



BELMONT & SOUTH CHEAM RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of 48th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on

Wednesday 10th July 2019 at St Paul's Church, Howell Hill, Northey Avenue, Cheam

Present at the meeting were 64 attendees, including 6 members of the BSCRA Executive Committee. Paul Scully MP and Councillors Hicks, Colburn & Pascoe, were present along with invited guests – PC Donna Williams, Helen Bailey, Chief Executive Officer of the London Borough of Sutton and Nicola Upton, Chief Executive of Age UK, Sutton.

Introduction and welcome by the Chair – Mr. Peter Matthey

PM welcomed everyone to this the 48th AGM of the Association. He also welcomed the guest speakers. PM hoped that members had enjoyed the slide show presentation of listed buildings in the Association's area. PM thanked the Vicar and PCC of St Paul's for permitting the Association to use the church buildings for this AGM.

Update from PC Donna Williams, Safer Neighbourhood Team

Prior to presenting his Annual Report PM introduced DW. PM reminded members that Sutton was now combined with Croydon and Bromley as a London Basic Control Unit. Currently, Cheam and Belmont teams are up to strength with 2 PC's and a PCSO designated for each of Cheam and Belmont and members are extremely grateful for the work of the teams in difficult circumstances.

DW explained that all staff now work across all 4 wards in the West Cluster (Cheam, Belmont, Sutton South and Sutton West). Shifts have changed to meet developing needs. More night patrols have been introduced especially at crime "hot spots" and plain clothes surveillance takes place. DW emphasised that it is important that residents call in any suspicious activity. It is understood that there can be problems with responses from the 101 service but 999 should be used where there is a concern to physical safety. Crimes can be reported online.

During the course of the last 8 weeks there have been 9 burglaries in Cheam and 4 attempted burglaries. There have been 10 thefts from vehicle, including 4 in Sandy Lane on one evening and 2 in the last few days. Belmont suffered from 10 burglaries and vehicle crime. It is important not to leave keys accessible and to place "keyless" vehicle keys in a Faraday bag or the like, if possible. Lock vehicles, lock doors and windows to houses. Residents can ask for a visit by a PC for Crime Prevention advice.

There is good news! Recently, 2 cannabis factories have been discovered and closed down. A known suspect was recently apprehended in Cheam following a resident's call.

Questions from members

- Q. Was DW aware of the increasing theft of catalytic converters? The RAC are receiving many calls following thefts.
- A. Yes, there have been 2 recently near the Marsden hospital but none reported elsewhere. If members see jacked up cars in the street, they may be witnessing a theft.
- Q. Police used to be seen in the area on foot - in Belmont it is not unusual to see groups of youths hanging around with no police presence.
- A. Resources are limited and well used. On occasions of concern, please make a report and the situation will be looked into.

Annual Report by the Chair

PM reported that this AGM marked his 13th year as Chair of the Belmont and South Cheam Residents' Association and trusted that most members were aware of the wide range of activities the Association has been involved with over the last year from the information circulated in the paper Newsletters and the electronic bulletins. Currently, approximately 2000 out of 2,400 members receive e-bulletins.

A show of hands indicated that all members present receive e-bulletins.

Much of the information in these bulletins is provided by members, although the Association does moderate, and hopefully, add value to some suggestions. It is felt that the Association is assisting to create a local community spirit. The Association is represented on the Council's Local Committee and is regularly consulted for its views.

Progress continues to be made with our Neighbourhood Development Plan thanks to the sterling efforts of Lyonel Bell. Developments on the old Sutton Hospital site have continued to take time with the London Cancer Hub, potential new acute hospital and the new Maggie's Centre opening in September. Improvements to transport infrastructure will be required. The need for road improvements will figure high in the priorities for the Neighbourhood Plan. The Association is generally supportive of the proposals as these potentially offer a way of getting a number of important improvements to the area funded – roads and public transport alike. The NDP document is shortly to be distributed for further consultation.

The Association was originally set up to monitor planning applications, and this remains a significant workload; there are typically about 6 applications across our area each week. Increasingly the Association is involved with other matters such as traffic, parking, trees and the like. The Burton Estates ASLC Character Appraisal document for South Cheam continues to provide helpful guidance for planning applications and prevent unsympathetic developments.

The Association has discussed with the Council, members dissatisfaction with the quality of street cleaning and has given feedback received from our Road Steward network on the latest status. The crime situation appears to have calmed a little although still gives cause for concern.

BSCRA now has its own Facebook page - please do look at it and post appropriate items.

The Association is supporting the continuing work of the British Legion branch in Belmont and its annual Remembrance Day service and parade.

