

**Streatham Common Co-operative  
Annual General Meeting (AGM): Minutes of meeting**

**Thursday, 22<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

**1. Reports from current board members**

The Chair of the board, Richard Payne, introduced the meeting and welcomed members to SCCoop's third AGM. He presented the Board's report which included a discussion of how well we were doing against our objectives and previous commitments and the society's spending to date. Richard noted there were now 494 members and we had nearly reached our original target of 500. The Playground scheme now has a project manager within Lambeth and a steering group is meeting. The lease for the Rookery Barn is nearly completed and should be signed with Inkspot soon. The paddling pool has been open all season for a cost of just over £10,000.

**2. Report from the manager**

The Manager, Dom Leary, presented an overview of the activities carried out by SCCoop since the last AGM in October 2016. Activities included improvements to the gardens with new planting in borders funded by Anthony Gold and FoSC, and winning a Bronze Gilt and retaining Green Flag Status. Dom noted that the horticultural standards were now officially recognised to be above those of a typical municipal park. Dom reported that Ben Kelly had completed his apprenticeship which was in partnership with Capel Manor College and had qualified. Volunteers have added huge resource to the gardens with 272 days worth of volunteer time recorded in the last year. The cascade remained out of order, but this will be repaired by next season. Significantly more composting had been done on site this year.

**3. Approval of Accounts to April 2015**

Nick Cattermole presented the official accounts to the meeting. The society's income had increased hugely as we completed our first year with £130,566 turnover vs. £28,649 the previous year. Total net assets had risen from £277 to £6,896. Due to the difficulties targeting spending to be exactly the same amount as income, we had made a small operating profit in the period of £8,026, and have £1,605 tax to pay. It was noted that next year we should be more careful to not make a profit. The meeting approved the accounts and agreed their submission to the FCA.

**4. Appointment of Auditor and allocation of surplus funds**

The meeting agreed that the accounts would be audited (on a review basis) by Chris James, a member of the society and a chartered accountant. Surplus funds were allocated to be spent on improvements to the Rookery and on Streatham Common.

**5. Election of Board**

Under the rules, 1/3 of the elected board members were up for re-election. John Ditchfield and Nick Cattermole were not re-standing and the society thanked them for

their work. Two new members, Leo Hopkins and Amy Chalkley were elected unopposed by a clear majority of the 41 members present. The board members were confirmed as:

The nominated representatives (who are not elected by the membership) are:

- Danny Adilypour, Lambeth Councillor
- Maggie Charnley, Streatham Common Community Garden
- Alastair Johnstone, Lambeth Council officer
- Tracey Williamson, Friends of Streatham Common

The following are elected to the Board:

- Amy Chalkley
- Leo Hopkins
- Charles Mitchell
- Richard Payne
- Alex Watt
- Georgina Worrall

## **6. Speaker, Cllr Jack Hopkins, cabinet member for Regeneration, Business and Culture**

Richard Payne welcomed Cllr Jack Hopkins to the meeting, and introduced the highlights of the new events strategy. Up to 8 major events in Streatham Area each year; New PIL (Park Investment Levy) from each event to be spent in park; New higher noise limits; Blanket Premises Licence; Opportunity to feed into Events Team at marketing stage; More community involvement being sought around Events,

Cllr Hopkins presented a summary of major changes to last year including bringing the parks service back into Lambeth (from Veolia), and the 50% budget cuts.

There then followed a Q&A session. Answering questions Cllr Hopkins spoke on:

- In answer to a question about how could we believe anything that was said, Cllr Hopkins explained that last year the plans explained at the AGM were proposals, and now we were discussing policy that had been adopted, so there was more certainty.
- There would be more money from PIL to spend in parks and Cllr Hopkins wants that to be available to be spent by SCCoop and other parks groups directly, rather than through the parks department.
- There was a new process around events with meetings with the local parks representatives as part of the procurement process. This should result in better information and events better reflecting what the community wants.
- Responding to a question asking whether services and budgets could be considered across the normal departmental boundaries, Cllr Hopkins said that it was difficult for investment in one service by the council to then be seen as a

saving to another budget, and reclaim that money. However he was committed to investing to improve outcomes.

- There is a review of Lambeth Country Show operating costs, and it was intended to reduce these as well as increase the income hugely. It was recognised that the income from events went to support the Country Show but that would remain a free event.
- Cllr Hopkins re-confirmed the £1 million for the Streatham Common playground and lower yard scheme, but noted that this was not all available in one go as the council wanted to make sure that its investment would produce the best future revenue. Creating revenue can protect council services against future government grant cuts. The new playground would be built first before the other parts of the scheme were evaluated.

## **7. Services beyond October 2016**

The Chair noted that the plans that and budges that we had hope for last year had been scuppered by the 50% budget cuts and the re-organisation of the parks service. It was no longer possible to take over the common at this time, however this remained the key vision and would be pursued for the future.

SCCoop's core budget is being cut further to £81,000 per year, but other income and fundraising can provide addition funds to spend.

Options presented were:

1. more ecology in the Local Nature Reserve and enabling more volunteering
2. partnership with the London Wildlife Trust and the Great North Woods project
3. carrying out repairs on the common that Lambeth cannot fund
4. partnering with a local tennis club to increase usage and awareness of the tennis court
5. keeping the paddling pool open
6. improving the Rookery further by restoring the cascade and rock garden

Barbara Write then spoke about the plan to use £25,000 SCCoop has to spend repairing the cascade as matched funding to form part of a larger project including a bid with the HLF to restore the Rock Garden and return it to its former glory.

The chair then presented the budget to October 2018. He noted that the income should be increasing on top of the £81k contract with Lambeth with up to 15k per year from the café and 12k from the barn rental forming a base budget of £107k. On top of this there was possibly more income from fundraising for the pool (target £5k), sponsorship 5k, Events £10k, and possibly PIL up to £15. This money could be used to fund some of the options presented above.

## **8 Group Session**

The meeting then had a short break, and split into groups to discuss the options presented and priorities, issues and other ideas.

Feedback was that the Rock garden, Paddling Pool are the top priorities with the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) the next priority (funding a part time ecology office to support work and volunteering). One member commented that a LNR officer and subsequent delivery, was likely to have a large positive impact on the common's environment. Members commented that the LNR needed to be promoted more as most people were unaware that this status existed.

Concerning the rock garden, members felt that it was a key part of the Rookery and that repair and renovation should be a priority.

When asked to prioritise the projects, the comment was made that some of the projects had already received investment (financial and time) such as the paddling pool and the cascade. As such it would be sensible to continue to pursue these projects.

Other ideas included more spending out healthy outcomes which it was noted had been one area we had not succeeded on – and perhaps an outdoor gym or trim trail would be a good use of funds. Members also acknowledged that SCCoop's current volunteering opportunities and public use of the park in general were credible healthy outcomes, but perhaps should be clarified more.

Although important repairs on the common should be done by Lambeth, and were less of a priority for SCCoop funds at this time.

Other comments included, should SCCoop take on the tennis courts there is a possibility that the management / booking of the courts could become an operational burden to the staff, this was to be avoided. If SCCoop were to take the court on then the facility should be publicised more.

Other projects suggested included;

The Long Border in the Old English Garden – funding sought and delivered  
Hilly 4 acres be planted as a true meadow  
Better consideration given to cycle facilities at the Rookery / car-park  
Rookery / SCCoop (FoSC?) merchandise be sold in café  
Plant a native bluebell wood

## **9 Close**

In closing, the Chair thanked the speakers and also the members for attending.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.