

Shad Thames Residents' Association

Annual General Meeting – Thursday, 27 October 2022, 1900–2030

1. Welcome, and Chair's opening remarks

Kathleen Hogan Ehrlich, Chair, welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. She said that STRA had had a busy year. She introduced the members of the STRA core group – the officers had all agreed to stand again – and she outlined what STRA does.

Aline Baeck
Hridi Chowdhury
Paul Crosbie – Communications
Jilly Frisch – Secretary
Julian Griffiths – Treasurer
Kathleen Hogan Ehrlich – Chair
Margo Lewis
Andrew McKelvie – Vice-Chair
Nick Napier

What does STRA do?

- Keeps up to date with what is happening in the local Shad Thames environment
- Makes representations, on behalf of residents, to the various departments of Southwark Council related to licensing, planning, and noise
- Makes representations, on behalf of residents, to the Metropolitan Police and the Safer Neighbourhoods Team
- Liaises with developers, FilmFixer*, and other local organisations, on behalf of residents
- Represents Shad Thames on the Potters Fields Park Board of Directors
- Represents Shad Thames on local Police Ward Panels
- Maintains Shad Thames social media platforms
- Facilitates communications amongst residents
- Arranges social functions for residents

(*More about FilmFixer – there is sometimes confusion and concern over FilmFixer. Shad Thames is one of the most popular areas in the Borough. STRA has tried to develop a relationship with FilmFixer, for example, we have developed a set of guidelines with them, which is updated every 2 years. We've asked them to communicate with residents when there are large shoots. However, we cannot "stop" things from happening. We can only "negotiate". And, when filming takes place on privately owned locations we have no possibility of intervening – sometimes even FilmFixer is unaware of these private arrangements.)

What does STRA fund?

- Donations to community organisations and businesses
- Extra maintenance (e.g. street cleaning) in Shad Thames
- Community events for the enjoyment of residents

2. Core Group updates on current issues –

Julian Griffiths, Treasurer

(a) Police Ward Panels

There are two ward panels in the Shad Thames area – the North Bermondsey Ward and the London Bridge and West Bermondsey Ward – they meet every 8 weeks – Julian attends both panels. The North Bermondsey Ward is an open meeting, via Zoom, the London Bridge and West Bermondsey Ward is by invitation only. If anyone would like more information on how to attend either, please contact Julian.

Report crime to the Police –

- Look for CCTV cameras in the area, they may have recorded the crime.
- Use the what3words app which will enable you to pinpoint exactly where you are when you want to report a crime.
- Report incidents on OurShadThames
- Consider upgrading the CCTV cameras on the blocks where you live
- Look out for mobile phone and bike thieves

(b) Treasurer's Report

2022 has been an exceptional year. STRA's total income was £28,380.31 and total expenditure £17,193.44 – this meant 90 transactions (compared to just 8 transactions last year). We received the very healthy sum of £22,847 from FilmFixer. We received £8024 from the Lottery Fund, £2000 from Potters Fields Park, and £1000 from the Fair Community Group towards the two days of Jubilee events.

We made donations to the Manna Society, Southwark Food Bank, Compass School, and the Ukraine Appeal. If residents have suggestions for other areas which we could support, we should be pleased to hear from you.

Andrew McKelvie, Vice-Chair

(c) Planning updates

Tower Bridge Court and Albion House – both are adding storeys

Work has started on TBC – 4 members of the STRA core group are on the TBC Community Liaison Group – one of the issues has been access for fire engines, but the developer has changed its plans. Demolition noise is anticipated to be considerable; cranes will be erected shortly. STRA is taking up the withdrawal of two charging points for electric cars, which is now being discussed between Southwark Council and the Developer.

As soon as information is received it will be posted on STRA's website.

Clove Building – a proposal to build two storeys and a roof garden has not yet been heard by the Planning Committee – there are 195 objections to the proposal.

India House – this application was approved by the Planning Committee, it was a close vote, and the objectors managed to include several conditions which will somewhat mitigate the intrusion and noise from the adding of an extra storey.

22 Shad Thames – as we know the developer's application to redevelop the building was rejected, minor works are now being carried out to return the building to its former state.

Jilly Frisch, Secretary

(d) Potters Fields Park

As the STRA representative on the Park Board, there have been issues which we have tried to take forward. One is to have an early and very full discussion and examination of

the implications of any big events – such as the “football” events of a couple of years ago. Another is to have more toilets on or around the Park. This has now come down to the possibility of the existing toilets on the Park, and those nearby, having the Disabled Access toilets changed to also allow public access. I’m still following this through. (BTW did you know that there are public toilets in Southwark Council’s main reception area?)

The Board meets four times a year, apart from this the Chief Executive keeps us informed of anything out of the ordinary coming up. The Fair Community Group are also represented on the Board. We often have “discussions” about issues which will affect residents, the other members of the Board all bring different strengths to the Board, but as they “work” locally, rather than “live” locally, we are always alert!

