

Wandsworth Society Annual Report, 2025.

I am pleased to see so many of you here this evening. Welcome to the 54th Annual General Meeting of the Society.

I hope that the Society has continued to provide you, it's members, with interesting monthly presentations which the events group consider relevant to the Society's aims. We have tried to bring the Society's affairs forward to encompass technology which is now available but we still do not have all members email addresses, which makes life difficult to communicate effectively. If you have not provided your email address, please could you do so legibly on the forms available here or email membership@wandsworthsociety.org and if you know of any other member who has not provided their address, could you try to persuade them to do the same.

Copies of the Notice and Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting are available on the Society's website and the Agenda for this meeting is available here this evening.

The Certified Accounts are also available here this evening and I would like to thank Paul Henry, once again, for carrying out the scrutiny required to enable the accounts to be sent to the Charities Commission.

Once again, I would like to thank most sincerely all those who have been involved in the running of the Society during the past twelve months, I would also like to thank John Crossland for his tremendous work in recording our meetings here at West Side Church and providing the audio facilities each time. What would we do without you, John.

Now to the interesting bits:

The Executive have met 6 times during the year and I am very pleased to say that almost all members of the Executive have attended each meeting, almost all without fail! The biscuits, tea and coffee must have some attraction!

The events group have put together a programme of talks which we believed would be of interest to the membership and I am please to say that attendance at these meetings has been consistent at between 30 to 40 members at each event. Talks have ranged from Lifeboats at the start of the year, the history of Waterloo Churches, a trip to Ukraine, food banks to the inside of Wandsworth Prison at the end.

A visit to Turner's House at Strawberry Hill Twickenham was arranged on a beautiful early summer day to be conducted round by a most knowledgeable volunteer. Surprisingly, the house was used for the war effort during the second world war for the assembly of munitions.

The Society sponsored this year's performance of Shakespeare in the Squares in St Anne's Church garden. "All's well that ends well" was enjoyed by many on the 2/3rd July. New members were recruited on the evening of each performance.

We were very fortunate to have been invited to a garden in St Ann's Crescent, the home of Richard and Caroline Pook, in July when we were able to relax and converse to the

sound of Steve Carpenter playing the vihuela and enjoy a wonderful range of food and drink on a warm summer evening. Thanks to the Pooks and all who helped to organise this gathering and to those who attended who made the evening such a success.

The year culminated with the customary well attended Christmas party in St Anne's Church Hall.

Other groups who have carried forward the aims of the Society during the year include the **Green/Environmental Group**, represented primarily by Bruce St Julian Bown who has "manfully" almost alone, taken this enormous topic forward with discussions and attendance with the Council and other bodies who have "a finger in the pie". This topic covers air quality, traffic, pedestrians and flooding. If I may say just a couple of words on this latter topic. I am Co-Chair of the West London River Group, an amenity group concerned with the Rivers Thames and Wandle. There is a comprehensive review currently underway funded by the Environment Agency, The Thames Strategy Review, seeking to establish how "climate change" particularly increasing levels of flood risk may/will affect the capital from Teddington, the western end of the tidal Thames to the sea.

The Roads and Transport Group led by John Dawson have continued to monitor proposals and actions mostly by the Council as the local highway authority. The latest, which is causing some concern, are the works being undertaken in Burntwood Lane following very little community involvement or consultation. The Group has written to the Council expressing our concern. The Council have made great play of how they are dealing with pavements, this should be part of their statutory obligations, not funded by CIL contributions as they have said. John would like additional help in monitoring and actioning any matters which we believe are or will be of concern. We thought at the beginning of the new Council's administration that there would be more dialogue between the Society and the Members and officers, this has not turned out to be the case, though recently on Burntwood Lane a quick response was available.

The group carried out a walk along the River Wandle to investigate the "missing link" in the Wandle Trail under the rail bridge in Earlsfield in the autumn. We continue to pursue a solution which is terribly complicated as it involves many statutory authorities.

The planning group, which I chair, has not met in person this year, however we continue to monitor closely all applications in our area of the Borough which may be of interest or concern. I am pleased to say that I have great support from members of the group as we "bat things around" to get the right consensus to our response to the developers and the Council. We also cover some other applications outside our immediate area, to name two, The AELTC application for Wimbledon Park and a massive new building proposed at Battersea Bridge. You will see on the Agenda an item about the AELTC which I will explain further in due course.

Last year I mentioned the Springfield Hospital application which was approved by the deputy Mayor after calling in the application for the GLA's determination. This scheme which has a 50% affordable housing content is now under construction. Just one further

word on Springfield, if you have not visited the site, please do so, as much of the new parkland is open and it really does look superb.

Soirees. Arrangements were made for two soirees during the year. The Society is most grateful to our hosts on these occasions which cause disruption to their household.

Acquisition of part of the late Ron Elam's card collection. The Society was offered the opportunity to acquire, jointly with the Friends of Wandsworth Common, part of the collection of cards of the late Ron Elam. The collection was to be offered for sale by auction in November and we had to act very quickly, like with only two or three days. The cards are an historical record of parts of Wandsworth with which the Society is concerned. A top price was agreed and a joint bid at auction was made successfully. The cards are expected to be loaned to the Council's Heritage service but the Society will remain as owner. Mrs Elam has very generously provided funds to enable the digitisation of the collection which will enable remote access to view these artifacts in due course.

The Society's communication with members. We have attempted to bring up to date all members' details on one database for ease and direct communication but I am sorry to say that we have only email addresses for 75% of member households. Please, please, make sure that the information which we hold is correct and up to date.

As you will see on the Agenda there is a proposal to regularise the subscriptions to the Society to £15 per household per annum. The rates of subscription have been in place for many years and have caused some confusion in collection and our costs continue to rise. I hope that you will support the resolution to increase/regularise the household subscriptions, with corporate subscriptions remain as previously at £30 per organisation. Any donations will continue to be gratefully received.

The Society needs more active participation from members and, in particular, we need expertise to assist with the website, communications and all that goes with this. If you know of any "tech savvy" person who could help, please let me or anyone of the Executive know.

Finally, thank you all for coming this evening and I would like to present a small gift to John, our AV expert and to Paul for his checking that we are all "in order".

Philip Whyte.