



Annual General Meeting 2023
Notting Hill East Neighbourhood Forum
26th April 2023 – St. Stephen's Church

Attending Committee Members	Primary Role	Abbr.
Richard Perkins	Chair	RP
Penny Bagnall-Smith	Vice Chair	PBS
Annabel Noth	Secretary	AN
Andrew Pilkington	Planning	AP
David Rea	Planning	DR
Steven Clutton	Website	SC
Suzanne Forte	Liaison Westminster Forums	SF
Glenn Taylor	Treasurer	GT

Attending councillors and neighbouring resident association representatives

Max Sullivan	Bayswater Councillor
John Zamit	SEBRA Chair

Minutes

The minutes that follow provide a summary of the AGM presentations and audience discussions. The full slide deck presented during the AGM can also be found on our website.

1. Welcome from the Chairman

Chairman Richard Perkins (RP) opened meeting by thanking those attending and gave a brief outline of the activities and aims of WNA/NHENF.

2. Acceptance of minutes from 2022 AGM

Secretary Annabel Noth (AN) proposed that the 2022 AGM minutes be formally accepted. The proposal was seconded by Suzanne Forte (SF). No objections were noted from those attending.

3. Treasurer's Report

RP handed over to Treasurer Glenn Taylor (GT) for the annual report. The full report is available as an appendix, but in summary there was little activity in the year with respect to events (due to Covid) and this kept expenses low. The only significant event was the Winter Party, but this was cost neutral due to tickets being sold. NHENF closed the year with approximately £8000 cash in the bank.

Question from attending member

Is there is an annual membership fee?

Answer from committee

The committee responded that no subscription fees are charged to ensure membership remains open to all, but noted that donations are always welcome. Treasurer GT also noted that a bowl for cash donations was available at the AGM, but this was entirely voluntary.

Question from attending member

Is this a change from previous years? How is any money raised?

Answer

Yes, annual membership fees were charged prior when WNA was solely an Amenity Society. Since becoming a Forum, (NHENF), fees have not been charged, which is typical of other local forums. Treasurer GT noted that although it would be useful to have a larger cash buffer there is no current shortfall to meet operational needs. Committee member SF noted that the Committee would be open to crowd funding for specific expenses and called on member suggestions for such expenses. Secretary AN noted that the Committee has been able to access public funds for specific projects and this is how projects have been progressed without making calls on members.

4. Appointment of Committee

Chairman RP noted that all current Committee members were standing for re-election. Vice Chair Penny Bagnall Smith (PBS) suggested each Committee member introduce themselves to the audience. Following this Chair RP announced that he would be retiring from the Committee and introduced two new potential Committee members, Vanessa Rowlands and Johnny Goth. SF formally proposed both new members and PBS seconded. Chair RP invited any new proposals from those attending but none were forth coming. Chair RP asked for a formal proposal that all existing committee members plus the two new proposals be elected as the Committee for the year coming and that they elect a replacement Chair and assign other roles as they see fit. This action was proposed and seconded by members attending.

5. Update on active and planned projects

Committee member Suzanne Forte (SF) was invited to present an update of current projects. SF started by reminding those attending that potential projects had been identified through neighbourhood consultations and at the 2022 AGM, those attending were each asked to allocate ten points across as many or few of these projects as desired. The total points for each project were used to define a priority order for the projects. The top five project priorities in order were:

- Pedestrian Crossings
- Needham Road Improvements
- Fiveways Junction
- St. Stephens Gardens Improvements
- Street Trees

5.1 Pedestrian Crossings

Three key crossing places have been identified through consultation with local residents, with the highest priority being assigned to a crossing point on Ledbury Road north of Westbourne Grove. The second most popular being is a crossing on Talbot Road to assist school journeys, and the third, a crossing linking to a Brunel estate cut-through. SF explained that the first two are being actively pursued with WCC, but due to the expense, the third might not be an immediate priority.

5.2 Needham Road

Committee member Suzanne Forte (SF) presented an overview of initial proposals for Needham Road and then discussed the evolution of the process from an organised meeting of Needham Road residents to a joint meeting of Needham Road and Artesian Road residents to discuss options for the junction of these two roads. Sketch ideas from this meeting were presented mostly related to tree planting, traffic calming, and the creation of a focal point for the junction. The next steps were identified as consultation with Westminster Council Highways department and drawings have been submitted and the resident group is awaiting feedback. NHENF is acting to facilitate the project, but the ideas are coming from the residents of these roads.

