

LONDON FORUM OF AMENITY AND CIVIC SOCIETIES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

17 OCTOBER 2024 6.30pm at The Gallery, 75 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EL

Minutes awaiting approval at the AGM in 2025

Present: Tony Travers, Patron; Peter Eversden, Chair and representatives of:

Barnet Residents Association, Battersea Society, Bedford Park Society, Belsize Society, BermondseyStreet.London, Brixton Society, City Heritage Society, Dulwich Society, Ealing Civic Society, Ealing Fields Residents Association, East Greenwich Residents Association, Enfield Society, Finchley Society, Gidea Park and District Civic Society, Greenwich Society, Hammersmith Society, Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group, Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association, Highbury Community Association, Highgate Society, Islington Society, Kensington Society, Ladywell Society, Marylebone Society, Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, Peckham Vision, Penge Forum, Pinner Association, Richmond Society, Shad Thames Residents Association, Southgate District Civic Voice, Teddington Society, West Hampstead Amenity & Transport, Woolwich Antiquarian Society.

Apologies for Absence: Balham Society, Camden Society, John Innes Society, Knightsbridge Society; Peckham Vision, Sydenham Society, Wandsworth Society, Westcombe Society.

1 Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

2 Minutes of the 12 October 2023 Annual General Meeting

The minutes had been placed on the London Forum [website](#). No changes had been suggested and they were approved *nem con*.

3 Chair's Report

The Chair referred to London Forum's *Insights* newsletter and the **Annual Report**, which had been posted on the website, and said they described in detail what London Forum had been doing in the year 2023-24. He thanked the London Forum team and member societies for their input last year.

He reported that the first half of the year 2023-24 had been dominated by the previous government's many planning policy consultations and changes. The **Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, passed in October 2023** with some improvements made in the Lords which he had sought in a meeting with Labour Peer, Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, now a Minister in the renamed Department for [Housing, Communities and Local Government \(DHCLG\)](#). Unimplemented parts of the Act will not be taken forward by the new government, which has published its own proposals for **changes to the NPPF and is to introduce a Planning and Infrastructure Bill**.

London Forum consistently opposed extension of **permitted development rights** as they exclude Councils and communities from Planning decisions. London Forum was not convinced by arguments that the **London Plan gets in the way of new housing starts**, bearing in mind the large number of permitted housing developments which have not yet been built out. London Forum [responded](#) to a consultation about **better use of brownfield** land for housing, which may have an impact in outer London, and to consultations about the **use of industrial land and opportunity areas**.

London Forum participated in consultations and meetings about the **next London Plan**. A summer **drinks reception** had been organised for members as had several member meetings, including on the **Green Belt and development along the river Thames**, as reported in editions of *Insights*.

The last few months of the year were relatively quiet due to the 'purdah' periods before the GLA and national government elections. London Forum postponed a number of planned member meetings as speakers felt they had to withdraw.

The Chair sadly reported the recent death of London Forum's **Vice President Nicky Gavron**, a great loss, as she was so knowledgeable and such an experienced campaigner through membership of Haringey Council, London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC) and then the GLA including as the first Deputy Mayor of London and a Labour London Assembly Member for 21 years influencing the content of London Plans.

He reported that member societies are actively contributing to London Forum work and this has been much-valued. That includes our advocacy work through **the Planning, Environment and Transport Committee** chaired by Michael Bach and **member communications and meetings through membership of our Member Services Committee**, chaired by Paul Thornton.

In the last two years, conscious of the need for **succession planning** on the Trustee Body, the Trustees had adopted the approach of 'buddying' key officers. This had worked well to prepare for the appointment of new officers when necessary. It was also most encouraging that member societies responded to London Forum appeals for new trustees with different skill sets to cover existing and expected gaps.

The Chair invited the meeting to join him in feeling pride for all that London Forum has done and achieved. He thanked London Forum trustees and members of the Planning, Environment & Transport and Member Services Committees for all their hard work.

