

**Streatham Common Community Operations Ltd
Trading as Streatham Common Co-operative or SCCoop**

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Thursday, 26th September 2019

1. Reports from current board members

The Chair of the Board, Richard Payne, introduced the meeting and welcomed members to SCCoop's sixth AGM. He presented the board's report which included a reminder of SCCoop's vision and a lookback over the previous year's activities. Richard spoke about objectives and commitments for the next two years in the light of recent changes to the contract with Lambeth. These include the continuation of the Apprentice scheme with Capel Manor, with our new apprentice George Darwin having started in September; the organisation of regular community events such as the monthly market; increasing community involvement and exploring partnerships with local businesses and increased staffing presence.

Richard gave an overview of the make up of the board which meets bi-monthly to discuss matters relating to the SCCoop and the Rookery.

Richard reported that the HLF project to renovate the Cascade and rock garden is now completed and the cascade is working.

The contribution of our regular weekly volunteers was noted as they are essential to help maintain the high standards in the gardens.

This year we entered a different category for the London In Bloom and were awarded Thriving for the It's Your Neighbourhood Category. This is equivalent to Silver Gilt for the category previously entered. We were also awarded Silver Gilt for the nature reserve.

2. Manager's Report

Lou Kizwini presented the manager's report. The fountain and pond in The Old English garden was repaired earlier in the year and this should last for 25 years. We would ask that members of the public do not put fish in this pond. It has been noted that concerns have been raised about the need for an escape route for amphibians and we will endeavour to build something.

The border by the wall to the right of the steps in the Old English Garden has been redesigned and planted. This is known as Kate's Border after the volunteer who designed it. The Covington Way side of the garden is currently overgrown and we aim to design this for next season.

The Memorial planting on the top tier is nearly complete with two new Acers planted recently

The White Garden has been maintained by one of our dedicated volunteers, Mick, who comes in four days a week to work on it all year round. We have a large group of regular volunteers who are the beating heart of the Rookery.

The Paddling pool is much loved by community and has been well used over the summer month. However, more fundraising is needed over next few weeks to ensure we are able to reopen next year. There were unfortunately some problems with vandalism this year causing it to have to be closed and drained on several occasions.

Mered has been working hard on conservation and woodland leading several mini projects. The objective is to create sustainable woodland, but more fundraising is required to continue with this project.

As part of the restoration project in the Stream Garden, the crazy paving has been replaced, and the pools relined. Most of the protective barriers around the new plants have now been taken down, although some need to stay in place to allow plants to establish. New viewing platforms have been added as part of the design to discourage people from walking across the beds.

It was reported that a lot of staff time is taken up dealing with aftermath of vandalism as the Gardener has to rectify this so there is a lot of work that goes unseen by the public. The gardener has also reported that the theft of plants is a regular issue.

Lambeth Councillor Danny Adilylpour spoke of his continuing support for the co operative model, and for SCCoop. The board acknowledged that Danny has been an excellent advocate for SCCoop

3. Approval of Accounts to April 2018

Maggie Charnley presented the official accounts to the meeting. turnover was £215,333 There was a small operating profit in the period of £9,880,

HLF Stream Garden received £43,000 this year with an additional £29,000 from Lambeth Council. The main source of income was from the grant from Lambeth Council, but additional income included £13,000 from the Christmas Fair, £12,000 in the form of donations, and £5000 from fundraising for the paddling pool. There is also additional income in the form of barn rental from Inkspot Brewery. It was noted that considerable additional income needs to be raised outside of the council grant as this is significantly reduced under the new contract terms.

4. Appointment of Auditor and allocation of surplus funds

The meeting agreed that the accounts would be audited again (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

Alex Watt was retiring and re-standing. Lee Heykoop was standing for the first time and Charlie Mitchell was standing down Alex Watt and Lee Heykoop were elected unopposed by a clear majority of the members present and we welcome Lee to the Board.

The Board also welcomes the following associate board members: Russ Lench, Charlie Mitchell and Pat Wilkins

6. Future of SCCoop

The terms of the relationship with Lambeth Council under the new contract have changed and SCCoop are now a contractor rather than a partner. There has also been a 50% cut in the annual budget from Lambeth which now stands at £50,000, and the provision of income from the café has also been removed. The obligations under the new contract still contact responsibility for full maintenance which includes gardening, mowing, litter removal and security. SCCoop are also required to carry out regular inspections and repairs to any damage. SCCoop will be seeking further funding for improvements to the garden and to maintain the current high horticultural standards. We will continue to run regular volunteer sessions.

There were no other submissions for the contract tender, although there were three expressions of interest. The contract submission is now in its final stages of completion. SCCoop are in the process of recruiting and a new Park Manager to start as soon as possible. There is no funding in the new contract for the Head Ranger position but we will seek funding to allow the woodland conservation projects to continue. There is an LNR project bid currently in progress to contribute to this cost.

We have asked FoSC to raise an additional £5000 and this has been committed. We currently receive £5000 per annum from the John Horseman Trust and have been in conversation with them to see whether this can be increased. We also have income from the rental of the barn to Inkspot Brewery. Other income sources include the Christmas Fair and RookFest. We have raised enough money to keep the paddling pool open for a further year.

6. Panel Discussion – Lou Kizwini, Rebecca Mays and Tracey Williamson Discussion on Events, Fundraising and Priorities

Topics discussed were focus and priorities for SCCoop under the new contract with the commitment to maintain the high standards in the gardens since taking over from Lambeth. There was discussion around events and how these can be used to fundraise for SCCoop and the aim of growing the monthly Farmers Market. SCCoop are investigating the possibility of holding weddings in the Rookery with a pilot event booked for June 2020

There was also further discussion about the need to put a fundraising strategy into effect immediately to enable SCCoop to be able to continue to operate beyond the current 2 year contract, and how SCCoop can better engage with shareholders and the public, particularly via better use of social media, in order to encourage more fundraising. Further potential options for fundraising were suggested including asking shareholders to donate more money, a donation box in the café for the paddling pool, and the potential to raise fund via corporate volunteering.

7. Priorities for 2020

- Increase fundraising efforts
- Investigate further options for funding for improvements
- Improved information about volunteering
- FoSC to meet to discuss trim trail

8. Close

In closing, the Chair thanked the speakers and also the members for attending. The chair also thanked all the society's staff, garden volunteers, event volunteers, board members, supporters, sponsors, funders and members who together make SCCoop possible.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.