Question from attending member

Mirrored architecture was mentioned in the proposals, what is this?

Answer from committee

The architectural styles on both sides of Needham Road are alike.

5.3 Fiveways

Committee Member Andrew Pilkington (AP) presented an update on Fiveways and noted that the main issue with this crossing is there is insufficient time to cross diagonally and as consequence it is necessary to use two cycles of the traffic lights to cross in stages. AP presented some historic images of the surrounding area and photoshopped images of how the crossing could look with suggested improvements but reiterated that the main ambition should be to lengthen the pedestrian crossing time from the current 15 seconds. Following a meeting with traffic engineers the suggested next step is to commission a traffic survey which will cost £15,000 - £30,000 pounds. The Fiveways junctions sits on the boundary of three resident associations, so there is potential to share this cost and/or access public funds (e.g. CIL funds).

Question from Max Sullivan (Bayswater Councillor)

WCC staff have been tasked to meet with RBKC counterparts to progress the application in consultation with NHENF, is this happening?

Answer from committee

NHENF have met with the two neighbouring resident groups and there was discussion of whether tree pits would be required first. NHENF are keen to proceed to the traffic survey, but the other resident groups want more time to consult with residents in their areas. This has delayed the CIL application.

Comment from John Zamit (SEBRA)

Believes that due the total expense being over £1m the funding could come from WCC capital funds rather than specifically from CIL funds. John recommended shifting the focus away from specific funding applications (e.g. CIL) and instead enlisting the help of the local Councillors to secure funds as they are well placed to help with this.

Comment from Max Sullivan (Bayswater Councillor)

Agreed that CIL should not be a barrier. What is needed is to demonstrate local community support and then funds should be forthcoming.

Comment from John Zamit (SEBRA)

RBKC will contribute, and because it is a major thoroughfare TFL will also be asked to contribute.

Comment from Richard Perkins (Chairman)

Noted that Fiveways stands between two major retail developments (Queensway and Emerald Island on Westbourne Grove) and should be viewed as opportunity to link the two.

Comment from attending audience member

Noted that one purpose of the Fiveways Project is to improve walking routes; recommended that our application explain WHY we want to achieve this with a focus of on the benefits of clean air and trees. Also recommended a greater focus of visual aspect of any application.

Comment from attending audience member

TFL will be critical of the Fiveways proposal if they perceive it could impact traffic flow. It would be wise to consider a system for improved traffic flow in the application.

5.4 St Stephen's Gardens public park

Options to improve the public park in St Stephens Garden were presented by SF, with the main focus being reconfiguration of the existing pergola to add chess tables.

Question from attending audience member

Do we still have table tennis table?

Answer from committee

Yes, and we are trying to get game tables and a picnic bench.

Comment from John Zamit (SEBRA)

Council Parks Division also has capital funds available so press them for funds next year. Get the Councillors to push your project forward.

5.5 Street Trees

Regarding planting street trees in our area, the committee was able to point to some recent successes. St Stephen's Gardens (east of Chepstow Road) has received Cherry trees in islands on the road, and three new Magnolia trees have also been planted on

Sutherland Place. NHENF is pushing for trees on Talbot Road and looking to identify further locations, with resident input welcomed.

Comment from John Zamit (SEBRA)

Two years ago, WCC Council allocated £2.4m for tree planting “in unusual places” and has been unable to spend the funds, in part because residents object to loss of parking spaces.

5.6 Other Projects

Having covered the top five project priorities in detail a brief update was given on all remaining project proposals (Street Furniture, Lighting, Right Tree Right Place, Retail Experience). Regarding Street Furniture, it was noted that NHENF is not being notified of new placements, nor consulted in advance for resident opinion of potential locations. A recent example is the unannounced arrival of a used clothing collection bin on the corner of Talbot Road and Shrewsbury Road. SF also outlined two effective methods for reporting issues, the Report It app for Westminster Council, and the BT website for broken phone boxes.

Question from attending audience member

Have we considered curbing the proliferation of street signs as part of the Street Furniture project?

Answer from committee

Agreed that street signs need to be considered as part of public realm infrastructure.

Question from attending audience member

Asked if anything can be done about the excessive amount of garbage that is piled on the street on collection days making it difficult to navigate with a buggy.

