

THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY

Minutes of the 43rd Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 6:00pm at Temple Bowling Club

The presentation began at 6:15pm.

The Chair, Dr Rebecca Tee, welcomed everyone to the 43rd Annual General Meeting of the Herne Hill Society, with a special welcome to new members. There were 40 people at the AGM, 35 of whom stayed for the talk on "The History of Railton Road" with Nikky Catto after the break.

A picture was shown of Sheila Northover, a previous Chair of the Society, laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday at Herne Hill Station.

Apologies were received from: Helen Hayes MP; Martyn Hall; Teresa Israel; Cllr Richard Leeming; Nick Mair; Susie Perring; David Taylor; Nelly Tee; David Young.

Helen Bristow and Kara Tritton acted as tellers for votes during the AGM.

Agenda

1. Minutes of AGM 2024 and Matters Arising
2. Chair's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Committee retires, and Election of a new Committee
5. Any other business
6. The Year Ahead and President's Commendation

Guest Speaker: Nikky Catto: *The History of Railton Road*

The first item was to accept the Draft Minutes of the AGM of March 2024 as posted on the Society's website. There were no amendments proposed and no matters arising that were not on the agenda.

The first vote of the evening was taken. Only paid-up members were eligible to vote. The proposer was Ros Glover and the seconder was Henry Ferguson.

A **vote** was moved on the motion to accept the draft minutes as a true and accurate record of the previous AGM. **Carried** by a clear majority on a show of hands.

Chair's Report

The Chair presented her brief report on 2024. This was her fifth year as Chair of the Society. During her first year she was mentored by Colin Wight.

The Society finished the year with membership up from 393 in December 2023 to 398 in December 2024.

Membership is the highest it has ever been according to our records. A bar chart showed its growth over the last five years.

The bulk of our income comes from membership fees. Recruitment remains a priority for the Society and the Committee have worked hard on this. Everyone who buys one of our publications from our website is asked to join or to encourage a friend or neighbour to join.

Membership	December 2024	December 2023
Total Membership	398	393
Including new members	36	29

The Society has members from all over England: Cornwall, Devon, Sussex, Surrey, Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. We even have members in France and the USA.

The audience was asked to encourage a local friend or neighbour to join and to pass on their magazines to illustrate the interesting and valuable work the Society does.

The Society had worked at getting as many members as possible to sign up for Gift Aid as we can claim 25% of subscription fees from the Government, providing valuable extra income. Last year Gift Aid amounted to £560.

The Society took a stall at the Ruskin Park Summer Fête in June, and the Lambeth Heritage Festival in September 2024. Our volunteers met with existing members, recruited new ones and sold publications.

The Society continued to be represented on the Brockwell Lido Users Association by Sophia Marsh and maintained close links with other local organisations such as the Herne Hill Forum, the Friends of Brockwell Park, the Friends of Ruskin Park, the Camberwell Society and the Dulwich Society.

Helen Hayes MP could not attend this AGM, but asked for a message be read out on her behalf:

Thank you to the Herne Hill Society's Committee and volunteers for all that you have done for the Herne Hill community over the past year.

I have been really pleased to work with you again over the past year on planning issues and your campaigns on the local environment.

I was delighted to join you earlier this year to celebrate the Herne Hill Society Excellence Awards celebrating the work of local people protecting our environment, heritage and community. I know that the Society has continued your important work documenting local history and I am looking forward to the launch of the Shops History Project and green plaques later in the year, which will really bring some of our local history to life.

I am very sorry that due to a longstanding commitment, I am unable to join you this evening. I hope you have a fantastic evening and best wishes for your AGM and for the coming year.

As well as those kind words and her continuing support for the work of the Society, Helen Hayes also generously donated a bottle of House of Commons champagne as a raffle prize.

During 2024 our local history books continued to sell well, direct from the website, through stalls and through Herne Hill Books by the station. A total of 272 publications were sold, including 26 maps and 54 magazines.

The Society held its monthly Committee meetings at the Half Moon Hotel.

We produced three more issues of *Herne Hill* magazine, hand-delivered to members by a team of volunteers, and also available online. Through its news items and feature articles, *Herne Hill* magazine reflects the changes and new developments in our locality.

Thanks go to editor Laurence Marsh, and his wife Sophia who does the layout and design of each issue, as well as all those who wrote for and took pictures for the magazine. The Society also issues monthly electronic newsletters to all members, and thanks are due to Colin Wight for compiling these and for managing our website.

The social media presence of the Society is substantial on Instagram and this tool is used to send messages about our work and that of local partners to spread relevant information about historical, environmental and community issues.

Special thanks also go to Pat Roberts, Bil Harrison, Valerie Suebsaeng, Robert Holden and Sheila Northover. All have continued to assist the work of the Society.

The Planning Group was active last year, evaluating planning applications affecting our built environment and changes in business activity and civic amenities. This volunteer group submitted detailed, authoritative objections on controversial applications. During 2024 –

- (1) The group continued to monitor planning applications in the Herne Hill and Loughborough Junction ward (Lambeth) and Dulwich Village ward (Southwark).
- (2) It raised the question of enforcement in a number of cases where development appears to have occurred without planning permission or contrary to the terms of the permission.
- (3) The great majority of domestic extensions are not controversial, but the Planning Group has objected to a small number, where it was felt the development went against Lambeth's or Southwark's own planning policies.