Nadia Brocardo, CEO of Team London Bridge, has stepped up to act as Chair of the Board, after Simon Grinter decided that he could not continue to lead the Board after his move out of City Hall to Newham. The Board decided to recruit another member, which will add an exciting new dimension to our deliberations – he will take up office in November*. (*subsequently delayed)

And, of course, you will have noticed the grass is currently having it’s essential annual re-furb.

(e) Jubilee events

Everyone who joined us to celebrate the Queen’s Jubilee on 4 and 5 June 2022, enjoyed the Doollaly Tap Band, and just being with each other – it was an event which STRA was really pleased to organise for our residents.

After applying for a Lottery Grant in January, we had a lot to do – especially as we are not professional event organisers. We had to find – a band and a bandstand, an MC, bunting, deckchairs, security, insurance, buy Prosecco, get commemorative tea towels made, (the profits from selling these were donated to charity). Julian Griffiths, STRA’s Treasurer handled all the finances (he’s now “almost” an accountant). The Fair Community Group and Potters Fields Park each donated funds to the event and helped us during the weekend.

We faced a drama the weekend before the celebration when the three local restaurants who, themselves, had offered to provide 300 hundred lunches several months before the event, informed us that they couldn’t do this, and would not therefore be involved in the celebrations! Of course, Kathleen Ehrlich, saved the day! She organised lunch for 400 people – she managed to get partners, family members, and her neighbours to assemble 400 Bento boxes on Sunday morning. How did she manage it?

STRA wanted to plant a tree on the Park to mark the Jubilee, but the Park’s byelaws do not allow this. As Southwark Council owe us a tree, a tree will eventually be planted somewhere in Shad Thames this year, and we plan to add a plaque to mark the Jubilee.

Everyone who came to the celebration had a great time – it was two days which we’ll remember for a long time.

Paul Crosbie, Communications

(f) Communications

A few years ago, a popular topic was “is Shad Thames dying”! Far from it today! STRA has 1400 members registered on our Facebook page – it is the best supported community site in London – with an area of mainly of just 15 warehouse blocks – and, 700 read the monthly STRA newsletter, together with the Twitter feed, and Instagram – a lot of outlets which thrive because of daily updates. The STRA website provides an overview of what STRA does. These outlets bring the community together as they cover a wide range of topics, and we strive to keep residents up to date with what is going on. STRA has links with other groups in the area, and we have let local businesses who rely on local trade to tell us what they are doing. Thanks go to the photographers who follow wildlife – including local bird life, and what the local fox gets up to! Incidentally, there are 200,000 Shad Thames hits on TikTok, which was started by a local resident during the days of Queen’s lying-in-state queue.

(g) Other 2022 events

If only the Ocean Diva promoters would read STRA’s Facebook page they would understand the oasis of harmony that has built up over the years and see that Shad Thames is a vibrant community which understands change – we are not a narrow-minded group of people, which they want to portray.

3. North Bermondsey Ward Councillors’ Reports on local issues

Councillor Rachel Bentley

Councillor Emily Tester

Councillor Hamish McCallum (apologies)

Councillor Rachel Bentley

- a) Much of Rachel’s time has been focussed on the OD.
- b) ASB has also been a local issue, she urged residents to report even small events to the Police.
- c) Evening parking breaches are an issue – Enforcement Officers have therefore been making random evening visits to the area.
- d) Councillors are pursuing street cleanliness, she appreciated that STRA contributes towards additional street cleaning at weekends.
- e) She said that the Councillors rely on STRA feeding issues to them.

Councillor Emily Tester

- a) Hamish McCullum and Kathleen Ehrlich had attended Southwark’s Planning Committee which had approved India House’s application for an additional storey. However, considerable concessions had been agreed, which would go some way to mitigating the decision.
- b) The Clove Building’s application will go to Committee, as well as local residents, one of the Councillors will also speak against the application.
- c) The Councillors are concerned, not only how these types of application will affect local residents, but also the cumulative effect on the whole area – a review of the conservation area guidance is needed, but Southwark Council are currently reluctant to look at this.
- d) And like, Rachel, the Ocean Diva issues have occupied a lot of time.

4. Ocean Diva, next steps...

Kathleen Ehrlich Hogan, STRA Chair, said that STRA had started conversations with everyone/everybody – we discovered that Southwark Council will have no say in the final decision, it is Newham Council who will sign-off on the OD application. Questions raised and, so far, answered by OD are on the STRA website.

9 October 2022 was deadline for Newham Council to receive comments/objections, and STRA is now waiting to hear the date of the public hearing – possibly February, and for more than a day.

Adele Morris, former Councillor, Cathedral Ward, and Vice-Chair of Southwark Council's Licensing Committee gave an overview of the OD application.

The deadline for making objections has passed – unlike planning, this is a hard and fast deadline of 28 days, set out in legislation. We understand that quite unusually almost 1,000 objections have been lodged with Newham Council.

