

Shad Thames Residents' Association Annual General Meeting – October 2021 via Zoom

Present: Councillor Hamish McCallum, North Bermondsey
Councillor William Hougbo, London Bridge and Bermondsey
Inspector Tom Cornish
35 Residents
STRA core group

1. Introduction:

Kathleen Ehrlich, (KE) Chair, STRA, welcomed and thanked everyone for joining the meeting.

KE said she took over from Nick Napier as STRA's Chair in September, and she will try to fill his very large shoes! Paul Crosbie has taken over the Comms role. The other core group members remain the same, and Hridi Chowdhury has joined the core group.

STRA strives to serve residents by making Shad Thames cleaner, greener and safer. After the ASB situation in the Spring, and the resulting public meeting led by Councillors Hamish McCallum and Humaira Ali, and where had Inspector Tom Cornish participated. Tom will now let us have some updates since then.

After that, the core group will report, followed by Councillors McCallum and Hougbo. Residents were invited to put any questions in the chat?

2. Inspector Tom Cornish (TC), Neighbourhood Policing, Southwark

TC said he oversees 23 safer neighbourhood teams in Southwark. Most relevant were the summer challenges in Riverside areas, particularly Potters Fields Park – where groups of young people had been boisterous – in many cases involving alcohol and drugs – most of them were from outside the local area, when they encountered local groups, fights broke out. This was something new for local Police. We put dispersal zones in place, at first we had not appreciated how this was affecting Shad Thames, we then included Shad Thames, which helped your local situation. After nightclubs opened, people didn't seem to need to come to the Tower Bridge area – the Tower Bridge lighting had been an attraction. Families seem to have now reclaimed the area.

We hope, now that Autumn is upon us, that all areas will be safer.

TC asked for questions –

Q. Nick Napier, STRA, are the Police expected something similar to happen next year?

A. TC said the Police would be monitoring the situation, and against the experience of last year, would be well prepared.

WH – congratulated TC on taking care of Southwark's 23 neighbourhoods. He said it was good that STRA is represented on the two local Police Ward Panels.

Q. Thomas – said that these areas are public spaces, and we must be mindful of not taking action against certain factions of the community, such as young people.

A. TC acknowledged this – he said the young people concerned were from Essex, i.e. they were not local, but they were becoming victims of crime, when local young people were, e.g., stealing phones from them.

Q. KE – on the dispersal zone – how big an area does that cover?

A. TC - Abbey Street is one of the boundaries – one of the concerns is that the zone should not expand without justification. He clarified that people are only asked to leave the zone if they are causing trouble – it doesn't mean all young people have to leave the area.

Q. KE – are things back to normal now?

A. TC – there has been a significant drop in ASB reports from Shad Thames, the focus has now moved to other areas where more ASB activity is being reported, e.g. Surrey Quays.

KE – there are many posts in the chat expressing thanks to local Police.

TC – pleased to let everyone have his contacts

3. Core Group updates:

KE said this has been a busy time for STRA and that members of the Core Group would provide updates on their activities:

(a) Julian Griffiths, (JG) Treasurer – Finances and Police Ward Panels

JG gave an overview of STRA's finances – he said that last year had been a very active one, whereas this year was a more regular year. Also, last year STRA had hosted a ring-fenced bank account for Butler's Wharf Riverside Trust.

STRA had an opening balance of £2825, income was £7525, expenditure was £5497, and the closing Balance £5497.

A contribution to street cleaning was a major expenditure, as well as donations to the Manna Centre and the Southwark Food Bank (£1000 each).

The Manna Centre has specific needs, e.g. clothes, their Website gives information on their most urgent needs, depending on the time of the year (<https://www.mannasociety.org.uk>).

Police Ward Panels

JG said that he attended the North Bermondsey Panel (covering Shad Thames) and London Bridge and Bermondsey Panel.

The Panels meet every 8 weeks – the North Bermondsey Panel is an open meeting, anyone can attend, but the London Bridge and Bermondsey Panel is more closed, an invitation is needed to attend this Panel – please contact JG to arrange. It's rare

that issues in Shad Thames arise – the exception were issues around the Football Village on Potters Fields Park.

If you are a victim of crime, please report it to the police. There are a lot of CCTV cameras in Shad Thames, which can be helpful. Residents have also reported crime issues on the Shad Thames Facebook page. These reports aren't forwarded to the police, but they do make neighbours aware of what is happening locally. Mobile phone and bike thefts are common.

(b) Jilly Frisch, (JF) Secretary – Potters Fields Park Management Trust

After the Public meeting last April, STRA decided it wanted to take certain issues forward to PFPMT – mostly based around the experience of the Football Village –

- a) some events are simply wrong for the area – a month of football in a high-density residential area is one of them;
- b) make public the Board's policy on the type of events it will approve;
- c) host only enough small events to fund the running of PFP and St John's Churchyard, and associated costs;
- d) think beyond the immediate confines of the park – the detrimental impact of events on the surrounding community has been overlooked;
- e) include a Community Impact Assessment for all events prior to their acceptance;
- f) commit to the provision of permanent toilet facilities in the park.

