

WALWORTH SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING - MINUTES

7.00pm – Thursday 21th June 2021 (Online)

Welcome, apologies and introductions

Jeremy welcomed everyone to the meeting

Attendance: Jeremy Leach (Chair), Rachel Gates (Southwark Council), Tracy Crossfield, Neil Crossfield, Amanda Sewell, Louise Mark (Purcell), Stephanie Ostrich (Southwark Council – Walworth HAZ), John Whelan, Christine Tan, Norma Lawrence, Shelagh Kavanagh (mins), (Alan's iPad), Steve Lancashire.

Apologies: Peta Steel, Diana Cochrane, Vince Brown.

1. Minutes of our May meeting and matters arising.

- a. There was no meeting in April, the last minutes were for March 2021 and were agreed as a true record.

2. Our Healthy Walworth – Streetspace Review: Registration launch - update from Southwark Council. Presentation by Rachel Gates

- a. Southwark Council will carry out a consultation of the measures introduced last year to reduce through traffic in parts of Walworth. The Cabinet Member will then look at the data and make a final decision as to the future of these schemes.
- b. They are asking people to register to take part but all in the areas covered by the schemes will receive registration by post. People can register on-line or request a paper form.
- c. Rachel stressed that the measures to date which are composed of physical closures and camera-controlled closures are a trial and their future will be decided by this consultation.

Q&A/Comments

- d. SK said she is in favour of the Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) and views them as opening the street for pedestrians and cyclists instead of closing the streets to cars. SK asked which streets will be included in the consultation as in reality everyone is affected in one way or another. RG said that registration documents should arrive in w/b 21st June. The consultation will cover those living in the streets within the LTNs and those living on and beyond the boundary roads.
- e. AS asked if the measures currently in place will stay. RG replied that what stays or goes depends on the outcome of the consultation.
- f. SK pointed out that a new east-west road between Thurlow Road and Dawes St is on the plans for the new Aylesbury Estate development next to Plot 18

and that residents in those streets are concerned about increased traffic and asked that new roads agreed before the LTN policy be reviewed. RG replied that these issues are on Southwark's radar and said new roads had been included in other parts of the Aylesbury redevelopment – eg near Albany Road

- g. JW also sees the initiative as street opening not closing and would like to see more openings, including King and Queen St.
- h. JL thanked Rachel for presentation.

3. Kaleidoscope Festival of Diversity – presentation by John Whelan.

- a. The Kaleidoscope festival to celebrate diversity in Walworth will include pop-up art, music and film events throughout the summer, culminating in Africa Day on September 11th in St Peter's Church gardens. Africa day which will consist of events and stalls offering goods for sale as well as information on volunteering and training. Norma Lawrence and Augustine Nyemah, both of whom are on the WS committee, are also on the Kaleidoscope committee. The events are being supported by Notting Hill Genesis.
- b. Volunteers for Africa Day, please contact John Whelan at whelanjohnwalworth@gmail.com or visit the website www.kaleidoscopebmfestival.com. Training on how to run an event will be given.
- c. JW will provide further updates at future WS meetings.

4. Walworth Heritage Action Zone - improvements to buildings on the Walworth Road - update from Stephanie Ostrich and Louise Mark from Purcell.

- a. Purcell are the architectural practice that carried out the initial HAZ survey of buildings along the Walworth Rd and were reappointed in March 2021 to work with SO on the implementation now that the funding from *Historic England* and Southwark Council is in place.
- b. Purcell have revisited the buildings identified and have noted a number of changes – for example, the parapet above Lynne's shop has been rebuilt and the original cornice has been removed; and the newsagent with the South London Press sign (believed to be the oldest building on the road) has deteriorated a great deal.
- c. LM noted that the budget cannot cover all 50 buildings identified
- d. There are three options: (i) new frontage and awnings for shops; (ii) pick a number of landmark buildings and renew the whole building to use as examples; or (iii) a light touch on more buildings.
- e. The budget is £700K and a new shop front could cost £40K, option iii could work out at £5-6K per property.
- f. Purcells issued a flyer to buildings in April and asked for response by 1st June, there has been a number of responses, and LM is still trying to get more interest.