Usually, if there have been objections then a council must arrange a hearing within 20 working days of the last date for objections. However, in this case the Oceandiva have asked for the hearing to be postponed several times. The reason that they have given is that they want people to see the boat before the hearing, and it isn't finished yet! They were offering to take people to Amsterdam to view it at the boatyard, but I suspect they weren't thinking that there would be hundreds of objections... As a result, the latest we have heard is that they have asked for the hearing to be held in February. (There is, however, no extension of the time allowed for objections).

An applicant for a licence doesn't initially have to submit any paperwork other than the detailed application form and the plans that show the areas to be used for licensable activities. However, Oceandiva have since submitted operational plans for pier and event management. These should have been circulated to those who sent in written objections, who are then able to decide whether, or not, to withdraw their objections. However, even if you don't respond, your written objection still stands until such time as you withdraw it in writing.

Once the date for the hearing has been confirmed, everyone with an outstanding objection will be notified and asked whether they wish to speak at the hearing. Because there have been so many objections to Oceandiva, not everyone would be expected to attend. My recommendation would be that each of the boroughs send a selection of people to represent their specific interests. Some people will be sending legal representatives. At the hearing you are not supposed to introduce new issues that you haven't previously raised. (There should, however, be an opportunity to respond as the applicant adds more information).

At the hearing there will be three councillors, a clerk, a legal advisor, and the licensing officers. The applicant will present their case first, then the responsible authorities (police, environmental protection etc), then other objectors. After hearing all the presentations and having considered all the written objections that have not been withdrawn, the councillors will move into a closed session to make their decision. The decision will be normally be

issued there and then, however this is an unusual situation for a licensing department to have so many objections to consider, so it may take some time.

The committee will have the power to approve, refuse, or approve with conditions. Unlike planning, both the applicant and the objectors can appeal, and have 21 days to do so.

Ocean Diva Q&As

Q – could OD operate in London before a licence is granted?

A – OD could potentially apply for Temporary Event Notice (TEN), but then only 499 persons could be on board. We would not be informed if a TEN is applied for/or granted.

Q – when people embark/disembark at BW, has BW objected to the influx of people?

A – BW do intend to object. The Police have, so far, not objected. Both licensing police and the metropolitan police have not reacted to the Pier Management Plan, which btw does not come close to addressing our concerns. Councillor Emily Tester said Southwark's Environmental Officers have objected.

Q – is there an argument, in view of the wider implications, that Newham is not the appropriate borough for deciding on this issue?

A – no, the OD can decide where they want to apply for a licence.

Q – what if it turns out that the OD is not in Newham most of the time?

A – the onus would be on people to prove that they are in breach of the terms of their licence. There is no fixed rule about how much time a licensee must spend in the borough which has granted their licence.

Q – is there a right of appeal once a decision has been made?

A – yes, an appeal can be made to a magistrate's court within 21 days, but it is a complicated and formal legal process.

Q – can the OD keep randomly submitting additional information?

A – after a licensing application is submitted, supplementary information can be added by the applicant at any time, e.g., in this case, related to the pier management plans, and overall event management plans. One issue which is not yet clear is where the OD plans to dock for static events, it has been suggested that this might be BW. BW has engaged a barrister to look at the implications for BW.

Q – who can speak at the licensing hearing?

A – anyone who has submitted a written application can, in principle, ask to speak. But objectors cannot repeatedly speak about the same thing. It's important therefore to identify a person who will speak on behalf of a group of people. The applicant can have as much time as they need, but objectors are given a limited time (3 minutes). Newham Council's formal representation can speak, then anyone else can speak. At the end of the hearing the councillors will go into a closed session to reach a decision.

Q – at the recent church information meeting the OD representative said that the number of people getting on and off the three boats currently moored at BW would be the same as the number of OD passengers – these three boats do not embark/ disembark at the same time, so this is not a valid argument.

A – anyone who has submitted a written objection should respond to this OD statement, with something like “I would like to clarify that the three boats never embark/disembark at the same time.”

Q – is the OD’s application likely to be successful, they seem confident that they will win – is this well-founded?

A – it is difficult to reject a licensing application. If a license is refused, there must be very good reasons, e.g., the licensing committee would have to have no confidence in OD.

Q – if a licence is granted with conditions, who will monitor the conditions? could we go back to Newham Council and say there is no reason to believe that OD will adhere to any conditions?

A – it will always fall on the objectors, i.e., residents, to monitor any conditions. It was, however, believed that people all along the river will be monitoring the ship, and any conditions.

Q – should STRA withhold some of its budget to pay for some of the costs?

A – STRA’s budget is so small, to be almost insignificant, but we have already met some costs in preparing our objection, etc.

5. General Q&A’s

Q – about 2 weeks ago, a brawl involving about 50 people took place outside Spice Quay Heights, but no Police attended – one of the residents has a video clip of the event.

A – it is just so important to report such incidents to the Police. The more reports they receive the more likelihood there is that more police resources will be channelled to the area. (JG said that he would report the event to the next Police Ward Panel, and it would be helpful if the video clip could be sent to him).

The meeting closed at 2030.