Although I am a member of the PFP Board I did not appreciate what the Football Village would entail – I do now! Fortunately, there are no plans to host events around any other sporting events.

The rest of the Board had not had good experience of public toilets, nonetheless, they agreed to commission a Feasibility Study, at the following meeting they backtracked a bit and decided they first wanted to have a study on the “desirability” of having toilets on the Park. I am on a subgroup of 3 to look at this.

A different issue, but one linked to local ASB – the Courage Yard Residents' and Leaseholders Association decided to employ a security company, plus a callout service for ASB incidents. For the Security company to provide a Security Guard, with a dog, for a 10-hour shift is £15.50 per hour, so per year it's £55,000, if, for example, ten blocks wanted to get involved, the cost would be £5,500 per block per year. STRA will approach other blocks to see if there is interest in participating. This could be an amazing facility to have in Shad Thames.

A more interesting item is to have an event on PFP to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. At STRA's AGM, 2 years ago, someone present said they would like to see a Bandstand on the Park – this could be on the afternoon/early evenings of Friday, Saturday, and Sunday – 4, 5, and 6 June 2022. If this appeals to you, or if you have other ideas, please let STRA know (info@shadthames.org).

(c) Andrew McKelvie, (AM) Vice-Chair – Tower Bridge Court

There is not much to report on TBC. There are three STRA members on the TBC Community Liaison Group. Plans are still in place for the project to be completed in

2023 – the start date is not expected to be until early 2022. Current information can be found on the STRA website (<https://www.shadthames.org/tbc-redevelopment/>).

(d) Paul Crosbie, (PC) Communications

PC said he has taken over Comms from KE, this includes producing STRA's monthly newsletter; Instagram is about to be launched; social media has expanded, it has been encouraging to note a lot of thanks on how Facebook and Twitter is run – which is appreciated, because of the amount of work involved.

There have been a range of comments – which is also encouraging, since STRA seeks to promote local businesses, restaurants, bars, and we monitor film requests.

The photographers amongst us follow the wildlife and provide some of the most popular local posts on Facebook and Twitter, including the plight of the ducklings, the canary who suddenly appeared on a balcony. Area history is also a big draw and residents use the Facebook group to solicit advice on local services, locate lost items, and more.

STRA also uses our social platforms to publicise planning and licensing applications; St Saviours Dock bridge has seen a lively topic of debate; and we've ended the year with people coming out to see the Marathon.

These are your pages, they provide information for everyone, look out for STRA's new Instagram, and thank you to everyone, both readers and contributors.

(e) Kathleen Ehrlich, (KE), Chair – Planning issues, and miscellaneous

22 Shad Thames was granted Grade 2 status, which the Developer unsuccessfully appealed against. They withdraw their initial planning application, but quickly submitted a new application to make good the work they had started – the 20th Century Society has petitioned Southwark, asking that the Developer be required to use material of the same standard as that which was used in the original building as a condition of planning approval. A lot of local residents worked hard to achieve this outcome.

The Clove Building – in the planning process right now – there is a group of residents which is very active in opposing this application.

Illuminated River Foundation – unfortunately, plans have had to be curtailed, their funding situation changed during the pandemic. The illumination of Tower Bridge will therefore not take place.

STRA has become put together a list of board presidents of individual local blocks and has hosted one meeting of this group so boards could share learnings about the cladding situation. If you are on the board of a block and would like to be included in this group, please contact us (info@shadthames.com).

4. Councillor William Hougbo, (WH) London Bridge and Bermondsey

WH said he had lived in Southwark for 23 years – his interests were community safety and youth services. He said Southwark is experiencing a new wave of crime

and ASB – the group called Bike Stormz – leader Mat Ferrari – 10,000 members – slogan “Bikes Up, Knives Down”. Unfortunately, when the public sees them, en masse, they are a formidable group. There is, however, a different group of bikers who do cause problems. The Bike Stormz group need space – most of the people come from across the country, not just from Southwark. We must come together to find a solution.

PFP, where dispersal orders were implemented – all age groups were affected – many youth centres were closed during lockdown. Of course, ASB belongs to the whole community, we must help young people, and all age groups, not to feel excluded.

Waste management is another problem, a lot of people are searching for bins at night – it could be good to have security guards at night – a community cannot just rely on the Police. Security guards is a proactive solution.

In Southwark there are a lot of estates, with gangs, who are fighting each, they are fighting for control of their estates, and people are stabbed. These young people, do not feel safe, so they carry weapons, like knives, they're afraid, so they carry weapons. Section 60, stop and search, is sometimes used by the Police to deal with this.

