

# SE5 FORUM FOR CAMBERWELL

SE5 Forum AGM 2023: Wednesday 18 October 2022, 6.30-8.30pm  
United Reformed Church, SE5, and on Zoom

## What are our priorities for Camberwell?

### MINUTES

#### Welcome & Introduction

SE5 Forum Chair Sophy Tayler welcomed everyone to the online SE5 Forum AGM in person and on Zoom, and thanked the United Reformed Church for the use of their hall and Cathy Deplessis and Denzil Steele of Southwark Pensioners for supporting the AGM with technical support to hold a hybrid meeting. The AGM Minutes 2022 were adopted.

#### SE5 Forum: What has been achieved:

First **Marie Staunton, Secretary**, gave a few words in tribute to Grace Semakula, Southwark Council Empowering Communities Programme Officer, who sadly passed away this year. “Grace wasn’t only a really good council officer, she was democratic, professional, a good friend to Camberwell and SE5 Forum and a great person.” SE5 Forum passed its condolences to Grace’s family, friends and colleagues.

**Sophy Tayler** said this evening was an opportunity to look back on our achievements over the past year. One highlight was board member Shazna Choudhry receiving a Volunteer Champion award at Community Southwark’s Southwark Stars Awards for setting up our free community Feel Good Festival for health and wellbeing in Camberwell. The full Annual Report is available to read/download on our website [se5forum.org.uk](http://se5forum.org.uk) - Sophy highlighted our workstreams (details below) and our increasingly essential community partnerships, especially through the Camberwell Identity Group, the Trees and Green Spaces group and the Feel Good Festival. A fun highlight was Denmark Hill Station coming first in England in the ‘WorldCupofStations’.

As well as partnerships with local organisations, SE5 Forum has been focusing on diversity, with the board undergoing diversity training with Binki Taylor of Lambeth Forum Network last month. Our community outreach continues to be important, especially through our Saturday market stall on the green. Camberwell Talks has continued to spotlight interesting local stories. Sophy thanked our funders Lambeth and Southwark Councils, King’s College Hospital charity and individual donations. SE5 Forum welcomes any new volunteers or partners - anyone who’s interested in improving Camberwell in any way for all our diverse community.

#### Feel Good Festival and Community Kitchens: Marie Staunton, Secretary, SE5 Forum:

**The Feel Good Festival** was set up in 2022 by our board member Shazna Choudhry – a free health and wellbeing festival for the community. In 2023 we continued the festival, with 2 events – one on Camberwell Green and the second in Ruskin Park with more than 1000 attendees. The free events were held with the support of many volunteers, local organisations, health bodies and practitioners,

offering free activities including exercise, NHS checks, free food from food pantries, kids' charities and activities, yoga, arts and crafts, facepainting, rollerskating and much more.

**Community Kitchen:** We ran a Caribbean Christmas Community Kitchen last December to bring people together, have fun, let kids meet Mr & Mrs Santa, but also offering important signposting to food services, health advice and warm spaces. Free food and toiletries were on offer. Some of what we've learnt from our events: it works when you get people together; we need partnerships and lots of volunteers; and signposting to services is helpful. We want to repeat all these events next year.

**Camberwell Talks:** We are in the second year of running Camberwell Talks by previous board member Joanna Large and kindly (mostly) hosted by Russell Occomore at Jazz Live at The Crypt, St Giles' Church. Russell spoke and said he shares the ethos of showcasing what's happening locally and he would've created a similar series if we hadn't - it was a delight to host these talks. Joanna said the amazing variety of speakers and fascinating subjects at our monthly talks always have some relationship to Camberwell; women's health, a local history of musical halls, how to start a wine business and a gardeners' time special! Our next talk is a local author's campaign to gain recognition for an inspirational black footballing pioneer ([Monday 6 November, 7pm – tickets on Eventbrite](#)). More talks will be coming in December, and 2024.

### **Trees & Green Spaces Group:**

**Caroline Hough:** Caroline introduced the group made up of six people 'with a passion' - led by Ben Moxham of The Camberwell Society and Sophy Tayler, Chair of SE5 Forum. Our aim is to promote the value and enjoyment of our trees and green spaces, including the special trees in Camberwell. Last year, we offered a Ruskin Tree Walk with a health and wellbeing theme with the wellbeing team at King's College Hospital. This followed the previous year's walk - a film with local narrators is available on [YouTube](#) - and a fantastic Tree Drawing workshop with illustrator David More. An exciting development is that funding has been secured to plant a number of Tiny Forests; we are currently looking for sites in Camberwell. We facilitate groups to do litterpicking sessions by offering out our litterpicking equipment to anyone to clean up Camberwell! We also monitor green spaces on large developments – an overwhelming topic! The group also liaises with council tree officers. A mulberry tree project is upcoming. Anyone is welcome to join our group.

