

**WALWORTH SOCIETY MEETING**  
**7.00pm – 6 July 2017: St Peter’s Church, Walworth, SE17.**

ITEM	COMMENTS
<p><b>WELCOME &amp; INTRODUCTIONS.</b></p>	<p>Jeremy welcomed everyone to the meeting</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Jeremy Leach (Chair); Marek Drewicz (Secretary); Norma Lawrence (Vice Chair); Cllr Mark Williams (Southwark Council Cabinet Member Regeneration and New Homes); Jon Abbott (Southwark Council); Owen Sheppard (Southwark News); Neil Crossfield; Christine Tan; Artison Wangpraseurt; Robert Davies; Puck de Raadt; Jason Leech; Elizabeth M; Steve Lancashire; Anthony Kelly; Jane Leek-Kelly; Celia Harvey; Augustine Nyemah; Richard Galpin; Steve Crawford; Alan Crookham; Jo Meehan; Shelagh Farren; Kevin Williamson; Nitya Boora; Michael Somers; John Whelan; Bridget Burke; Anne Roache; Elaine Clarke; Michelle Baharier; Liba Hoskin; John Tyson; Shelagh Kavanagh; Mike Wilson; Olivia Tweedie; Darret Tomlin.</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Apologies were received from: Lise Magnollay; Brett Berger; Jenny Jefferies; Justine Simons; Cllr Darren Merrill; Debora Chobanian; Cllr Eleanor Kerlake.</p>
<p><b>1. Walworth Town Hall</b></p>	<p>Mark Williams (Southwark Council Cabinet Member for Regeneration and New Homes) and Jon Abbott spoke to the meeting about the latest proposals for the Town Hall. Approximately £4m has already been spent on temporary works, security costs and new roofing. It was decided at the last cabinet meeting in June 2017, that a tender process would be started to find an arts/cultural organisation to take a lease on the building (D1 use). Estimated this tendering process will take approximately 12–18 months.</p> <p>Newington Library is also a challenge. The temporary home of the Newington Library in the Artworks project is due to finish in December next year. A new home for the Newington Library will need to be found. The Council is mindful of the request that any new venue should be south of Wansey St and thus in Walworth to ensure it is able to support the life of the Walworth area. The Council is in final negotiations with the Art Academy, who run short courses, for the proposed two years meanwhile use of the Newington Library building.</p> <p>CH queried why the library couldn't go back in the original building. MW suggested the building wasn't fit for purpose for the Library use and would be very expensive to make it so. Nor does the Council have the revenue budget to run a Library of that size and shape compared to the efficiency with which a new library such as that in Camberwell can be managed.</p>

JK asked why the D1 use class had been fixed on. Suggested other uses such as commercial/hub spaces, School etc. Concerned over financial viability. Why haven't further options been looked at?

MW noted the building wasn't suitable for school use and lacked suitable amenity space etc. Arts and Cultural use was chosen in recognition of the cultural history of the area. Noted that it is a broad category and can include a varied offer. The Council wants to make sure the community is involved in the process. Will look closely at the bid offers that come in and see what can be accommodated in terms of commercial uses as well. It is not intention to be rigid about the process.

MB queried how the Art Academy had been chosen for meanwhile use and raised concerns over the cost of its courses and how accessible these would be to local people. Raised concerns too that other arts groups in the area hadn't been approached. Also query as what happened to idea that the building might contain the Registrars Service and other civic uses as well as concerns about the future of the proposed Walworth Town Square.

MW noted that the Walworth Town Square is going ahead. As noted previously, the Council cannot justify the costs to deliver the Registrar function on the site. The tender process for the meanwhile use had several expressions of interest. The Council has had to make sure the finances were in place. MW confirmed that there will be public access to the building.

JM asked if there was a commitment with Lendlease for what is delivered. Also, if the Council was interested in a charitable group taking over the running of the site.

MW confirmed the Square would be delivered but there is no commitment to Lendlease. The Council would consider any group coming forward provided there was funding and suitable business plan in place.

JW mentioned the Cuming Museum which was a fantastic draw for the community. What is the future for the museum. Could it be back onsite?

MW mentioned that a new home and way to display the collection is being sought. Noted that the budgets have been reduced since the fire but the Council is looking into how a home can be found. MW noted that this may be

included by any group tendering for the site and that it would be a topic for discussion. Highlighted the budget pressures that Local Authorities are facing.

SK raised concern with the idea that the collection could be broken up and displayed at different venues. It must be contained together as one collection.

Concerns were raised about the loss of the Library and the museum. Questioned what Arts/Charity organisation might exist that has £20m+ of funding to take on the scheme.

MW explained that other non-Council organisations had access to bid for other pots of money that the Council cannot and also noted that the Council would still be making a contribution as well.

SC mentioned the large number of high rise apartments being built around the area and the lack of other uses. Wanted to see some of the money coming from those apartments being put into the community.