We all appreciate the efforts of the Police, if you feel the police should come immediately, use 999. Or, more general issues can be reported to the Ward Panels. It helps the Police to know what is happening in various areas when drawing up their plans for patrolling.

5. Councillor Hamish McCallum (HM), North Bermondsey Ward

Hamish thanked KE, and NN, for their cooperation and support over many years, as well as the Core Group. He passed on good wishes from Anood, who is on maternity leave, she has just had a baby girl named Isabelle.

HM said he would not repeat what William has said.

As was brought to the fore at the Public Meeting in April, there were many issues involving PFP, including the Football Village, which highlighted the need for the Council, Police, and others, be more responsive, but also to take issues encountered into future planning. HM thanked the local police for everything they did, mentioning, that the Council might have been better at dealing with smaller issues as they arose, the outcome might then have been better. HM said he had raised this issue on the Council's Scrutiny Committee.

HM said Councillors continue to support residents on development issues, such as the TBC Community Liaison Group, it was good news on 22 Shad Thames, and, in connection with the Clove Building planning application, Councillors would ensure that local voices are heard.

Perpetual issues are garbage and noise... Early morning collection of refuse had been due to Covid, the Council has now rectified it. There are still problems with

missed waste collections, overflowing bins – but litter picks on the BW jetty was a good initiative – this, however, should not be necessary – but it is a problem across the area. Councillors support STRA's application for CGF for extra street cleaning in Shad Thames.

Finally, there is good news on parking in Shad Thames, the review of controlled parking zones has led to extending it to allowing parking by local residents seven days a week.

HM said he is ready to assist STRA and local residents with any issues in the area.

6. Questions in the chat room

KE – most comments in the chat are around noise and garbage –

Q. is there an hour before which garbage collections are not supposed to take place? – what is the best way of reporting deviations?

A. HM said the answer is complex, a big part of the issue is from refuse collections, with Shad Thames being both residential and commercial. Veolia, on behalf of Southwark Council, should be after 7.00am. Where it's not a Council collection there is no minimum time, but HM would be pleased to look into this.

Similarly with deliveries, there is no morning time, but we have managed to get companies to appreciate that they are in a residential area – if there are any specific issues, please let HM know.

Q. Where is the Courage Yard Office?

A. (JF) 57 Lafone Street.

Q. How are trustees elected to PFP?

A. (JF) According to the PFP Articles, a body is identified, e.g. STRA, Fair Street, Moore London, Team London Bridge, GLA, Southwark Council, who can each then appoint a Director, with Southwark Council being able to appoint two Directors.

Q. How does STRA make/receive donations?

A. (KE) Generally, our funding comes from FilmFixer, but there was no filming during the pandemic, things are picking up now. We have agreed guidelines with FilmFixer and productions filming in the area are asked to give a small donation to STRA to offset the inconvenience to local residents. However, they aren't required to do so. It's rare that we receive zero FilmFixer funds in a quarter, but last year there were 9 months where there was no filming, and therefore no donations.

We use the money we receive to pay for extra street cleaning, we give money to local groups, we hold events, e.g. Anise Gallery, and, hopefully, next year on PFP. We had an accumulation of funds at the start of pandemic, we felt the best thing we could do was to help Southwark Food Banks, the Manna Society, Compass School which needed tablets/computers, etc. Members of the core group make suggestions about what we might fund and the group is also happy to receive proposals from

residents and other groups. An explanation of what STRA funds is available on our site (<https://www.shadthames.org/what-we-fund/>).

A resident stated that he believed that residents are being inconvenienced during filming, without any tangible recompense – it would be better to see any donations coming back to the community – e.g. something like the security guard proposal could be funded by donations from filming. A standardised fee for filming in the area should be set at a sensible level, e.g. £5,000 – film companies get such large tax breaks, the amount STRA receives in comparison is a “pittance”. Also, the Council collects funds from film companies for closing parking bays, again residents receive nothing.

KE – said whether companies film here, or not, is not STRA’s decision – FilmFixer decides on that, and while companies are asked to make a donation, STRA cannot anticipate what level any donation will be. Many residents complain about not being notified of filming – STRA has recommended paper mailings, and we have given FilmFixer the name of a mailing company –it’s an ongoing frustration. We will take this up with them again.

JG – there is occasionally “illegal” filming in the area, FilmFixer will usually act on receiving such information.

KE – there is another question on the nuisance noise from helicopters, unfortunately, there is little we can do – helicopter noise is not necessarily related to filming. Licence to operate helicopters in the area, we believe, is through the Mayor’s office.

If we’ve missed something that you’ve raised in the chat room, please let us know info@shadthames.org

STRA is always looking for new members to join the core group – please contact us info@shadthames.org

Notes of this meeting will be posted on the STRA website, and a link included in the next Newsletter.

Thanks to everyone who joined us this evening.