



Chairs Report

Norwood Forum

2024-25

Executive Summary

At the start of this year of activity, the Forum Committee determined to be ‘productively noisy’, driving forward the issues that matter most to our community in an often challenging but at the same time always constructive and collaborative way. With funding of £5,500 from the Lambeth Forum Network, we have taken forward projects on public transport and active travel, health and wellbeing, our local heritage, the green agenda and restructured our working relationship with community safety organisations. We have sought to inform local residents about critical issues, including changes to our transport network and planning issues, and enable them to participate in consultations. We co-hosted the general election hustings together with Herne Hill Forum in which all candidates were present.

Over the year, the Forum made grants to 24 community-based organisations totalling £4,100 for a whole range of small but great activities. We also invested in our own governance to be as effective and transparent a Forum as possible.

We look forward to growing and diversifying over the coming year, and to continuing to serve our community.

Lambeth Forum Network

A £5,500 grant was received from the Lambeth Forum Network (LFN) which has covered the costs of a part-time administrator, our website and other overhead costs, and for us to hold a series of public meetings focused on public transport and active travel.

Co-Chairs have attended every LFN meeting, sharing this responsibility and contributing to each discussion, most prominently making recommendations on the new terms of reference of the LFN, most of which have been adopted. This has included distinguishing the LFN as a network of neighbourhood forums, ensuring correct and consistent language throughout and maintaining control of funding decisions by vote of participating forums.

We have shared our ideas and approaches with other forums and taken ideas and inspiration from their work, including recently from Thriving Stockwell. We aim to continue to work collaboratively with our neighbours, Herne Hill Forum and Streatham Action Group.

Projects

- **Public transport and active travel**

The focus of our Annual Community Meeting last year was public transport and active travel. At the meeting, we facilitated table discussions on each transport mode to capture community

priorities. We collected further feedback at Norwood Feast, via email and through other community engagement events. We were then able to submit a comprehensive representation to Cllr Rezina Chowdhury (Deputy Leader, Sustainable Lambeth and Clean Air), detailing community priorities and asking for an overall strategy for the Norwood area. Forum Committee members had an in-person meeting with Cllr Chowdhury, in which we set out a series of community concerns. We subsequently published our feedback and the councillor's responses.

We have also had a meeting with Helen Hayes MP regarding TFL controlled roads, namely the A205 including the Tulse Hill Gyratory. We have been involved in work to make the gyratory safer since 2011 and the Streetworks project and are part of the new community-led campaign group, Transform Tulse Hill. We attended TFL's community engagement event to highlight further issues that matter to the community on TFL controlled roads.

In a related effort, we have held three of four planned public engagement events targeted at under-represented and more vulnerable members of our community, with the aim of getting as broad a perspective as possible. These have focussed on young people, older people and commuters with parents with young children to run shortly now the holidays are over. We will publish a report on the completion of these meetings and feed this back to transport decision makers. Our aim going into next year is to enable people who live, work or study in the Norwood area to personally make the case to transport decision-makers for positive changes based on our community priorities.

We continue to promote consultations and report decisions. Over the past year, these have included: works to Tulse Hill Gyratory, Brockwell Park to Gipsy Hill cycle lane extension, the proposed introduction of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) and kerbside management, the expansion of dockless e-bike parking bays, the planned changes to the junction of Rosendale Road and the A205, funding allocation for design works at Croxted Road, the trial and subsequent removal of the West Dulwich LTN and changes to bus routes through the area.

- **Thriving Norwood**

Thriving Norwood is a community-led project designed to improve the wellbeing of our neighbourhood. Norwood Forum ran two large-scale grant schemes with funds received from Lambeth Public Health between 2022 and 2024 and was successful in late 2024 in acquiring further funding from the Changing Lives programme run by Lambeth Council to take the project forward. This enabled us to appoint a Coordinator who has been focussing on the following:

For our community:

- connecting residents to local social and community activities, including local Health & Wellbeing 'one-stop-shop' Hubs, that improve wellbeing and resilience and reduce health inequalities
- signposting the community to support and service providers such as the NHS and Lambeth Council as well as local organisations.

And for service providers, project organisers, local NGO's, community and voluntary organisations, local Councillors and Lambeth officers, by:

- facilitating an information-sharing health and wellbeing network and building a database of that information, and also running specialist training events such as on writing funding bids
- holding monthly themed online meetings alongside regular networking events with specialist speakers designed to increase knowledge and encourage new connections to be made.

Regular updates on community health have been published on our website and in our newsletter including bowel cancer screening, an HIV survey for black heritage communities and a spike in measles cases affecting children.