4 Financial Report

The Treasurer presented the financial report for 2023-24 as shown in the Annual Report. On the income side, he drew attention to subscription income having stayed flat and income from meetings (since election purdahs had meant fewer meetings). He also noted the major donation of c£4000, in kind, in the form of office and meeting space from Alan Baxter Cowcross. It had no net effect on the accounts because the same figure was also recorded as an expense, but was a healthy reminder of expenses London Forum would otherwise have to expect to incur. It was pleasing that the Forum's reserves were now earning higher interest rates.

On the expenses side, the figures had decreased significantly from the previous year when there had been exceptional outgoings related to the new website and a donation to Civic Voice. One significant expense was the cost of printing and sending AGM notices by post as required in the Constitution. Later in the meeting, changes to the constitution were to be proposed including the option to use email instead.

As at 30 June 2024, the reserves stood at just under £40,000. The funds are spread across a number of banks to reduce risk.

The Treasurer reported that Miles Storey, Independent Examiner, had reviewed the accounts and recorded his thanks for that input. He reported that Miles Storey had agreed to continue in the role, which the meeting would come to later in the agenda.

5 Approval of Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23

Approval was proposed by Michael Bach of Kensington Society, seconded by Mary Hogben of Finchley Society and passed *nem con*.

6 Appointment of Honorary Independent Examiner

Re-appointment of Miles Storey, Treasurer of the Westcombe Society, as Independent Examiner for London Forum was proposed by Stephen Speak of Kew Society, seconded by Andrew Bosi of Islington Society and passed *nem con*.

7 Changes to the Constitution

A current and a revised constitution had been posted on the website for review by members. The Secretary talked through the various reasons for the recommended changes to the Constitution. These included allowing for **the use of technology** – email, online meetings, electronic filing and the like which will enable London Forum to reduce costs and be more efficient. The proposed changes also included, relaxation of unnecessarily demanding requirements, correction of errors and adoption of gender-neutral pronouns. There were no comments from members. The amended Constitution was proposed by Mary Hogben of Finchley Society, seconded by Michael Bach of Kensington Society and approved *nem con*.

8 Election of Trustees and Officers

Peter Eversden, Peter Pickering and Stephen Speak have resigned as Trustees. Peter Eversden acknowledged the long service and excellence of the input from Peter Pickering and Stephen Speak as Minutes Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Three new Trustees have been nominated: **Ali Dezyanian (Finchley)**, **Richard Farthing (Hammersmith)** and **Lesley Hodsdon (Greenwich)**

As the Trustee who was elected longest ago, **Darian Mitchell** resigned and stood for re-election.

Michael Coupe of the Dulwich Society proposed the appointment of all four *en bloc*, seconded by Annabel Clarke of Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group and this was passed *nem con*.

The Chair proposed trustee **Michael Jubb** as the new Chair. This was seconded by Clare Birks of BermondseyStreet.London and passed *nem con*.

The new Chair shared an appreciation of **Peter Eversden's almost 30-year contribution to the London Forum** including over 24 years as Chair. He reflected on the extremely broad range of planning issues that Peter had engaged with on London Forum's behalf, the extensive network of contacts and his very active and indefatigable influencing in policy forums.

The new Chair proposed that other officers should be confirmed as follows *en bloc*: **Paul Thornton as Vice-Chair, Clare Birks as Secretary, Ali Dezyanian as Treasurer and Darian Mitchell as Minutes Secretary**. This was proposed by Andrew Bosi of Islington Society, seconded by Lesley Hodsdon of Greenwich Society and passed *nem con*.

Peter Eversden's appointment at Vice President was proposed by Michael Bach of Kensington Society, seconded by Michael Coupe of Dulwich Society and passed with a hearty vote of thanks.

8 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked Alan Baxter Cowcross for their continuing generosity in providing office and meeting space at no cost to London Forum.