

THE HERNE HILL SOCIETY

Minutes of the 42nd Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 26 March 2024 at 6:00pm at Temple Bowling Club

[Slide 1] The presentation began at 6.15pm.

The Chair of the Society welcomed everyone to the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Herne Hill Society, with a special welcome to new members. There were 55 people at the AGM, 37 of whom stayed for the talk on G.E. Street, architect of St Paul's Church, Herne Hill, afterwards.

[Slide 2] A picture was shown of the President of the Society and previous Chair, Colin Wight, laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday at Herne Hill Station.

Apologies were received: Helen Hayes MP; Victoria Barber; Lyndon Fothergill; Martyn Hall; Robert Holden; Teresa Israel; Rosamund Jones; Cllr Richard Leeming; Nick Mair; Sheila Northover; Veronica Plowden; Lin Proctor; Patrick Roberts; Cllr Deepak Sardiwal; David Taylor; Nelly Tee; David Young.

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

[Slide 3] **Agenda**

1. Minutes of AGM 2023 and Matters Arising
2. Chair's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Committee retires and Election of new Committee
5. Any other business
6. The Year Ahead

Guest Speaker: Sarah-Jane Miller

The first item was to accept the Draft Minutes of the AGM of March 2023 as posted on the Society's website. There were no amendments proposed and no matters arising that were not on the agenda.

[Slide 4] 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 2023. It was her fourth year as Chair of the Society. During her first year she shared the role with Colin Wight.

[Slide 5] The Society finished the year with membership up from 386 in December 2022 to 391 in December 2023.

[Slide 6] Membership is the highest it has ever been according to our records. A bar chart shows 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 2023	December 2022
Total Membership	391	386
Including new members	29	64

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.

What works best is if people are asked to join the Society by someone they know. The audience was asked to encourage a local friend or neighbour to join and to pass on their magazine to illustrate the interesting and valuable work the Society does.

We have been working at getting as many members as possible to sign up for Gift Aid as we can claim back 25% of subscription fees from the Government - valuable extra income. Last year this came to £521. Anyone who would like to sign up to our Gift Aid Scheme - or check if they have already done so - should get in touch with our membership secretary, Ros Glover.

[Slide 7] The Society had a stall at the Lambeth History Fair in West Norwood. In this slide Sheila Northover, a previous Chair, can be seen with some eager visitors.

The Society also took stalls at The Charter School and the Ruskin Park Summer Fete. Our volunteers met up with members at these events, recruited new ones and sold our publications.

The Society continued to be represented on the Brockwell Lido Users Association by Sophia Marsh, and maintained close links with other organisations in 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 that 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've 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 also generously donated a House of Commons bottle of Champagne for the raffle. This was in aid of the restoration of the historic organ at St Paul's Church, Herne Hill.

[Slide 8] During 2023 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.

[Slide 9] The Society held its monthly Committee meetings at the Half Moon Hotel. This year Michèle Arnal left the committee and Rosamund Jones decided not to stand again. Thanks are due to Ros for bringing us the idea of the Shops History Project, of which more later.

We produced three more excellent 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 the 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 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 and Sheila Northover. All have continued to assist the work of the Society in varied ways.

[Slide 10] The Planning Group was as active as ever last year, evaluating planning applications affecting our built environment, licensing applications and changes in business activity and civic amenities. This volunteer group submitted detailed, authoritative objections on controversial applications. During 2023 –

(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 a permission.

(3) The creation of hard standings for car parking in front gardens is something it continued to oppose, especially in Conservation Areas.

(4) The great majority of domestic extensions are not controversial, but the Planning Group has objected to a limited 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 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.

There were very few licensing applications of concern last year.

[Slide 11] Treasurer's report

Lyndon Fothergill was unable to be present, so the Chair spoke to his report. The accounts summary has been posted on our website.

Introduction

- The 2023 accounts run from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, and they show the Society's 2023 income and expenditure compared to that of 2022.

[Slide 12] This slide shows 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.

[Slide 13] This slide shows actual income in 2023 compared to actual income in 2022.

- Membership and gift aid income was slightly up compared to 2022 (we had more members) - with publication sales and magazine advertising income slightly down. This is because a) more advertisers wanted space in 2022; b) there was also a new book to sell in 2022 (*Sunset over Herne Hill*). Higher interest rates on the Society's deposit account also resulted in increased income.

[Slide 14] This slide shows expenditure in 2023 by category.

- The largest cost was magazine printing, followed by postage, purchase of publications for sale, website and IT costs, and storage. It also shows expenditure on the first 2023 Awards Ceremony.
- The Chair mentioned the cost of postage. In 2023 £497.25 was spend sending out magazines to members who are too distant for delivery by hand. All other postal costs come from dispatching publications (for which we always charge postage and packing).