### **Business/Identity: The Camberwell Identity Group**

#### **Business: Marie Staunton, Secretary, SE5 Forum:**

The Camberwell Identity Group is a coproduction of SE5 Forum, Camberwell Society, Camberwell Arts. We get together to promote Camberwell as an area. In 2021-22, with a Southwark Council grant, our business marketer Jordana Leighton worked on local business marketing with business newsletters, email campaigns, and creating 80+ business champions - creating a vibe for the high street. We've now applied for another Thriving High Streets Fund grant to support local businesses again, to run marketing and media campaigns, support carbon neutral measures, send out newsletters and print more of the popular Travel Guide to Camberwell copies.

What we've learnt: we really need a town centre manager to coordinate business relationships with council; we need longterm commitment from the council; and we need businesses to lead it. We are very pleased to hear that Southwark Council is currently writing the grant agreement!

**Identity: Tony Coleman, Camberwell Society:** The Camberwell Identity Group works in a truly cooperative, mutually supportive way. Until now, we've created the [Camberwell.life website](#) and the Camberwell C branding, which you can see more and more in the area. The branding guidelines created by Sutherland Studios are available to download for free by any individual, organisation or

business in Camberwell to add to publicity. The free Travel Guide to Camberwell was produced by Camberwell Arts and a 4<sup>th</sup> edition is coming out in June 2024.

We have a strong online presence: we now have more than 5k followers on Instagram, with many Twitter and Facebook followers, too, as well as getting press coverage. It's a powerful medium to inform the narrative around Camberwell. An upcoming project is the Black History Walk plaques and panels (secured with Southwark Council CIL funds from developments). This will be launched on Saturday 9 December on Camberwell Green. On the green, there will be a lectern showing the walk – featuring 8 inspiring people of colour who've done something amazing in the past. We are also continuing to work on local murals and looking forward to seeing Camberwell Station Road's wonderful murals by a local artist on the old station building, which should be on site from February 2024 as part of a revamp of Camberwell Station Road. We also engage with large developments to incorporate Camberwell identity branding and be sympathetic to the area.

### **Community Market Stall**

**Barbara Pattinson, SE5 Forum:** Our Saturday weekly market stall on the green is a remarkable tool. It's great to get information and feedback - you'd be amazed what we hear from the community! We can also share local information and it's an opportunity for local organisations and practitioners to showcase their activities with leaflets. We sell beautifully designed Camberwell-themed merchandise to promote the area and support our activities.

### **SPEAKER + Q&A: WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES FOR CAMBERWELL?**

#### **Speaker: Southwark Council CEO Althea Loderick:**

Althea joined the council in May 2022 as Chief Executive Officer. Althea gave an overview of her extensive council experience in all areas of London, including her recent position as CEO of Newham Council, as well as previous experience in the national policing improvement agency, prison service and, further back, in homelessness voluntary organisations. Althea expressed her interest in engaging fully with attendees and welcomed questions and input from the audience at this session, so would keep her speech short.

Althea identified **three transforming objectives** in the [Southwark Council Delivery Plan](#):

Althea said her priorities are to ensure that this plan is being delivered:

- Close the gap – in inequality and inequity throughout the services in our borough, where everyone has an equal opportunity.
- People Power – Southwark recognises that although it is a huge bureaucracy (4.5k staff), we will only thrive if we work together and if Southwark recognises the work that comes from a coproduction with communities. How Southwark listens and is transparent.
- Neighbourhoods – determining about 10 neighbourhoods across the borough and to ensure most of the essentials within people's lives are within easy reach within their neighbourhood – not a one-size-fits-all approach, but what works for each individual neighbourhood.

Althea pointed to the recently created **Town Centre Action Plan for Camberwell**, which is currently a working document and covers a whole range of issues. It is due soon to be a public document –

so an important action is to make people aware of this document and to see what work is happening within neighbourhoods. There's still more work to do, however.

