

CHERRY TREES



RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 20th November 2023 at 7pm

St Mary Abbots Church Hall

Committee Members Present: Charles Penney - Chairman (CP), Frances Manthos - Membership (FM), Bruce Fair-Treasurer (BF), Myrto Rochat (MR) - stand-in Secretary for this AGM, Mimi Carney - Environment (MC), Thomas Blomberg - Planning (TB), Christian Klotz (CK), Manish Goel (MG), Rashmi Chopra (RC), Elisabeth Meunier (EM)

Apologies from Committee Members: Caroline Cuffe - Secretary, Romanos Brihi, (RB), Peter Hoffmann-Fischer (PHF), Monique Bahadur - Social (MB), Alessandro Tonchia (AT)

Apologies from others: Felicity Buchan MP, Cllr and Mayor Preety Hudd, Cllr Lloyd North and Alex Turner (Opportunity Kensington)

Sponsors: John D Wood & Co. (Matthew Harrop and Glynn Gibb present)

1. Apologies and Opening Remarks

The Chairman (CP) welcomed all members and opened the meeting at 7.05pm. 43 CTRAA members (including the 10 Committee members listed above) attended the meeting. As the AGM coincided with member Rolf Christophersen's 102nd birthday, everyone joined in a round of applause for him and wished him well. John D Wood (JDW) have sponsored the CTRAA AGM for over ten years. CP thanked them very much. CP thanked St Mary Abbots for making the hall available to us. CP thanked members (including the Committee) for attending the meeting and MR for taking the Minutes. Apologies had been received from two of our Councillors. Our local MP, Felicity Buchan, could not join today. Our local police joined the meeting (Sergeant Niall Gannon-Holmes, PC Rae and PC Rachid). Kris Vaskelis, who runs the private security firm, We Patrol and Protect Limited, was also in attendance.

2. Minutes of the Last AGM held on 30/11/2022

Draft Minutes of the 2022 AGM held on 30th November 2022 were circulated to members by e-mail with a hard copy provided to members attending the AGM. The Minutes were approved by the meeting.

3. Opportunity Kensington (including Token discount scheme)

This is a Council-supported scheme on which CTAA has piggy-backed since we gave up running our own retailers' discount scheme. Cllr Catherine Faulks stood in for Alex Turner, who runs Opportunity Kensington but could not attend the AGM, and her report is below in these Minutes.

4. Sponsorships during the year

John D Wood are the kind sponsors of today's AGM whilst the Summer Party was kindly sponsored by Knight Frank and the Autumn Party by Strutt & Parker. Maskells kindly sponsored a new event, namely a Christmas Drinks Party at the Kensington Wine Rooms, which was successful and well attended. Huntsworth Wine kindly provided wine for all events at cost. CP thanked all of the generous sponsors.

5. Accounts for Year Ended 31/10/23

BF presented the Accounts for 2023. Total funds are broadly flat on last year when compared to the previous year, the reason being the introduction of a Christmas party, which necessitated a reinvestment of just over £1000. With 255 paying members, we spent approximately £2600 overall for both of our parties, the actual cost for each event varying according to the amount of sponsorship received each time. Receipts included a £270 of donation from the filming of TV series The Chelsea Detective, as well as Bank interest of £82, representing 1.45% interest at NatWest. We spent £99 for the Survey Monkey platform which enabled our Survey Questionnaire. Our mission is to try and keep our membership dues down as much as possible to be as inclusive as possible, hence leaning on our sponsors. The reason why the overall income figure from memberships is higher than 3 years ago is because last year, BF encouraged people to pay 3 years of subs in one go (@ £24 for 3 years). CP thanked BF for his diligent work. The

6. Composition and Election of CTAA Committee 2024

A draft List of Portfolios for 2024 was circulated by e-mail prior to the meeting and provided in hard copy at the meeting. This included 3 new people who were introduced by CP : Manish Goel, Rashmi Chopra and Christian Klotz. The proposed Committee portfolios for 2024 were approved.