[Slide 15]

- This slide compares the Society's 2023 expenditure to that of 2022, and shows that less was spent on magazine printing (3 magazines in 2022 versus 4 magazines in 2023), and included the costs of the 2023 Awards Ceremony.
- Storage costs were less in 2023, because one year's storage was paid for in 2023 (2024) and 2 years' in 2022 (i.e. 2022 and 2023).
- No small grants were awarded in 2023 - all other items of expenditure were broadly similar.

[Slide 16] This slide shows the Society's income and expenditure together.

- Income was broadly the same across both years (£7,846 versus £7,438), whilst expenditure was less in 2023.
- As a result the Society ended 2023 in a slightly better financial position than it ended 2022 (£15,912 versus £16,433) - but both years ended in a stable position.
- When outstanding invoices are taken into account the Society ended up in a very similar position (£16,858 vs £16,753). All 2022 and 2023 invoices have now ben paid.

[Slide 17] The accounts and their paperwork have very kindly been examined by Sally-Anne Jeffries and, if agreed by the members, will be submitted to the Charity Commission. There were no questions.

[Slide 18] A **vote** was taken to accept the accounts.

Ros Glover proposed to accept the 2023 accounts and Laurence Marsh seconded the proposal. The vote was **carried** and the accounts will be posted on the Society's website.

[Slide 19] The Committee retired. Colin Wight (President), as Returning Officer, conducted the Election for the new Committee.

[Slide 20] The candidates for offices were taken one by one, then the remaining Committee members as a group, so there were four separate elections. Only paid-up members were eligible to vote.

Vote: Rebecca Tee as Chair – Nominated by: Colin Wight. Seconded: Juliet Cooper.

That vote was **carried** and Rebecca Tee was duly elected as Chair.

Vote: Laurence Marsh as Vice Chair – Nominated by: Rebecca Tee. Second: David Williams.

The vote was **carried** and Laurence Marsh was duly elected as Vice Chair.

Vote: Lyndon Fothergill as Treasurer – Nominated by: Martyn Hall. Seconded: Laurence Marsh.

The vote was **carried** and Lyndon Fothergill was duly elected as Vice Chair.

There is still a vacancy for Secretary.

[Slide 21] The last **vote** was for four further Committee members, being voted on together: **Rosalind Glover**, Membership Secretary - Nominated by: Robert Holden. Seconded: Sheila Northover.

Henry Ferguson – Nominated by: Rosalind Glover. Seconded: Colin Wight.

Lin Proctor – Nominator: Matt Tee. Seconder: Victoria Barber.

Martyn Hall - Nominator: Helen Bristow. Seconder: Lin Proctor.

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

[Slide 22] A suggestion was made by David Cianfarani based on the Camberwell Society's recent drive for members: publishing extra magazines, perhaps on cheaper paper, and picking one local road in which to target a delivery. David was thanked for his suggestion.

[Slide 23] The Chair then gave a flavour of the year to come, in the form of three initiatives. 2023 saw the launch of the inaugural **Herne Hill Society Excellence Awards** at a Celebration Event where the Awards were presented by Helen Hayes MP. Finalists were then featured in each Herne Hill magazine over the next year.

There was one Winner and two Runners-up in the three categories of Heritage/History, Environment and Community, with the slogan that *Community doesn't happen by accident*. The Camberwell Society has followed this initiative by starting their own awards scheme. The second Herne Hill Society Award scheme will start in the summer of 2024 with the Awards being presented in spring 2025. Those present were encouraged to consider people and organisations which could be entered for an Award.

[Slide 24] **Herne Hill Shops History Project.** The Society had “borrowed” this idea from the Norwood Society. Laurence Marsh held a talk on the History of the Shops in Station Square on Zoom on 27 September 2023, based on the first tranche of research. The Society’s green stickers will be in every shop, telling about an interesting previous incumbent. A QR code will enable inquisitive locals to click through to the complete history of each shop.

This could result in a book, with a trail, a resource for history projects for school students, and a portal into the social and economic history around Herne Hill. The Society has a small band of history enthusiasts, led by Laurence March our Vice Chair, who are doing this research in waves on: Station Square, Half Moon Lane, Herne Hill, Dulwich Road and Norwood Road. A general invitation was issued to help the Society to research the history of our shops.

This initiative was still in the planning stage but will be **a publication featuring some of the most iconic buildings of Herne Hill.** More information will follow. The Society is looking for writers interested in Herne Hill’s history to join in compiling this new book.

Everyone present was thanked for their support as members. 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, as positive comments are very heartening.

No matters were raised under AOB.

[Slide 25] The meeting ended at 7:00pm.