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**Minutes of the Virtual Annual General Meeting**

**Friday 14 August 2020 (5:30pm)**

**Live on Facebook**

**Committee Members (2019-20) present:** Sunil de Sayrah (Chair), Kim Hart (Vice-Chair), Noshir Patel (Treasurer), **Ibtisam Adem,** Anne Crane, Su McLaughlin, Gloria Orosungunleka and Philip Virgo

**Apologies for absence: James Davis**

**Also present:** Helen Hayes MP; Councillors Jackie Meldrum and Jane Pickard; Gerry Evans (Lambeth Council)

Over 100 members of the public

Tim Stephens (Admin.)

1. **Welcome from the Chair**

Sunil de Sayrah (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, and explained the steps taken to hold the Annual General Meeting online as live meetings in venues could not be held due to the coronavirus pandemic. The constitutional requirements had been met as far as possible with the seeking of nominations and the prior publication of papers online before the meeting.

However, current technical problems with the online link between Zoom and Facebook were preventing the live streaming of the Community Conversation and AGM The meeting would go ahead and the recording posted as soon as possible after the event on the Norwood Forum Facebook page {in the event the live stream came live part-way through the address by Helen Hayes; the [recording is here](https://www.norwoodforum.org/news/19-aug-20/norwood-forum-agm-guest-speaker-helen-hayes-mp)}. He explained the agenda and order of the meeting.

1. **Helen Hayes MP: address**

Sunil de Sayrah welcomed Helen Hayes MP to the meeting. Helen would give an address and then respond to questions asked in advance and as many as possible which were posted live on Facebook.

Helen Hayes reflected on the difficult times for everybody during the COVID-19 pandemic, the uncertainties for people and businesses, and the pain, illness and bereavement brought to many families. She thanked the local community groups and wider community for their response over the past months, whether looking after immediate neighbours, serving on one of the mutual aid groups, the food bank or council volunteer scheme, or in many other ways. The best of our local community came through in these difficult times.

Throughout the pandemic she had continued to serve the constituency, at the virtual parliament and then back in the House of Commons once that reconvened; Parliament was currently in recess. She observed that if you already had difficulties or pressures in your life, the coronavirus pandemic made these issues more difficult; she would review the issues which were “at the top of her in box” throughout this time:

* Housing shortage in South East London: meaning often overcrowding and the poor condition of people’s houses. These conditions were exacerbated for people when they were required by lockdown to remain in their homes.
* Domestic abuse: keeping people safe and giving as much relief as possible
* People who had fallen between the gaps of the government furlough, self-employed and business support schemes
* Supporting the reopening of businesses: which had already faced a very difficult year of trading due to the substantial rise in business rates and locally the Thames Water replacement water mains work. She welcomed the return of West Norwood Feast at the beginning of the month and urged all to shop local.
* Thames Water replacement water mains work: whilst it was a relief these works had ended, compensation payments had not been made.
* A Level results: she congratulated those receiving their A Level results for completing these studies during such a difficult academic year. The complaints raised with her from local school teachers, pupils and parents showed a clear pattern of under-assessment of pupil grades. She was supporting those concerned with their appeals, and making representations to universities etc.
* The withdrawal of ban on evictions from private sector housing on 23 August 2020 before the economy had recovered would create enormous problems.
* The Black Lives Matter protests had highlighted that racism and structural inequality were leading to the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the BAME community. The government should implement recommendations of reports such as the Lammy review on the treatment of, and outcomes for, BAME individuals in the Criminal Justice System.
* Windsor Grove Royal Mail Delivery Office was thought to be saved from closure in the medium term, following the protests by the local community. The Council had addressed the parking problems by taking enforcement action on the abandoned vehicles and installing a controlled parking zone.
* Southwark Metals planning application for a scrap metal recycling centre at Windsor Grove: along with all local ward councillors she had objected, not least because of the vast increase in heavy goods traffic that would be created for the local area. She would make objections to the Lambeth planning committee when the application was considered (date still awaited).
* The government relaxation of planning laws which would remove the involvement of the local community in the consideration of planning applications, whereas reform should increase this.