Work is in hand to develop new ‘one stop shop’ Hubs in the Norwood area and with additional funding received from the NHS to run a series of events specifically for women and girls. A neighbourhood wellbeing day in September is also planned, full of free taster sessions, open to everyone.

There will be a Neighbourhood Wellbeing Day at West Norwood Health & Leisure Centre on Saturday 13 September between 11am and 3pm with all kinds of free wellbeing taster sessions to try and stalls with information and advice to visit.

More on Thriving Norwood can be found here: [Thriving Norwood](#)

Heritage

A major six-year conservation and community engagement project at West Norwood Cemetery officially came to a close this summer with a remarkable light and arts festival: Illuminate. With £4.6m funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and £2.6m of match funding from Lambeth Council, the West Norwood Cemetery: A New Beginning, delivered in partnership by Lambeth Council and the Friends of West Norwood Cemetery, has brought new life to one of London’s most historic burial grounds. With two representatives on the newly formed Strategic Partnership Board, the Forum has helped shape and oversee the project, and will continue to inform developments, such as a new Robson Road entrance and the finalisation of an ‘acceptable uses’ paper. The opening event for the stunningly restored St Stephens Chapel was a highlight with poignant references to the Greek immigrants who are buried there. Throughout our engagement, the Forum has sought to balance the needs of grave owners with the desire to optimise the cemetery as a green space and community asset for all.

We celebrated Lambeth Heritage Festival in July 2024 and the stunning restoration of Brockwell Hall in May 2025.

During the year, the Fawcett Monument on Norwood Road was knocked down and damaged by a car crashing into it. The Forum has been engaging the Council with regard to its repair and reinstatement.

• **Green Norwood**

Building on the Forum’s long track record of celebrating our local green spaces, and promoting environmental awareness and climate action, over the past year the Forum has set up [Green Norwood](#) to invest even more energy into our green initiatives. Our focus will be on green energy and energy efficiency, our green spaces, air quality, reduce/ reuse/ recycle, and education and training in green jobs. There are many opportunities to collaborate with the Council, Station to Station and other local partners and to apply for external funding to drive forward this timely agenda.

- **Community Safety**

During the year, the Forum ended its co-hosting arrangement of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) with the Lambeth Safer Neighbourhood Board. Making Lambeth one of the safest Boroughs in London is a priority in the Council Strategy, and the safety of our community continues to be a high priority for the Forum. But this allowed for the CSP to transition to a pilot community cluster, co-hosted by the Lambeth Neighbourhood Watch Association, working with and through the local area Neighbourhood Watches and Safe Neighbourhood Panels (SNP). Forum members attend each of the SNPs in our locality; we have promoted the relaunch of Neighbourhood Watch in Lambeth; and we publicise the Safe Havens in our neighbourhood.

Ongoing work

- **Planning applications**

Norwood Forum receives every planning application made across our area – from Brockwell Park to Crystal Palace, Leigham Court Road to South Croxted Road. We have a sub-committee comprising members of our committee along with members of Norwood Action Group and The Norwood Society. They review every application and decide if comments need to be made – both for and against. The Forum does not generally comment on individual applications. An example of when we have successfully influenced a planning decision this year is to limit the opening hours of the Adult Gaming Centre on Norwood Road. We have publicised Lambeth Council's Licensed Landlord Scheme and are particularly attentive to the increasing number of HMOs (Homes of Multiple Occupancy) in our area.

- **Consultations**

One of the key roles of any Lambeth neighbourhood forum is to provide a platform for residents and local communities to share their feedback, experiences and insight, as well as participate in decision-making and influence policy, service design and delivery. Over the past year, we have provided accurate information to the people who live, work and study in our community to enable them to contribute to council consultations, such as on the Low-Traffic Neighbourhood in West Dulwich or the proposed CPZ in West Norwood. The latter was the focus of our representation to Cllr Rezina Chowdhury, which elicited a detailed response, published [here](#).

We have also responded to consultations on behalf of our community. For example, the Forum submitted a response to the [consultation on the SADPD](#) (Site Allocations Development Plan Document). Subsequently, Site 19 (Knollys Road) was removed from the plan. Committee members contributed in person to the Examination in Public Hearings in February and March relating to Site 18 (Norwood Road) and the Inspector ensured that we were able to raise all of the important issues, such as around heritage and conservation, building height and density, land use and transport considerations. At the request of the Inspector, in July, the Council produced a paper on the matter of reasonable alternatives within the Sustainability Appraisal.

The Forum also submitted responses to two consultations relating to education provision in our locality – on proposed closures and amalgamations in the primary school sector, and on the proposed closure of the Jubilee Unit for Deaf Children, which was later withdrawn. We have raised two critical issues with the Council: the need to plan ahead for falling rolls in secondary schools and to make the case for local government to have a role in the closure of academies,

which are currently outside of its remit, and yet Borough Councils are left to manage the impact.