Q&A/Comments

- a. NL asked why the 50 buildings all are around East St junction or further south; and why many shopkeepers who have been on the Walworth Road for many years have no knowledge of this scheme. SO replied that the 50 buildings were pre-determined by Southwark Council, noting that the focus was on the junction of East St/Walworth Road (the original Walworth village), but asked for details of those shops identified by NL.
- b. NL commented that many shopkeepers were disillusioned and some had written to their councillors, and also that some shopkeepers had been misinformed by councillors that money was available for their shops.
- c. SL suggested that SO should perhaps talk to the councillors about the grants available, to make sure everyone has the correct information.
- d. JW highlighted the increase in open shop fronts which have a poor appearance and are in conflict with the shop front improvement project. LM replied that this had been noted and agreed they do detract, but are not in the set of buildings identified for the project. SO said the Walworth Road has been a Conservation Area since 2016 so these issues should be picked up by the council. She asked people to take pictures and report to the Council. However, SO also noted that planning law is currently being amended.
- e. LM said it is hard to identify owners of some properties. NL added that Southwark Council knows who owns the properties as they pay Business Rates. SO replied that data protection rules mean some information cannot be shared between teams, but will contact the Business Rates team.

5. Walworth Stories - Walworth Society History project – update by Neil Crossfield and Stephanie Ostrich

- f. NC reported that the Wal Soc have secured a grant from the Southwark Council Neighbourhoods Fund for the project, and have also applied to Historic England Capacity Building scheme - which supports projects that build up the capacity and commitment of local communities to champion the conservation and enhancement of their own local historic environment. There has been a number of meetings with HE and he is hopeful that the grant application will be successful.
- g. The project will include story gathering and talks and community events, as well as training sessions for local community members. Community involvement is key to the project and they are looking for any ideas to get people involved. The funding will allow research to be done by DC and NC who will also facilitate community-led research.
- h. SO added that Historic England is very keen on the project, especially the oral history elements.
- i. JW added that it sounds very interesting and that the Kaleidoscope project is also gathering stories. He has many contacts via the Peoples Company and events like Africa Day in September where the Wal Soc could have a stall to make contacts.
- j. NC and SO will report back to future meetings

6. Development in Walworth updates

- a. **Town Hall** project is moving on. The planning officer has made sure that a conservation architect is appointed to ensure the quality of the category A rooms. The draft Section 106 agreement is going to the North Walworth councillors and Wal Soc have met with Cllr Merrill to give its view. Jillian Houghton from Southwark Council is preparing the management committee for the community space. General Projects are due to start work in summer 2021.
- b. **Manor Place Terrace** – work will start in July 2021 to construct 60 homes.
- c. **East Street Baptist Church** – Wal Soc are making representations to retain the building in any redevelopment not least because of its rich history.
- d. **Rodney Road** site of potential hotel – JL presented a revised image of the building with tiny changes to the size of the overhang onto Orb St. There is a re-consultation at present. Wal Soc is supporting Friends of Nursery Row in their objections.
- e. **Paddy Power** on Walworth Road – Wal Soc are objecting strongly to the application to add two storeys to the building.
- f. **Beehive pub** – has been closed through lockdown and there is a rumour that the freeholder wishes to sell the building. In 2015 Wal Soc obtained a designation of Asset of Community Value for the pub which was recently renewed.

7. AOB

- a. NL asked if anyone else had been to the Lendlease consultation on a new office block proposed in Elephant Park (H1). NL has made her own objections: to the colour of the block (red), the size of the block, the density, and the fact that it is too close to the road. NL commented that Lendlease are forcing this on the community. JL added that the proposal is now for all offices, even though there is talk of a walk-in health centre on the ground floor. NL commented that that will just be for residents of Elephant Park. AOB
- b. Parliamentary boundaries – another proposal has been published. Walworth is currently in two parliamentary constituencies – mostly in Bermondsey and a smaller area in Camberwell and Peckham. This proposal will split Walworth across three constituencies. SK pointed out that the consultation ends on August 2nd. JL recommended that we discuss this further at the next meeting.
- c. Meeting dates – Walworth Soc meetings clash with Labour Party meetings which means some people cannot attend. SL noted that Labour Party branch meetings are 2nd Thursdays and constituency meetings are 3rd Thursdays. JL proposed we switch to 1st Thursdays from the September meeting which was agreed.

Date of next meeting: Thursday July 22nd 2021 7pm on Zoom