MW noted that a lot of funding had been brought in and had delivered projects such as the Castle Leisure Centre and changes to the roads at the E&C. Confirmed the Council does want mixed use development for the area.

SF suggested some of the Council's money is put into funding a professional fundraiser.

MW noted that advice had been sought from architects and other experts. The Council is limited in avenues of funding but recognises that other groups and bodies can access other sources. The challenge is not just the renovation costs but the longer-term costs of running a service from that building.

KW suggested some sort of video might be helpful to better explain to local people the extent of the damage caused and the challenge that is faced. KW would like an idea of timescale for reducing costs of security etc.

MW is happy to look into providing limited access to groups if safely possible. Recognised the ongoing costs to secure the building.

The idea of a demonstration video was supported. Queries raised about the use of the reading room space.

MW confirmed the Art Academy would use the reading room space for the meanwhile use. The Council would look at

	<p>different tenders and discuss the issue with applicants about potential uses for the space. It would probably be Autumn next year when final negotiations would take place.</p> <p>Concerns raised over the long timetable and also the expected costs and what would have to be offered.</p> <p>MW suggested it would likely be a long 25-30 year lease. It is a desirable building and location. The timeframe has been slow due to the drying out and assessment of the building as well as the Council going through the process to see if it could have been a Council led project.</p> <p>A question was raised about the Council's funding contribution and also if the Council is so concerned about Arts/Cultural use why has it let the valued Coronet be demolished.</p> <p>MW noted that there is approx. £16m left. Some of this would be used for the Newington Library. Some of what is left might be considered as a contribution to the refurbishment of the Town Hall. The Council has not yet determined the Coronet application. Noted there have been licencing issues with the current operator. The application will be considered in the round and determined later this year.</p> <p>MB asked if a Community Asset bid would be considered for an 'asset transfer' of the building.</p> <p>MW noted that the Council isn't looking to dispose of the building, rather it is seeking a long lease arrangement.</p> <p>JL suggested the Society make a deputation to the Council's Cabinet meeting on July 18th including topics such as the Cuming Collection; the credibility of another 12-18 months of tender processes; the issue of the Library, if it's not going back in the original building will it stay in Walworth; the temporary use and making sure that public access/use is assured.</p> <p>JA confirmed that there will be a contractual requirement with Art Academy to provide community usage at ground floor at certain times.</p> <p>JL asked if anyone has further questions or concerns they want to be considered for the deputation, please contact him with suggestions.</p>
<p><b>2. Follow up to previous meeting</b></p>	<p>No matters arising</p>

<b>3. Kennedys</b>	<p>JL noted that a planning application has been submitted for conversion to a hotel. JL noted some discussions had been had to help evolve the design. Asked if there were any observations. SC sceptical about how so many rooms could be fitted in. JW raised concern about how it is currently being used and that this raises concern over the quality of any future hotel. JK queried whether it was a change of use application. JL to check.</p>
<b>4. Walworth Festival</b>	<p>JL noted we held the first of our 4 street festival events last Saturday. The next one will be on July 22<sup>nd</sup>. JW thanked everyone for their help. Volunteers still needed for the next ones. Pease come along to Fielding Street for 9am to help set up. JW also mentioned the Pasley Park fete which will be on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> September.</p>
<b>5. Brandon Estate Murals</b>	<p>RG spoke to the group about the 4 murals which were originally there and commemorated the Chartist. One still remains at the top of Napier House, but others have gone. RG is currently undertaking research and is interested in idea of a campaign to bring a mural back. Next year is 170-year anniversary of the Chartist rally on Kennington Common and various events are planned.</p>
<b>6. Community Growing</b>	<p>JL mentioned the community growing initiatives around the area. The Society is keen to avoid groups reinventing the wheel each time and have put a bid to United St Saviours charity to fund a support group/individual. We are now through to final round for the bid.</p>
<b>7. Other Projects</b>	<p>JL mentioned Bethel Terrace (just before Albany Road) and the interest from both the Walworth Society and other local Camberwell based groups in its restoration.</p> <p>JW mentioned there is an Arts Council project to capture the history of the Coronet. If anyone has any memories or photos please send on to John (whelanjohnwalworth@gmail.com).</p> <p>KW mentioned that 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> July is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of opening of Walworth Garden Farm – there will be two full days of events. Saturday is the family day.</p>
<b>AOB</b>	<p>JL mentioned the OKR Area Action Plan. One of the gas holders has just been listed. Two of the associated ones are likely to become surplus to requirement. At Kings Cross, one has been used as a plaza space. JL would like to suggest similar integration of one into something in the local area.</p> <p>JL mentioned issues about tall buildings in the area and changes in planning policy. Would like the Society to register concerns about the apparent relaxation in policy.</p> <p>There will be no meeting in August.</p>
<p><b>Date of next meeting:</b> 7pm, Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September.</p>	