- **Promoting the activities of others, local events and opportunities**

One of the joys of leading the Norwood Forum is in enabling community groups and individuals to deliver projects and activities through our Small Grants programme. It is incredible how much they can achieve with small grants of £300 to progress valuable work from which the whole community can benefit. We are indebted to them for their time, energy and resources.

We received 34 applications and funded 15 projects – two of which we suggested partnering up. Ultimately one project did not take up their grant, so 12 project grants were awarded in all. Most have now finished and here are some highlights:

- **Nature Vibezzz** hosted 11 weekly Saturday afternoon family activities in the community garden, welcoming 75 adults and 135 children. The grant funding enabled the purchase of additional equipment and tools to support the growing number of participants.
- **Elm Wood Playground Plant Up and Carnac Street Community Garden** together held two Sunday sessions where parents, children, and residents planted flowerbeds and carried out playground maintenance. The sessions were highly successful, strengthening community ties, and more are planned. This was one of the partnership projects where we successfully introduced two applicants to each other.
- **A Small Studio** applied for a grant to host work experience for young people aged 15-18 attending local schools. They already offer one week of work experience for young people and usually pay them £20 per day. They found it was so popular they were having to reject young students. The grant supported 3 young people for 1 week work experience each and has also formed part of a seed/pilot for a wider project they plan to initiate to create a young persons' work experience network using the business and SMEs already active in the area.

One of the young people said: *'I had a great week at A Small Studio, everyone was very friendly and welcoming. Hearing the colleagues' conversation and joining in a group meeting gave me an insight into what architects do and how they plan a lot of things which makes me more interested in pursuing a career in architecture. Overall, I had a lot of fun working as an architect for a week. I would love to work in a place like this. I am really grateful for this experience and would love to work here.'*

The full list of grant recipients can be found here: [2024/25 Community Projects | Norwood Forum](#)

We were also successful in being granted additional funding of £500 from a surplus LFN budget. This was parcelled up into £50 donations to a range of organisations involved with green spaces, from Friends of Norwood Park through to the much smaller Tritton Vale Pocket Garden. A full list of recipients can be found at the end of this document.

But it is not just through our limited funding that we support local groups. Over the year, through our website, monthly newsletter, and social media, we have been able to publicise a wide range of activities and events happening locally, including such things as diverse as bike maintenance to the local history forum talks and walks, the work of our local community kitchen to children's workshops run by many different organisations. Through this publicity, we aim to add to the vibrancy and participation of our community. There is nothing that the Norwood Forum does

that it does alone. We are embedded into a huge network of relationships with multiple and diverse organisations.

For the **Lambeth Civic Awards**, Norwood Forum nominated Sarah Beresford at The Hope for her community fundraising activities and for making The Hope such a welcoming space. We celebrated our local winners, Nicola Pastore from Solve the School Run for the Climate and Green Space Award and Southside Rehabilitation Association for the Social Enterprise Award.

Looking forward to 2025-26

Over the coming year, we hope to see the Norwood Forum remain a vibrant and active organisation for the people who live, work and study in our neighbourhood; a forum for residents to share their views; and a source of reliable information on local events, and celebrations as well as on consultations and campaigns. Working closely with our MP, councillors and the Council's new Community Engagement and Participation Team, we are determined to ensure that the voice of our community is heard in local decision-making.

As a committee, we want to reflect the diversity in our multiple communities and represent the interests of everyone. We would be delighted to have more volunteers to help progress our different areas of work directly and through our wide range of associated groups. Are you green fingered or have expertise in planning or transport? Do you have an interest in green energy or reducing waste? Would you like to help in efforts to make Norwood safer? Or can you share your knowledge of public health or interest in local history and heritage? Are you a whizz at comms? If so, we would love to hear from you. There are so many ways to get involved.

One of our core areas of interest in 2025-26 will be to feed into the review of Lambeth's Local Plan which will focus on the built environment, public transport and active travel, community engagement, health and wellbeing and environmental ambitions. Another, through our Green Norwood group, will be to drive forward a wide range of initiatives to protect our green spaces, make our community more sustainable and help our neighbours make good, simple green choices.

Jane East and Tom Palmer

Co-Chairs, Norwood Forum

Appendix 1. Organisations in receipt of £50 additional funding for green spaces

Friends of Norwood Park

Carnac Street Community Garden

Open Orchard

Lambeth Horticultural Society

South London Botanical Institute

Triton Vale Pocket Garden

Nature Vibezzz

Friends of Hillside Garden and Palace Nature Reserve

Friends of Gipsy Hill

Friends of Tivoli Park

