

# St Helens Resident's Association

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## Minutes of Open Meeting

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Venue: St Helens Church Hall

Attendance: Chair: Clare Singleton  
Treasurer: Ruth Hillary  
Vice Chair and Minutes: Henry Peterson  
Cllr Judith Blakeman, ward councillor  
Members of the public, and SHRA management committee members.

### **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed members of the public and briefly rehearsed the aims of the Association: to involve residents of the St Quintin's estate and surrounding streets in local planning, amenity, and quality of life issues.

### **2. Current planning issues**

The planning appeal by the developers of 290 Latimer Road, to add a further floor to the development, has still not been decided by the Planning Inspectorate.

On the 'towers of terror' the Association had reminded the Council Leader of his commitment to pursue issues with Westway Development Trust, and the Leader has written accordingly to those councillors who are WDT members.

Proposals by Imperial College to development the Woodlands site (former BBC Worldwide) would be the next major planning issue for the area. The scheme involves a tower block for student accommodation. Consultation days to be held shortly. LB Hammersmith and Fulham is the planning authority for the site.

The chair thanked Nigel Whitbread for his work in maintaining a regular review of all planning applications affecting the area.

The Association has permission to put up a public notice board, from the landlord of the bakery in St Helens Gardens, and the board will go up once current works to the premises are completed. Costs of the board are being met from a ward grant, following applications made to Cllr Judith Blakeman as ward councillor.

### **3. Treasurer's report**

Ruth Hillary reported that the Association's funds stand at £207. Main outgoings are the costs of leaflets and room hire.

#### **4. Environmental projects**

The chair reported that Terry Oliver, North Kensington Environmental Manager had hoped to attend the meeting but was on leave. Ruth Hillary gave an update on current projects:

- a climate change project is planned for the local area. Interested residents are invited to get in touch. Potential initiatives include giving households the opportunity to trial energy saving equipment such as smart meters
- another idea is to do a full energy audit on a 'typical' St Quintins Estate house. Given that these are of broadly common design, materials, and structure, all households could potentially benefit from seeing where the main energy savings could be made.

Sarah Milner-Simonds from Groundwork London gave an update on the Kitchen Gardens project, which has been going very well. The site next to the health centre on St Quintins Avenue has 50 plots, and is fully subscribed and very active. Sessions on planting and basic gardening techniques have been run from the Lighthouse, and a further session will be on 1<sup>st</sup> June at 4pm.

Anyone interested in the sessions or in joining the waiting list for Kitchen Garden plots can contact Sarah on 020 8743 3040 or [sarah.milner-simonds@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:sarah.milner-simonds@groundwork.org.uk)

#### **5. The work of the Kensington Society**

Amanda Frame, Chairman of the Kensington Society, gave a presentation on the work of the Society. Founded in 1953 by Mrs Gay Christiansen, the Society is committed to preserving and improving amenity in the Borough. This involves monitoring all planning applications, lobbying against poor design, loss of heritage or visual amenity and maintaining the quality of open space and the built environment.

The society works closely with local amenity organisations and residents groups, and welcomes the establishment of the St Helens Residents Association as a new organisation in W10.

Amanda reminded people that the council does not routinely refer planning applications to committee unless three or more objections are received. Others are dealt with by officers under delegated authority. Hence the Society often needs the support of others to make an objection.

Current planning issues in the Borough are as follows:

- major roadside advertising developments are becoming a growing issue. Following on from the WDT towers along Westway, there have been other major sites approved by LB Hammersmith & Fulham along the A40. Further large-scale

advertising is in place at the Chiswick Roundabout. Campaigns to block these proposals have not been helped by an apparent new willingness by Transport for London, and the London Mayor, to allow developments to proceed despite concerns on road safety implications.

- There were some signs of hope in that 3 further applications on the M5 had been refused on grounds of 'impact on the area's amenity'.
- RB Kensington and Chelsea continues to object to 'advertising creep' including proposals to place adverts on cable boxes and other street furniture.
- The Kensington Society supports SHRA in its view that the Westway Development Trust is now placing commercial gain and income generation before local amenity, and shares its concerns over conflicts of interest amongst the WDT management committee.
- The Society continues to campaign over construction sites that breach council policies on nuisance to neighbours. There are concerns over the level of enforcement of council policies and guidelines.
- Change of use of shops are another frequent issue. The high profile case of Portobello Road and the All Saints development (former arcades now amalgamated into a single store) demonstrate that current planning policies are not proving strong enough to halt unwelcome developments.
- Proposed redevelopment of post offices in Westbourne Grove, Kings Road, and Kensington High Street -- another current issue.

In terms of longer-term planning policies, Amanda Frame encouraged SHRA to keep a close eye on the Latimer Area Action Plan, and proposals for the development of a new North Kensington School on the swimming pool site. The Commonwealth Institute redevelopment was a further high profile planning issue for the Borough.

The Kensington Society can be contacted via its online message form at [www.kensingtonsociety.org](http://www.kensingtonsociety.org)

## **6. Opening of the new Childrens Centre (Highlever Road)**

Nina Engel and Richard Holden from the council gave a briefing on the new childrens centre. This is a facility which combines services for families and young children (health visiting, midwifery, early learning) along with specialist care for children with disabilities (such as autism and learning disorders).

The Centre has been opening on a phased basis since Jan/Feb and is now fully up and running, with around 40 children on site. It is very high quality provision, meeting the needs of a significant part of the 350 disabled children in the Borough, and integrating specialist care with universal services.

The council was conscious that the building works had inevitable caused some nuisance for neighbours, and was grateful of forbearance of local residents. Some initial teething problems (such as the security alarm regularly going off at night) were being sorted out. Neighbouring residents agreed that they saw no need for a sonic alarm, which created the risk of serious nuisance at night.

There will be an open day in July (date to be circulated) for local residents to see the Centre in action. Volunteers to help with activities at the centre will be welcome, and should contact the staff there. There is a community room available for local meetings. An advisory board involving local residents will also be formed.

#### **7. Any other business**

The Chair thanked all the guest speakers for taking the time to come to talk to the meeting. All the contributions had made for a good discussion and a useful meeting.

An Association member had raised the issue of recent dog attacks on other dogs. If other members had similar experiences to report, the Chair would feed back to the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

The Chair thanked people for attending and closed the meeting.