7. Status of Membership

BF presented a review of Membership, which stands at 255 fully paid up members. BF encouraged the meeting to spread the word in the neighbourhood about CTAA and mentioned the website. The Christmas party at Kensington Wine Rooms, due to take place on 5th December, will provide an excellent opportunity to entice potential future members.

In reply to who is entitled to become a member of CTAA, BF explained CTAA welcomes any resident living from the central line boundary of Kensington Church Street to all streets immediately East of it including: Vicarage Gardens, Vicarage Gate, Palace Gardens Terrace, Brunswick Gardens and Strathmore Gardens. There is an additional slightly looser category of membership available to people with strong connections to the neighbourhood, and CP confirmed that, although the first criterion for membership entitlement is based on geographical limitations, other applications from people with strong affiliations to the neighbourhood can be considered at the Committee's discretion.

8. Members' Survey Feedback – MG

On MG, one of the new members on the Committee, reported on the findings of the survey launched following last year's AGM. He thanked everyone who had taken part, totalling 84 members. Asked how valuable members found the services we provide, 80% of people said they found all of the services very valuable. 80% of new members also found the services very valuable, with the only difference being that new members were also keen to have more talks like the ones organised over zoom during the pandemic. MG asked the meeting whether anyone had visited the CTAA website in last few months and the answer was very few. The survey allowed for open comments through a feedback section and these included a keen interest in matters regarding neighbourhood amenities (rubbish/dog poo/ traffic/ the need for further engagement with Police), as well as thanks expressed to the Committee for their hard work over the years. Some people were keen to have more newsletters and talks whilst, lastly, some people expressed the desire to see a channel set up to allow members to connect such as a WhatsApp group. Someone in the meeting suggested a list of local tradespeople would be a useful thing – we currently don't have that on the website. CP will discuss with the Committee to see if such a facility could perhaps be addressed via the website. CP thanked MG.

9. Environment/Traffic and Parking, including rubbish, trees, dogs mess, lampposts, pavements – MC

MC reported on environment updates. Dog mess continues to be a problem on our streets, as confirmed by a member, querying whether we need to put up notices. CP confirms this is a borough-wide issue and that we did have notices put up a few years ago, thanks to Rae Than. One of the bins specifically designated for this went missing for a while but has now been replaced. These dog mess bins are usually hard to place as residents always object to having them near their houses. Cllr Catherine Faulks reported that Street Line, our dustmen, are very good at reporting dog fouling, but in order to attract a fine, the culprit needs to be seen in action.

The rubbish collection time gap raised as a problem last year seems to have improved.

In accordance with the schedule mapped out last year, James Burton, Arboricultural Officer at RBKC, carried out a survey of all the trees in the area and pruning is planned for April 2025. Seven new trees are due to be planted in 2024, 2 outside nos 4 and 5 BG, 2 outside nos 42 and 48 PGT as well as 15 and 72 PGT. Generally, it was reported that RBKC is helpful and responsive in dealing with environmental matters, whether these be issues of noise, lights or even portaloos. CP confirmed this and recommends a direct call to them for any such matters, particularly urging everyone to report any infringement to the Building Noise Regulations, as these are usually dealt with very promptly by the Council. Finally, it was reported that the “One Way” signs at VG and the top of PGT are still being regularly infringed, mostly by delivery motorbikes. CP thanked MC for her hard work.

