

AGM Summary: First Society Annual General Meeting

The first full Belsize Society AGM took place at Belsize Square Synagogue on Sunday 8 March. The meeting reviewed a successful year for the Society.

The Chair reported on events that were organised, the continued role of commenting on planning and tree applications, and the publications the Society produced. The Tradesmen You Can Trust booklet was provided to members, who were also kept informed of local issues thorough email, the website and the newsletter. The Society's carol singing and garden party attracted large numbers.

During 2019, we organised a pollution monitoring programme in the area funded by Camden; the year also saw a consultation about the ward boundaries for London councils and the Society made submissions to the consultation.

There was a presentation to the Society made by Rashid Iqbal, CEO of the Winch. He highlighted some of recent work by the Winch, including steps to encourage wider community use of the Belsize Library. The Winch has operated the library for several years, maintaining a librarian and a band of volunteers. There have been a number of community focused events. The discussion that followed highlighted the importance of the links between the Society, the Winch and the Belsize Library. After the AGM, some steps have been taken to progress, especially with Anthony Isaacs joining the Society committee.

The questions and comments raised by members then covered how best to raise concerns about transport issues such as rental cycles parking, obstructing pavements. Large-scale developments and monitoring construction impacts on residents was also discussed. The Society's Treasurer reported on finances, which remained healthy, and there was a discussion about the donations made to local charities.

We also said thanks to some of the 2019 departing committee members: Barrie Tankel and Consuelo Phelan provided considerable efforts over a number of years for the Association and Society. Consuelo's expert input on trees in the area will be hard to replace, and this issue includes an article highlighting how diverse and valuable this natural asset is in Belsize. Many members will have received Barrie's help and advice as planning applications are considered by the Council. Barrie was also a Trustee of the Society helping with setting up.

The meeting then agreed the trustees of the Society and the rest of the Committee for the Society was elected.

The new Committee is: Prabhat Vaze (Chair, Trustee); Sarah Courtin (Secretary); Neil Harris (Treasurer), Trustee; Michael Jampel (Constitution and Governance, Trustee); Sanya Polescuk (Planning); Teresa Poole (Community); Anne Stevens (Membership Secretary, Trustee); Anthony Isaacs (BelSoc/Library liaison); Tom Symes (Planning). After the Committee meeting, Artur Carulla was co-opted to the committee, to help on planning matters.