Our thanks go to every one of the members of the Group, all planning and building experts and those interested in these issues, which was led by the hard-working Laurence Marsh. There were very few licensing applications of concern last year.

Treasurer's report

Lyndon Fothergill presented his report. The accounts summary has been posted on our website.

Introduction

- The 2024 accounts run from 1 January to 31 December 2024. They show the Society's 2024 income and expenditure compared to that of 2023.

The Society's income by category.

- Almost half our income comes from Membership Subscriptions which, as we have charitable status, can be gift aided. The next biggest source of income is Sales of Books that the Society publishes as well as books purchased from other publishers (notably on architectural history from Lambeth Archives) and sold on. The third main source of Society income is Magazine Advertising. The fourth largest source of income was Donations – in particular a donation of £1,000 from the Timothy Franey Charitable Foundation.

Actual income in 2024 compared to actual income in 2023.

- Membership and gift aid income was slightly up compared to 2023 (we had more members) - with publication sales and magazine advertising income slightly down. This is because more advertisers wanted space in 2023 and we had fewer book sales (less events) – though book sales do go up and down. Higher interest rates on the Society's deposit account also resulted in increased income. Gift Aid is an important additional source of income (£560 in 2024).

Expenditure in 2024 by category.

- Our largest expenditure in 2024 was Other printing, where we reprinted some of the books that are still in demand. Specifically, we printed 200 copies of *Sunset over Herne Hill* and 200 copies of *A Short History of Herne Hill* – both available to buy from our website. The next largest item of expenditure is Magazine printing: the 3 magazines we print and send out to members each year. Other significant items of expenditure were our Website and IT costs, Storage and two Small grants. One was to St Paul's Church towards the cost of restoring its organ; and one was to the Herne Hill Music Festival – used towards the production of *Peter and the Wolves* at Judith Kerr Junior School.
- A slide compared the Society's 2024 expenditure to that of 2023. Income was broadly the same across both years (£8,060 versus £7,438), whilst expenditure was slightly more in 2024. As a result – whilst we are still in a healthy position overall – with a total balance of nearly £15,000 (which is above the Charity Commission's recommended reserve for a charity of our scale of £12,800), this is less than we finished with in 2023. The Committee is looking at ways that we can reduce expenditure and increase income to make sure we can keep going as a Society for many more years.

The accounts and their paperwork have kindly been examined by Sally-Anne Jeffries and, if agreed by the members, will be submitted to the Charity Commission. There were no questions.

A **vote** was taken to accept the accounts.

Ros Glover proposed to accept the 2024 accounts and Laurence Marsh seconded the proposal. The vote was **carried**.

The Committee retired. Colin Wight (President), as Returning Officer, conducted the Election of the new Committee.

The candidates for Officer roles were taken one by one, then the remaining Committee members as a group. Therefore there were four elections. Only paid-up members are eligible to vote.

Vote: Rebecca Tee as Chair – Nominated by Colin Wight, seconded by Kara Tritton. The vote was **carried** and Rebecca Tee was duly elected as Chair.

Vote: Laurence Marsh as Vice-Chair – Nominated by Rebecca Tee, seconded by Ian McInnes. The vote was **carried** and Laurence Marsh was duly elected as Vice-Chair.

Vote: Lyndon Fothergill as Treasurer – Nominated by Martyn Hall, seconded by Laurence Marsh. The vote was **carried** and Lyndon Fothergill was duly elected as Treasurer.

Vote: Susie Perring as Secretary – Nominated by Lin Proctor, seconded by Lyndon Fothergill. The vote was **carried** and Susie Perring was duly elected as Secretary.

The final **vote** was for four further Committee members, being voted on as a group:

Rosalind Glover, Membership Secretary - 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.

The vote was **carried** and Rosalind Glover, Henry Ferguson, Lin Proctor and Martyn Hall were all duly elected as Committee members. A new Committee was therefore **elected**.

The Chair then gave a flavour of the year to come, in the form of three initiatives.

Excellence Awards 2025: a Celebration Event was held on 7 May with the Awards presented by Helen Hayes MP. There were twice as many entries as for the first Awards in 2023. There was a Winner and two Runners-up in the three categories of Heritage/History, Environment and Community. Finalists are featured in each *Herne Hill* magazine.

The Camberwell Society has followed our initiative by starting their own awards scheme. Those present were encouraged to consider people and organisations that could be eligible for an Award.

Herne Hill Shops History Project had been slightly delayed owing to illness.

All members present were thanked for their support. Anyone interested in joining or getting more involved with the Society was invited to contact the Chair. Feedback was welcomed, especially when the Society does something well, positive comments being very heartening!

No matters were raised under AOB.

President's Commendation

Colin Wight, Hon. President of the Society, presented the inaugural President's Commendation to Dr John Brunton, prolific author and a former Vice-Chair of the Society for many years.

The meeting ended at 7:00pm.