Helen Hayes answered the following questions submitted beforehand and on Facebook during the meeting:

* Adult Social Care reform: there was no clear detailed timetable but a government announcement may be made in the autumn. The cross party committee she had served on had concluded care should be free at the point of delivery. The pandemic had highlighted the dedication of staff and the lack of government support for the sector.
* Private sector evictions: the implications of the removal of the ban on evictions were very worrying given the evidence in her casework of the behavior of unscrupulous landlords. Those in danger of eviction should seek legal advice from organisations such as Centre 70, and could also seek her support.
* Windrush scandal: thanking Helen for her support before the issue became public and asking whether men and women had been affected differently. She felt this was the case since women had often spent longer periods out of paid employment and therefore had more difficulty proving their period of residence. The compensation claim system was complicated and few payments had been made.
* The introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and measures to increase space for cycling and walking. The government had asked all local government authorities to introduce emergency public realm measures to widen narrow busy pavements and make cycling and walking safer especially as the use of public transport and private vehicles was discouraged. Lambeth was bringing forward measures it was already consulting on and where public support could be demonstrated. There were polarised views, and short term disruption and congestion. Measures were being introduced on a temporary basis and Councils were monitoring the impact and inviting feedback before taking permanent decisions. Lambeth had funds for the temporary installation of measures in Rosendale Road. It was important that people gave their views via online consultation or these could be raised with her.
* Chemical spraying: Lambeth had banned chemical spraying on Council estates, with the delay on the termination of street spraying understood to be a consequence of coronavirus pressures. Local people could stop their streets being sprayed by undertaking their own pavement weeding.
* Parliamentary constituency boundary: the Boundary Commission review to reduce the number of constituencies from 650 to 600 (which would have split Dulwich & West Norwood) had been shelved. A fresh review would be undertaken with a fresh round of consultation. Separately, Lambeth council ward boundaries were being reviewed, and views were [currently being invited](https://www.norwoodforum.org/news/21-aug-20/lambeth-electoral-ward-boundary-review).

The Chair thanked Helen Hayes for attending and updating the local community on such a wide range of important and wide-ranging issues.

1. **Minutes of last AGM (13 July 2019)**

No comments had been received, and the minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 13 July 2019 were taken as agreed as a true record, with no actions remaining.

1. **Chair’s annual report 2019-20** (see written report)

Sunil de Sayrah presented the written report covering the year’s activity and the response of the Forum to the COVID-19 pandemic. The supporting slides can be [viewed here](https://www.norwoodforum.org/sites/norwoodforum.org/files/Forum%20AGM%202019-20%20slide%20deck_0.pdf). He thanked the Committee for their work and highlighted the support from the community in the Forum’s work.

1. **Treasurer’s Report** (see written report)

Noshir Patel (Treasurer) presented the previously published summary of the accounts for 2019-20. Income totalled £5,010, expenditure £4,841, with carried forward reserves of £8,096.

There had been no questions raised on the accounts, which were received.

1. **Election of Norwood Forum Officers and Committee**

The Committee membership for 2019-20 had been notified with the agenda. Kim Hart (Vice-Chair) announced the outcome of the nomination process for the committee for 2020-21. As no positions were contested, a formal election ballot was not required and the 2020-21 Committee would be:

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| Chair: | Sunil de Sayrah |
| Vice-Chair: | Kim Hart |
| Treasurer: | Noshir Patel |
| Ordinary Committee members: | Ibtisam Adem |
|  | Anne Crane |
|  | James Davis |
|  | Su McLaughlin |
|  | **Gloria Orosungunleka** |
|  | Philip Virgo |

Further volunteers to serve on the Committee would be welcome.

In conclusion, Sunil de Sayrah gave his thanks to those serving on the Committee in 2019-20, welcomed the new committee and thanked the administrator.

1. **Close of meeting**

The meeting closed at 6:35pm.

Chair

Norwood Forum

June 2021