Report from Councillors

Cllr Catherine Faulks (CF) reported on:

“Opportunity Kensington”

Opportunity Kensington is a business improvement scheme for Kensington High St, which seeks to raise £850,000 annually from levies on business rates. Some of the steps taken this season are:

- Three Christmas trees will soon be put up and the Christmas lights have already been installed.
- The hitherto high level of shoplifting on the High St has been most effectively tackled by the active presence and patrolling of 2 community officers, thereby helping businesses to save money and making residents and shoppers feel safer. Victoria Borwick referred to the use of face recognition AI technology currently being used by major stores like John Lewis to curtail shoplifting as proving very useful and suggested RBKC could support shops wanting to follow suit in the High St. CF confirmed the Council will continue to explore other existing safety schemes with a view to incorporate them on the High St, including for example the Safer London scheme, Walkie-Talkies etc.
- A map of the area is now handed out to all hotels for their guests and visitors. CF will give some to us so CTRAA members can help themselves to them. All this information is also available on Instagram and a specific person has been appointed by RBKC to manage social media for the scheme.
- Token cards are being handed out – these have a QR code on the back which gives a discount in local shops.

Other matters

A member raised the issue of the level of rubbish accumulating on the High Street, with private commercial waste contractors being used, often creating enormous overflowing piles on the pavement. CF acknowledged that RBKC uses private rubbish collections for bigger businesses, and that it has become a real issue because there are too many.

CF also reported that, on 12th January, a new planning application will be submitted on behalf of the Newcombe House developers because of the requirement for the building to have 2 staircases.

E-bikes: policy does not allow RBKC to publicise a map of ebikes but it also recognizes that there are still not enough stands for them. There is understandable frustration from residents about the fact that they are often dumped in the middle of the pavement with no regard to pedestrians so RBKC is planning to operate vans that will take them away to the pound in Kensal Rise, in addition to imposing fines on culprits, which should help.

The Kensington Mayor's Carol Service will be held at St Mary Abbots on 4th of December. CP thanked CF for her contribution to the AGM and the Councillors for their hard work on our behalf.

Report by We Patrol and Protect Limited - Kris Vaskelis (KV)

KV reported on a few incidents in the past 6 weeks, with 2 people being mugged recently (NHG station and Waterstones being the meeting point). A person was shot in the early hours of the morning of the AGM in the Ladbroke Grove /Notting Hill area and the police have opened an investigation. It is suspected to be most likely gang-related activity. CP thanked KV.

11. Planning Issues (including Newcombe House) - Thomas Blomberg (TB)

TB reported planning to be fairly quiet, except Newcombe House. The current application, which arrived in June, still remains to be decided and has now been pushed back to January 2024. Developers hoped to have it all up and running in first quarter of 2026. But TB thinks this is now unlikely to happen as there many scenarios for delays. The current developer has taken over the approval obtained by the previous one but has put forward a different design so it is not currently clear how the project will now be able to progress on this basis.

12. Website - Thomas Blomberg (TB) and Christian Klotz (CK)

The website is in the process of being revamped by TB in collaboration with CK, MG and BF. The mandate has been to look at various technical solutions to give the website a fresher look and feel. As TB has, thus far, been responsible for all the site content, the idea was also to open it up to other contributors. Another new big feature of the site is that it will be able to feature an online membership facility in due course. TB explained the new site will continue to look familiar and will go live soon, early in the New Year. CK introduced himself and thanked TB for all the work he has done on the website over the years. CP thanked TB and CK.

13. 2024 Garden Parties and Other Events

CP confirmed there will be the same number of parties in 2024 as for the past year, plus hopefully one talk, which CP hopes to be able to arrange for around March/Easter time.

15. Any Other Business

CP brought the meeting's attention to the following 3 items:

- Member Jana Gough knows of an Afghan lawyer looking for accommodation locally for 2/3 weeks
- Local choir *The Aubrey Singers* will have a concert this Sunday 26th November at St George's, Aubrey Walk
- *Calling London*, a charity founded and run by Committee member Frances Manthos which collects unwanted coats from the public and re-distributes them to charities and needy families is in full collection mode right now. Collection points are all over the borough at Chestertons and FM encouraged the meeting to drop off any unwanted coats and to come and help out on 25/26th November.

16. Concluding Remarks

CP thanked CTAA members and Committee members for attending. He invited members to join the Committee for a glass of wine. The formal meeting ended at 8.30pm.