Answer from committee

SF asked if this was WCC or RBKC streets and noted that RBKC require commercial garbage to be placed on street for 5am collection, which leads to shops putting it out at end of day and leaving it there until 5am. Questioner clarified that it was both WCC and RBKC. Chairman RP agreed that domestic rubbish is placed on the streets very early by residents and left until 8 am collection time. The question of whether there is a better approach would need to be directed to the company that operates the garbage collection but agreed it is an important issue. Vice Chair PBS noted that garbage collection issues can be reported to WCC.

Comment from Max Sullivan (Bayswater Councillor)

That garbage collection does not require residents to take bags out of bins, the collection crews will do this for you. Not all residents are aware of this, and this exacerbates the issue of bags being piled on the streets.

Answer from committee

Secretary AN noted that garbage collection seems to be done in two phases, with one team collecting bags from front gardens and placing it on the street for the second

team to throw into the truck. The issue is that there is a delay between the two teams which leads to a pile up of bags on the street at exactly the time that parents are making the school run.

Comment from Max Sullivan (Bayswater Councillor)

Would like to be sent examples of this so he can investigate as there should not be a significant delay between the two phases of collection.

Question from attending audience member

Can we get bins for dog poo?

Answer from committee

SF noted that RBKC has dedicated dog bins but WCC does not. NHENF asked for this but was told that residents should use the normal bins. RP noted that there is an enforcement team.

Comment from Max Sullivan (Bayswater Councillor)

The council does follow up on enforcement and cited an example of camera evidence being used to identify someone guilty of dog litter and visited by an Animal Warden to give them dog poo bags. Max would support the return of dog bins.

6. Presentation from Clean Air Bayswater

(Local community group working with Breathe London to have air quality monitors installed in the local area <https://www.clean-air-bayswater.co.uk>). Jenn Kyner provided an update on Clean Air Bayswater activity including a campaign to reduce car idling. The group is working with WCC to introduce fines for idling as they view this as far more dangerous than parking on single yellow lines. Clean Air Bayswater recently organised a family fun day at Porchester Gardens and purchased books for the Paddington Library and Paddington Children's Library on the subject of air pollution, and is preparing for an event on Clean Air in mid-June this year and campaigning to restrict Heathrow Airport expansion and flight path rerouting.

7. Play Streets

Chair RP described the Play Street policy in our plan which is to allow any of the quieter residential streets to close for a short period of time for a play street but only one street at any given time to avoid traffic issues.

Comment from Max Sullivan (Bayswater Councillor)

Legislation currently allows either individual closing of streets with an application or designating a street as a Play Street. A consultation will be arranged with several schemes being drawn up.

Comment from attending audience member

Northumberland Place currently has over 40 children between the ages of 0 and 10, so it is an obvious place for a Play Street.

Comment from Chair RP

Suggested involving the Neighbourhood Forum any time one wants to make a street or public realm proposal to get feedback from the entire community.

Comment from attending audience member

Preference for different streets being used for playstreets at different times to minimise traffic displacement.

8. How we can all be more environmental

Committee Member Annabel Noth (AN) presented how to minimise our environmental footprint. Amazon - Designate your own delivery date to consolidate packages and minimise traffic from delivery vehicles, milk delivery in glass bottles that can be reused, grocery and vegetables can be delivered by suppliers using paper and cardboard, household cleaning supplies can be purchased in recyclable & refillable containers and can be delivered in tiny containers through the mail slot, and soda makers can make sparkling water at home.

9. Update on Neighbourhood Plan

PBS summarised key points of our Neighbourhood Plan: Allowing mansard expansion upwards as long as they are uniform at the front, personal outside space, more innovation in our back extensions, preservation of our gardens, reinstatement of our architectural detail, some expansion of space on upper-level flats, infills that preserve garden space.

Comment from attending audience member

Mansard policy - why are you making it easier for more development?

Comment from attending audience member

Dormers better than double mansards structurally and design-wise.

Answer from committee

These policies represent what the majority of the residents wanted.

10. Closing remarks and upcoming events

Chairman RP thanked the committee members for all the work associated with hosting the AGM and creating the Neighbourhood Plan. The following upcoming events were announced:

- "Bring your own dish" Jubilee Party at Needham Road Sunday 5th June
- Guided neighbourhood historic walk in September
- Next formal meeting of NHENF will be near Christmas
- Annual Garden Competition is approaching, and volunteer is required to act as competition judge.

11. Any Other Business

Local artist announced exhibition at the Porchester Library on Friday 20th May and invited all attending to join the exhibition.