

Walworth Society Committee Meeting
7.00pm Thursday 10th August 2017 – 28 Sutherland Square SE17 3EQ

Meeting Notes & Action Points

1. Present: Augustine Nyemah, Peta Steel, Shelagh Kavanagh, Jeremy Leach (Chair), Vince Brown, Diana Cochrane, Norma Lawrence.

Apologies: Marek Drewicz, Gary Malloy, John Whelan.

2. Minutes of last committee meeting. All issues from the previous meeting had been addressed.

3. Community Growing Bid to United St Saviours Charity - next steps and implications for WS.

- The Walworth Society has been successful in an application to United St Saviours Charity (USTSC) to create a position of a community growing co-ordinator for a period of two years to support community growing across the Walworth area and to the north of the New Kent Road. USTSC have agreed to fund the WS for £32,000 over a two-year period.
- The meeting discussed the implications of this and how this might affect the society. The meeting agreed to meet the terms of the grant by:
 - Having regular committee meetings on a bi-monthly basis each of which will include a formal report back about the project and a report about the society's finances from the Treasurer. The suggestion is to hold the committee bi-monthly ahead of that month's WS meeting.
 - To tighten our financial procedures in terms of making payments so that two WS officers would have to make any payments from the society's accounts. In addition, the WS accounts will now be audited in terms of being externally verified by a qualified accountant.
 - To have more regular officer meetings on an as and when basis.
- The meeting discussed becoming a Charity or a Community Interest Company with pros and cons for each but it was agreed that we should not rush into a decision about this until we have obtained more advice about how to do this and the implications of any option.
- There were suggestions of looking at other societies such as the Peckham Society and Camberwell Society and seeing how they are structured and run.
- It was formally agreed by the meeting that the annual accounts would be externally verified and the funds taken from the society's account to pay for this. This amount is understood to be relatively small (under £150).
- The meeting agreed to take on the project which has the working title of the Walworth Community Gardening Network and that the Treasurer would now sign the agreement with USTSC. It was agreed that Vince Brown who is the Treasurer would lead on this project and be funded by the project. As described above, the financial arrangements of the society would be tightened to ensure that two officers would be required to effect any payment from the WS account from now on.
- It was agreed that the geographical area that the WS covers (as set out in the constitution) would be proposed to be amended in due course at a future WS members meeting and with members' approval to reflect the ward boundary changes planned for the 2018 local elections.

3. Walworth Road Post Office Public Consultation -

<https://www.postofficeviews.co.uk/liveconsultation.php> (Enter Code - 026007).

It was proposed that the Walworth Society response to this consultation would include the following elements and that we would encourage members to include the following themes in any response that they might make.

1. That it is vital to retain the Post Office facility in Walworth and on the Walworth Road. Guarantees from the PO are requested that the service will be retained at an appropriate size to meet the significant level of demand that there is for PO services in the Walworth area in the existing building or in another building on the Walworth Road south of Wansey St.

2. A parcel collection facility is needed in the Walworth/SE17 area and there is no more appropriate location for this than in the PO building (especially if the developers of the Crampton St Sorting Office do not give guarantees that a service will be created within the commercial parts of that redevelopment). The current threat to the two services at the same time is extremely damaging to our area and the presence of the facility in Mandela Way is simply not an appropriate substitution for this loss. The PO and Royal Mail need to work together to create a parcel collection facility/service in Walworth.

3. There are concerns about the robustness of the organisation that is proposed to take on the Walworth Road Post Office owing to their apparent relatively limited experience of a busy urban Post Office. Guarantees are needed that the Post Office will a) give support to the organisation that is proposed to take over in Walworth so that they are able to take this on service successfully and b) that they are not able to walk away from the service if things get tough and leave Walworth with no post office service and that the Post Office will step in to provide support to find a replacement for them. Overall the importance of this service to the Walworth area and the fears that local people have of its loss cannot be stressed enough.

4. There are concerns at the timing and nature of this consultation. After 18 months of uncertainty, just a 6-week consultation has been undertaken at the height of the summer period with the only public discussion/interaction with people in Walworth being a drop-in session rather than the public meeting that had been promised.

4. Walworth Town Hall.

- The meeting discussed the current position of the Walworth Town Hall in the light of the deputation that the WS made to Cabinet in July.
- The offer of tour of the building for WS members was discussed and it was agreed that this would be mentioned at the September WS meeting to understand the levels of interest in taking a tour.

5. WS Secretary role.

- An offer has been made for the role of minute taking at the WS meetings.
- The position of secretary at is being looked into to define the role within the society in the light of Marek's move to France.

6. Planning applications and AOB.

- It was agreed that the Chair would draft a WS response in relation to the appeal of Southwark Council's decision to refuse planning permission for the redevelopment of 374 Walworth Road (Bananas Bar).
- It was agreed that the September WS meeting would include Delancey's request for a discussion of their amended proposals for the redevelopment of the E&C Shopping Centre and that an invitation would be made to traders and other groups to attend that meeting. It was proposed that information about this meeting would be given to Southwark News.
- It was agreed that Jeremy and Diana would meet with LSBU following their invitation to meet concerning their proposed ST GEORGE'S QUARTER DEVELOPMENT.

DATE of next meeting – Thursday 5th October 6pm