contribution."

Expenditure

"Nearly half of our expenditure was on printing. Magazine printing was higher than the year before, due to vagaries of payment dates. We bought some publications for resale. One Small Grant was awarded. Publicity costs were for the banners in the underpass."

Overall

"At the end of 2022 the Society's finances remain strong. The figures for the year are best looked at in conjunction with those for 2021: a small surplus of £1,525 in 2021 and a small deficit of £1,264 in 2022 combine to make a surplus of £261 over the two years. When we consider that these two years include the largest single item of expenditure in the Society's history - over £4,300 to publish *Sunset over Herne Hill* - then this result is highly satisfactory. We also have stocks of publications to sell."

There were no questions.

Thanks to Sally-Anne Jeffries for checking the accounts for the fourth year running.

It was proposed by Juliet Cooper that the statement of the Society's financial accounts should be approved, seconded by Colin Wight. An online poll was held and the accounts were adopted unanimously and will be posted on the website.

4. Committee retires

The 2022/23 Committee stood down pending the election of a new Committee. Thanks were given to Michèle Arnal, who had been Minutes Secretary, and to Annie Gelly, a founder member of the Society. Martyn Hall is stepping down as Treasurer, a post he has held since 2017. He was thanked for his skills in managing the finances of the Society and his positive attitude.

5. Election of new Committee for 2023/24

The elections were conducted by Pat Roberts as Returning Officer. The Committee Officers were nominated and seconded as follows:

Chair: Rebecca Tee, nominated by Colin Wight, seconded by Juliet Cooper.
Vice-Chair: Laurence Marsh, nominated by Rebecca Tee, seconded by David Williams.
Treasurer: Lyndon Fothergill nominated by Martyn Hall, seconded by Laurence Marsh.
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.

The Committee members were nominated and seconded as follows:

Rosalind Glover, nominated by Robert Holden, seconded by Sheila Northover
Henry Ferguson, nominated by Rosalind Glover, seconded by Colin Wight
Lin Proctor, nominated by Matt Tee, seconded by Victoria Barber
Martyn Hall, nominated by Helen Bristow, seconded by Lin Proctor
Ros Jones, nominated by Henry Ferguson, seconded by Ros Glover

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

A further election was held for the position of Honorary President. Colin Wight was proposed for this position for his involvement with the Committee since 2004 and his continuing support and guidance.

Colin Wight, nominated by Laurence Marsh, seconded by Rebecca Tee. A vote was taken and was unanimous in favour of Colin Wight as Hon. President.

Colin replied: "I am honoured to be elected as President. The Society has had just one previous President, the much loved and missed Bill Kirby. As he died in post at 100 years of age, I hope I may follow his example. Thank you."

6. Any Other Business

There were no items to discuss.

7. The Year Ahead

The Herne Hill Society Excellence Awards: these have been launched to shine a light on local individuals, organisations or businesses who are contributing to the Society's three areas of Community, Heritage and Environment. The Awards were open for nominations up to December 2022 .

The judges ,Sheila Northover, Colin Wight and Pat Roberts, have now made their decisions and the Awards will be presented at a Celebration event on 27 April 2023 at Temple Bowling Club.

Each of the three categories will have a Winner and two Highly Commended. Winners will receive a crystal award and all finalists will receive a certificate and will be featured in a Herne Hill Society magazine over the forthcoming year.

Blue/green plaque (Shops History Project): we have adopted the idea of the Norwood Society of blue heritage window stickers in most of the shops in Crystal Palace. With a small team of history researchers, we are now finding out about the past incumbents of each Herne Hill shop.

Every shop who commits to the scheme will be given a sticker, personalised to some aspect of their history, to display, backed up by fuller information on our website. This should prove exciting to local people, school pupils and visitors and will also lead to a publication in due course. More history researcher volunteers are always welcome to help with this new project - just get in touch.

Help in running the Society is always needed, particularly from those with expertise in finance, events, social media, research and website management, as well as more generally. There is a vacancy for Secretary. 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 spoke about the Local History Walks that he will be leading in September 2023 in conjunction with Lambeth Local History Forum. He regretted that the Society had not had a presence at the Lambeth Local History Fair which was held in Waterloo SE1.

Sheila Northover suggested that the AGM could be held as an in-person event in 2024 to encourage more people to attend, perhaps with a speaker to attract a higher turnout.

The 2023 AGM closed at 7:45pm.