PM reported that membership is remaining at recent levels and is currently around 2400. Hernan Lozano and the Road Stewards continue to work hard to maintain and increase the number of members. This number represents around 80% of all households. It is difficult to improve this number as a significant part of the shortfall is in respect of rental properties whose residents have less interest in the Association activities than owner occupiers. Flats are also an issue in recruiting members as access is often difficult.

PM continued that the Association cannot function without the support of the Road Steward network. Road Stewards are the eyes and ears of the Association in their roads and enable the distribution of paper literature and collection of subscriptions. Over 100 Road Stewards are required. We always need more. Maintaining the network is an ongoing task as folk move out of the area or have mobility problems. A round of applause was given for the work of the Road Stewards.

PM advised that the Association's Officers - General Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary - are willing to stand again as are all Executive Committee members except for Duncan Prior who has resigned.

A special mention is due to continuing Committee member Heather Shaw who has been a continuous member of our committee since 1989 – 30 years! Her support has been invaluable. For a lot of this time Heather has also been the Chair of Sutton Neighbourhood Watch and has been a valuable link between that organisation and ours. "Thank you, Heather".

PM also thanked the Ward Councillors for their support and help in "making things happen". He also thanked all members for their ongoing and enthusiastic interest and support. The Executive Committee knows that it can rely on members to support the Association and hence, their neighbours, in getting resolutions to issues.

Finally, PM thanked his wife, Helen, for her patience and endurance of the time he spent on Association business.

Treasurer's Report (Paul Arnold)

The Approved and Independently Examined Annual Accounts to 31st March 2019 were published in the May 2019 Newsletter.

The Treasurer reported that the Association continues to have a healthy financial position. By 31 March 2019 we had 2193 paid up members for 2018/19. With subscription arrears, donations and interest we had a total income of £2326, £60 lower than the previous year but not a cause for concern. It is worth reflecting that with arrears our paid-up membership for 2017-18 increased by 74 from 2262 to 2336, and collections received already in 2019-20 indicate this pattern will be repeated, although we continue to struggle to gain members in blocks of flats and when people are renting.

BSCRA made a surplus in the year of £980. This was helped by the Neighbourhood Forum team funding a joint winter newsletter and a one-off decrease in our meeting costs.

We have total net assets of over £9,100. We are always open to suggestions on how best to spend this money so if you have any ideas please contact Peter, myself or any member of the Committee.

Guest Speakers

Helen Bailey, Chief Executive Officer, London Borough of Sutton

PM warmly welcomed HB to the meeting and said how grateful the Association was that she was willing to spare time in her very busy schedule to talk to us.

HB thanked PM for the invitation and for what he and the Association does. HB said she has been in post for 4 months and is keen to meet the many communities, interest and action groups in the Borough.

The role of CEO is one of facilitation and challenging. The CEO is not the principal decision maker, that role lies with Councillors, but to be an advisor and interface with staff, contractors and suppliers to achieve what the elected members require. HB had worked for the GLC until 1986 where she received great training, worked in management consultancy, served as CEO of Islington and worked for The Treasury. Latterly she had worked in the Mayor of London's Office on policing issues.

Sutton was an exciting prospect for her not least due to her enthusiasm for health project and the new London Cancer Hub. One of her hopes is to join up services and make them seamless.

It is fair to say that more and more will be achieved through partnerships with other local authorities and contractors. The Veolia relationship being an example.

HB outlined some of the challenges she foresees

The London Cancer Hub This is an exciting prospect enabling new research and bringing forward many positives. It will be an inspiration to young people. But what do we need to do together to make it a better "fit" in the community? Traffic is clearly a major issue, and this will bring forward opportunities to develop public transport. Any adverse impact on local residents needs to be minimised.

Housing The population of London is getting denser and this needs to be managed. Sutton needs more housing for the best of Sutton

Transport Improved and alternative means of getting to Belmont (for the Marsden and LCH) need to be put in place but where is the funding to come from? The Council will have to contribute but so will TfL and Network Rail. Public transport in Sutton has been shamefully neglected.

Parking There is a current Public Consultation, and more will be known in the Autumn.

Street Cleaning HB knows this is an ongoing issue and wishes to improve the appearance of Sutton's streets and highways. There is, however, a balance to be struck between using contractors and cost.

Budget The Council has an annual budget of £150m. Of this £110m is spent on adult and child care including education. The balance of £40m has to meet all other costs!

Questions from members

Q. PM showed a diagram which detailed the many varied responsibilities for maintaining roads, street and verges across the Borough involving Sutton Council, TfL and Surrey County Council. The verges along the A217 near Belmont are a disgrace. Cannot more liaison occur to good effect?

