

Minutes of the Wandsworth Society 54th Annual General Meeting held on 26 March 2025 at 7.15pm

There were 38 members in attendance and all members of the Executive present.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Judith Coles, Mike & Marion Shaw and Mike Grahn

2. Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 AGM

The Minutes of the 2024 AGM have been posted on the website and copies were available at the meeting; unfortunately, some copies distributed at the meeting did not have the second page. It was agreed that the 2024 minutes be added as news to the website, alongside the unapproved 2025 minutes. However, as no members objected and there were no outstanding matters arising, the Minutes were adopted (Proposed by Philip Whyte, seconded by Jenny Massey). Motion carried unanimously.

3. The Annual Report by the Chair, Philip Whyte.

The full report is available on the website, wandsworth.society.org.

- Thanks were extended to two members of the Society who had offered invaluable voluntary service to the Society during 2024. These were John Crossland for providing audio visual services and Paul Henry for being the independent examiner of the accounts.
- The Executive have met six times during the year. The Events group have organised nine speaker meetings, two social events and a guided visit to Turner's House. In addition, the Society sponsored two performances of *All's Well that Ends Well* in St Anne's church garden by Shakespeare in the Squares
- Other groups carrying forward the aims of the Society during the year include:
 - Environment group, manfully led almost single handedly by Bruce St Julian Bown.
 - Roads & Transport led by John Dawson monitoring proposals by the Council covering local roads and cycle lanes.
 - Planning, chaired by Philip Whyte monitors all significant planning applications in this part of the Borough sending letters of objection or support, as appropriate. This year comments have also been made on two major applications outside our local area being the AELTC application covering Wimbledon Park and a massive new building by Battersea Bridge.
 - Two soirees have been held and the Society is most grateful to our hosts.
 - Joint Acquisition of the late Ron Elam's postcard collection. In November we were offered, as were the Friends of Wandsworth Common, at very short notice, an opportunity to jointly acquire this unique collection. The Executive had to make a speedy decision very fast and we were fortunate to make the acquisition. The cards form a unique historical record of Central Wandsworth and the Common. The intention is that these should be digitised and held as part of the Heritage collection.
 - It was reported last year that we planned to modernise our membership systems; we have now built a reliable, secure and GDPR compliant, database holding members' details. This has highlighted the fact that we

still do not have email addresses (despite a recent vigorous campaign) for 25% of members, highlighting the fact that we touch a large number of older, inactive, households who joined before 2015 who can only be reached by postal or hand delivery.

4. Finance

The 2024 annual accounts were presented at the meeting. Net income was £9,249 and expenditure for the year was £10,860 showing a deficit of £1,611. Net assets remain healthy at £21,831. The Treasurer explained that the deficit reflected:

- Sponsorship of Shakespeare in the Squares
- Purchase of Ron Elam collection
- Higher meeting expenses due to a 50% increase in hall rental.
- Higher IT costs due to purchase of database software.

The higher costs were offset by a reduction in printing costs and higher surpluses from social events. The accounts were put forward for adoption. Proposed by John Dawson, seconded by Shiela Allen. Motion carried.

5. Election of Society Officers.

Philip Whyte agreed to stand for another year as Chair but would stand down in 2026. His election was proposed by Richard Pook, seconded by Jenny Massey, Carried unanimously.

Other officers agreed to continue on the Executive. These are Richard Pook (Treasurer), Gill Gray (Membership Secretary), John Dawson, Iain Gray, Bruce St Julian Bown, Peter Farrow (Newsletter Editor), Julie Harrison and Caroline Pook (co-opted minutes secretary). In the absence of anyone else coming forward, the members were elected. Proposed: Jenny Massey, seconded Trevor Grubb. Motion carried.

6. Motions from the Executive Committee to be put to a vote:

- The database highlights the inconsistency of membership subscriptions with some paying £10 and others paying £15 which causes confusion in securing subscriptions. One member from the floor raised the issue of inequitable voting rights for one, versus two, member households; it was agreed that the Executive would examine and regularise this issue with reference to the constitution and a response would be sent to the member. Agreed that the subscription would rise to £15 for all in 2026 (apart from £30 for corporate members). Proposed by Philip Whyte, seconded by Caroline Pook. Motion carried with one vote of dissent.
- The Society has been approached to contribute towards the “Save Wimbledon Park” organisation which aims to challenge the consent for the AELTC to develop the former golf course. The consent has overridden the covenant to retain this historic park as open space. As our reserves were originally generated from public subscriptions towards a fighting fund many years ago it is proposed that the Society contribute £1,000 towards this campaign. Motion proposed by Philip Whyte, seconded by Richard Pook. Motion carried without dissent.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm and was followed by drinks and a talk about the history of Traveller Communities in Wandsworth.

CP. 29/03/2025