

The Belsize Society

Minutes of the Committee Meeting at 19.30 pm on Tuesday 14th March 2023
at 79 Lawn Road NW3 2XB

Present: PV (Chair), BA, SC, AS, DT, TS, Angela Alban (AA) and Peter Wallace (PW)

Apologies for Absence: SP

Minutes of last Meeting

1. The minutes of the last meeting in February 2023 were approved

1. BelSoc Business.

a. Matters arising from the AGM on Sunday 12 March 2023.

i. Bench for Diana Self,

At the AGM it was proposed that the Society should provide a street bench in memory of Diana Self. This proposal was unanimously approved. The best place would probably be in conjunction with the new Queen's Green Canopy trees at Eton Road. BA will take this further with the Councillors and Council Officers.

ii. Slidepack from Tom Parkes. The slides prepared by Camden Air Quality Officer Tom Parkes would be put up on the website.

iii. E-bikes. It was widely acknowledged that the haphazard leaving of e-bikes on local pavements was a problem; It was understood that Camden Council were seeking to get the companies concerned to improve their software so they could more easily be tracked. If possible stray bikes should be photographed and the photo sent to an online address. When notified the companies will remove the bikes. This address will be publicized in the next newsletter.

b. New Committee set up and meeting timings.

i. A paper was circulated setting out committee roles.

1. Existing officers and roles were confirmed.

2. DT will be taking on liaison on transport issues as well as the retrofitting network and environmental issues.

3. BA will look after air quality as well as trees. It was noted that both PV (as chair) and AS (membership secretary) would definitely be relinquishing their roles next year, and SC (Secretary) might not be able to continue as secretary but hoped to work with PW on TYCT.

ii. Tuesday really is the most convenient evening for committee meetings and they will continue on the second Tuesday each month.

c. Progress on Queen's Canopy (BA)

BA reported that three trees have been planted (a cherry, a crab-apple and a hazel).

d. Chairing the Belsize Village Streatery liaison group (PV).

It was noted that it had not been possible to agree suitable arrangements for a Streatery residents' consultation group to be formed as a sub-committee of the Belsoc committee.

e. Retrofitting network discussion (PV, DT)

A retrofitting network was being established involving both DT and PV and an interested member. They will be hoping to enlist other interested persons, and organize events, of the which the first is likely to be a visit to a retrofitted home, although this is still awaiting the installation of a heat pump/exchanger. It was noted that one of the key hindrances to such work is the shortage of skilled craftspeople qualified and competent to undertake it.

f. Volunteering for the Society: Outcomes from recent email (PV, AS)

The Committee were delighted to have two new people observing their meeting.

Finance

1. Accounts for February 2023 (NH)

In the absence of NH this item was postponed.

Membership

1. New members in February 2023 (AS)

There were 4 new members in February/early March

Events

1. Working with the Library on events (PV)

It is anticipated that there will be a joint event with Belsize Community library in June, probably a talk. Full details will be provided in the May newsletter.

2. New Members' event.

It is hoped such an event could be organised for late summer. AS indicated a willingness to host.

Publications

1. Newsletter (PV):

The Committee congratulated the editors on a substantial and interesting newsletter in February.

2. TYCT 2023

This will be delayed until August. The form requesting entries will go out with the May newsletter

Planning

1. Comments/objections:

TS had examined about 10 applications and not yet made any objections.

2. Howitt Close: Application for listing and planning application

a. Freshwater has appealed against refusal of their initial application for the addition of an extra storey. Their new application is still pending. The timetable of the appeal is still very unclear.

b. Historic England are still considering the application to grant the building Grade II listing. Disappointing the 20th Century Society has not felt able to support the application.

3. 11 Belsize Crescent, NW3 5QY

Belsoc is providing support to local efforts to enforce restoration of like-for-like features for building in Belsize Crescent in line with conservation area policies.

Trees

1. One objection had been lodged, to excessive pruning proposed in Wedderburn Road.

2. BA had undertaken an analysis of 2022 objections which suggested that the Belsoc objections had not been very successful. 40 trees had been felled. If this continues the overall ambience of the conservation area will not be preserved. Despite a tree strategy released by Camden Council a comparison the numbers of trees felled in 2022 with 2021 suggested that felling was now only being refused when the tree was subject to a TPO. The figures suggested that there had been a clear change of policy, related possibly to a change in Council personnel. BA will communicate with Councillors and Officers to draw attention to the changed policy and ask about how it had been authorized.

Any other business: None

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday, 11 April at 19.30.

Location: TBC

New committee roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities to remain unchanged:

- Planning, Tom Symes, Sanya Polescuk and David Thomas
- Trees: Barbara Abraham
- Represent Society about climate change: David Thomas
- Newsletter: Prabhat Vaze
- Treasurer: Neil Harris
- Non-committee roles are: newsletter delivery, catering for walks, summer party and AGM, noticeboard maintenance, newsletter editing

Unfilled roles or roles where committee members would like a change. Firstly, some all-year roles:

- Managing members (currently Anne)
- Taking minutes at Committee and other meetings (Sarah)
- Chairing committee meetings (Prabhat)

Activities that are periodic:

- Represent Society about transport (unallocated)
- Organise member events (summer party, AGM) (Prabhat)
- Organising meeting with councillors
- Organise cultural events (e.g. historic walk)
- Organise social events