Item	Responsibility
Leaf clearance on verges	LBS
Grass Mowing verges	TfL
Litter clearance on paths and verges	LBS
Fly-posting on lamp columns and street furniture	TfL
Shrub Bed weeding and pruning	TfL
Shrub beds litter picking	LBS
Street Sweeping	LBS
Gully cleaning	TfL

A. HB confirmed PM's analysis. The issue is being worked upon but is not easy. TfL made a decision to reduced the frequency of verge cutting.

Q. PM referred to the new LCH insisting that transport and traffic flows must be improved and not just maintained.

A. LBoS is looking for partners to support the plans. There will be further public consultations. Without development on this site there will be no chance of improved transport links. HB is seeking support from the Mayor of London.

Q. PM observed that the LCH will be very close to Surrey, what liaison is taking place with the County Council as, presumably, many workers for the LCH will be coming from Surrey?

A. HB accepted that there is a conundrum. There will be economic growth to benefit both areas. HB has good links with Surrey CC (and other authorities) and will seek to optimise these relationships.

Q. Belmont used to have 2 railway tracks (now, only one), can the other be reinstated to enable twice as many trains to be scheduled?

- A. HB knows the background and has worked on other transport issues that are not easy due to cost and regulations.
- Q. How often is the frequency and standard of street cleaning supervised or monitored?
- A. HB agreed that the current standard is not acceptable (it is that which is monitored, not the frequency) and a framework is being sought below which the standard should not fall.
PM suggested that it would be helpful for the Association to know when Veolia say they are cleaning individual roads.
- Q. What is the best way of improving transport between Sutton & Belmont?
- A. All areas need to be explored. There is a new service - Sutton Go Bus. Any developments are dependent upon partnerships with TfL & Network Rail.
- Q. A proposed rail connection between Wimbledon and Leatherhead was not progressed due to Green Belt issues. Could the Overground system not be extended to Sutton?
- A. Thameslink improvements have occurred and commuting times are not bad. Also many interchanges are available. Probably, other priorities need addressing first.
- Q. Is the Council being pressed to build new houses. 1 in 5 houses in this location are being extended. Is this not counter-productive?
- A. Permitted Development Rights are now being used extensively. In Central London blocks of small flats are being built. In Outer London larger flats are required. There is a concern about conversion of offices into housing. It is a very complex world.

PM thanked HB for joining us and her presentation. PM reflected that it is important to keep a dialogue going. HB appreciated the invitation to the AGM and is very happy to see active groups such as BSCRA.

Nicola Upton, Chief Executive Officer, Age UK Sutton

PM welcomed NU to the AGM and posed the question "What can BSCRA do for older folk, particularly those facing loneliness?"

NU explained that Age UK, Sutton is independent of Age UK nationally. Age UK Sutton raises all its own funds which in turn supports older folk in Sutton. 9,000 old people in Sutton live alone, 2,500 are chronically lonely. NU & PM have talked about how Age UK, Sutton can help smaller associations like BSCRA to progress their own initiatives.

Age UK, Sutton provides information, advice and support on
entitlements
Family Circle
bereavements

During 2018 20 staff assisted on 5,500 occasions. 2,700 of the enquiries were from those aged over 75.

Just under 30% of Sutton residents are over 65 years of age.

Age UK, Sutton is keen to work with the local authority, the NHS and other care agencies and provides a Home Help Service assisting with cleaning, shopping etc and through this work provides 22,000 hours of support annually.

Borough residents have been helped to claim £1.8m of entitlements through allowances previously unclaimed and improved utility costs.

Age UK, Sutton aims to persuade all businesses in Sutton to recognise the gift of older folk.

Age UK, Sutton also provides a Social Prescribing Service where the GP prescribes something that is not intrinsically medical.

Older people should be enabled to be part of society and for their voices to be heard. Sutton should be an age friendly society and a review is presently being undertaken to benchmark this using the WHO framework. Age UK, Sutton is keen to work with groups such as BSCRA.

Questions from members

Q. In supermarkets etc there are Parent & Child parking spaces. Could similar provision be made for older folk and carers? Could there be designated drop off zones for older folk?

A. Good idea.

PM mentioned that BSCRA has been considering outreach possibilities in Belmont.

Paul Scully mentioned the recent closure of the final bank branch in Cheam Village - perhaps Community Hubs could be set up incorporating banks, post office and similar enterprises.

Q. Do you have volunteers?

A. Yes, 106, aged 18 to 92!

Q. What is One Voice for Age?

A. An older persons' special interest group always open to new members. Pilot funding has been received for a Food & Friends group providing a platform for intergenerational cooking and the making of new friendships.

PM thanked NU for her attendance and presentation. Such matters relate to many members of the AGM audience!

PM closed the meeting by thanking members for attending and expressing the hope that they found the AGM interesting and useful.