

The Belsize Society

Minutes of Committee Meeting at 19.30 pm on Tuesday 11th April 2023
at 14C Belsize Square NW3 4HT

Present: PV (Chair), BA, AS, DT, TS, PW

Apologies for Absence: SP

Minutes of last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting on Tuesday 14 March were approved

BelSoc Business

- 1) Neil's passing. With profound sorrow the Committee noted the unexpected death of Neil Harris, who had been the Society's very efficient and careful treasurer since 2013. The Committee expressed thanks to DT and TS for raising their concerns after the March meeting and commended the police for their prompt response to these concerns. TS would continue to liaise with relevant persons in the hope that further information might eventually be available.
- 2) BA was thanked for her paper listing actions that might be required following Neil's death.
 - a) The Committee noted that PV and AS were both additional signatories to the Society's Santander and Charities Bank accounts. PV had established contact with Santander and obtained online access to the account, which had enabled urgent payments to be made.
 - b) New Treasurer. An appeal for a longer-term treasurer might be made in the May newsletter and backed up by an email to members. BA was thanked for her document setting out a job description for the Treasurer's role: this could in due course be shared with any prospective volunteers. Mention should also be made in the document of the administration of gift aid.
 - c) Interim Treasurer PV would email the current independent examiner and ask if he would be willing to act on interim basis, since he is already familiar with the society's accounts.
 - d) Charities Commission and HMRC. Michael Jampel should be consulted about notification of the decease of a trustee to the Charities Commission, since he has online access to the Charities Commission's digital services. In due course a new contact would be required for HMRC, but this will not be needed until late Summer. [Note: AS's address is registered with HMRC for correspondence about the Society's affairs]
- 3) Progress on Queen's Canopy: Three flowering trees have been planted, in time to be officially included in the register of the Queen's Green Canopy. BA had made the relevant notification, but had so far received no response. She is charing this up. She is contacting the tree officer and Councillor Kirk to see if there might be scope for further planting at the site.
- 4) Benches at the Queen's Green Canopy site. The one large bench currently at the site would be better replaced with two smaller ones slightly differently arranged. The Belsize Society would wish to be associated with the provision of one in memory of Diana Self, and another in memory of Neil Harris. When these have been installed it the Society would wish to organize an "opening" ceremony to mark what had been achieved.
- 5) Retrofitting network discussion (DT) has produced a short article about retrofitting which should appear in the next newsletter, with an invitation to interested persons to contact him. The Committee felt it was important that the article should refer to the issues involved for flats, which are the dominant form of housing in Belsize. It is hoped that a network can be set up, leading possibly to a workshop morning in the autumn. AS will endeavour to set up a dedicated email address on the Belsize.org.uk server.
- 6) AGM follow up.

- a) PV will chase up the AGM speaker in the hope that his slides on Camden's clean air policies can go up on the website
- b) E-bikes: there will be a note in the Newsletter about how to report dumped e-bikes.

Finance

1. Bank balance, 31/3/2023: £4220.13; Payments: none in Feb, £434 to Keith Melhuish in March; Receipts: £80 in Feb; £10 in March.
2. Belsoc had previously agreed that the Society would make a contribution to the provision of new window blinds for the library if the rest of the money required could be raised. The Friends of the Library are to contribute £500 and it was agreed that a £500 contribution will be made by the Society.

Membership

3. 2 new members had joined in March.

Events

1. Future Events: PV will seek out a venue for the Summer Party: the date will have to depend on the host, but should be late June (avoiding Wimbledon dates).
2. There will be a joint Friends of Library/BelSoc event at the Library on 16 June: a talk by , Fabian Watkinson, "The House that no one wanted: Erno Goldfinger & 2 Willow Road. This will be publicized in the May newsletter and by email a week or so before the event. The event will be free and pre-booking will not be required, but donations will be requested.

Publications

1. Newsletter: The deadline for contributions to the May newsletter is the end of April. Contributions expected include a piece about E-bikes, notification of the Library/BelSoc event, a reminder to submit TYCT entries, a piece by AN on Belsize and royalty, a review of the Isokon exhibition
2. TYCT 2023: It is hoped that this can be available for distribution with the August newsletter.

Planning

1. Camden Planning Committee has approved the developer's proposals for the O2 site despite massive local opposition. An attempt is now being made to persuade the Secretary of State to call in the application, which he has power to do.
2. Howitt Close: Historic England has not agreed to Grade II listing for Howitt Close. BA will appeal against this refusal, on the basis of further information about the historic importance of the building in relation to the war-time history of Belsize Park. In the meantime no action has been taken in relation to the developer's appeal against the refusal of their initial planning application. A decision on the newer application appears to be delayed, pending the outcome of the appeal to Historic England.

Trees

1. Comments/objections: there were very few applications for tree works in March and no objections.

Any other business:

The Committee noted that the Society would be supporting the application by the Globe Tennis Club for the renewal of their current Asset of Community Value Status

Date of next Meeting: Tuesday, 9th May at 19.30

Location: Flat 1, 20 Netherhall Gardens NW3 5TH