**Southwark 2030 plan:**

Althea pointed to the [priorities and themes identified by Southwark Council](#) from the 2030 consultation engagement events and surveys (some 2000 people were involved). This will inform the next steps to create the Southwark 2030 plan – focusing on 8 key areas Homes, Safety, Neighbourhoods, Nature, Climate, Culture, Prosperity, Health & Wellbeing. All partners and residents should come together for the next steps so it's owned by all. We will be aligning those goals with policy and attaching, where we can, budgets to deliver those goals so that there is real and tangible support. We hope to have the plan agreed by early next year.

**Q&A:**

Marie Staunton chaired questions from the hall, with Sophy Tayler taking questions on Zoom.

**Question: Russell Occomore,** Jazz Live at The Crypt: Our venue has been running for 28 years – we've seen a lot of changes in that time. There are half a dozen venues that do music in SE5. Can Althea look out for an upcoming government call by the Culture, Media & sport Committee for evidence on grassroots music venues (GMV)? It would be useful to submit evidence from Southwark and to publicise.

AL: Last two authorities I was in were both boroughs of culture. In Southwark, we already have so much culture. However, when we talk about neighbourhoods, we include culture as one of the essential aspects. I would be keen that we bring together cultural organisations with the council to move forward with this. Althea asked RO to send a note to her on this.

**Camberwell Green:**

**Question:** Barbara Pattinson, SE5 Forum queried the council's removal of bench and table tennis table from Camberwell Green due to an increase in anti-social behaviour. It is unclear why this was done without community participation in the decision. Members of the audience expressed their disapproval of this.

**Question:** Dr Diego Quattrone explained he is a psychiatrist at King's College London, and discussed the link between drug use, poverty, mental health and anti-social behaviour. He said it was important to sort the cause and symptoms of anti-social behaviour on Camberwell Green or it will get worse. Crime and consumption of cannabis high. He can share expertise with the council team.

**AL:** With street furniture that seems to encourage certain anti-social activity, one choice is to remove that street furniture and it will probably impact the issue. Although we know the risk of displacement. The issue is now being reviewed.

**Question:** Why are there not more police present?

**AL:** I'm not police! But as part of the Met Police's current transformation, they are holding joint local multi-ward meetings with councillors. Police resources in the borough have gone up but we will continue to argue for more neighbourhood policing. Community can show where they want that to be and how it could work. Community safety affects everyone. We are very aware of community safety in Camberwell. The multi-ward meeting including Camberwell takes place on

Wed 1 Nov at this venue.

**Question: Mastoor Khan, SE5 Forum** on the health and wellbeing of children and nutrition. There are alarming figures for this area about obesity and nutrition. We noticed the benefits from our Feel Good Festival on showing how we can introduce healthy food to children. How can we keep that good work going?

**AL:** There's a lot we are doing in that area, e.g. with our cost of living support. Obesity and poverty often goes together. There's work with our public health team doing lots of outreach. If SE5 Forum collates all these questions, we'll make sure you're linked to the council and respective partners.

**Question: Shazna Choudhry:** Given that we are all facing a cost-of-living crisis, are there any plans to support leaseholders with service charges? Other boroughs including Lambeth and Westminster currently allow leaseholders to pay in interest-free equal monthly instalments for major works. Southwark only provide these types of plans for estimated major works – can this be extended to actual service charges?

**AL:** Southwark's housing stock far outnumbers other boroughs – 55,000 homes, so non-comparable. If we don't finance what needs to happen through that means and if we delay collection of charge, then it has to come from somewhere else. Such a specific question but happy to take it and get more details.

**Question: Bridget Bell:** I wanted to say thank you from [Plane Hell Action](#) that Southwark's Cabinet Minister for the Climate Emergency, Clean Air and Streets James McAsh signed against City Airport's proposed extended hours of flights, which would have caused more noise for local residents. Southwark supported Newham and Lewisham Councils' objection, along with other boroughs. Would you support Cllr McAsh to join the forum zooms on Heathrow and City Airport flights?

**AL:** Just to confirm, I am an officer so have to be apolitical and can't support campaigns myself. Any decision a councillor makes to support a campaign is done in consultation with their group and councillors.

**Question from hall:** Can we have free swimming for under 11s?

**AL:** There's already Free Swim & Gym so we're doing this already. And we brought leisure centres inhouse so staff also have better terms and conditions.

One participant mentioned she found Southwark Leisure Centres have improved since being brought inhouse.

**Question: Tony Coleman, Camberwell Society:** Camberwell is already split between two boroughs. Now constituency boundary changes have split Camberwell into three. There are things we lack in Camberwell e.g. we would like to have a community space, a cinema. Do you have thoughts about how to support improving Camberwell when we feel on the edge of the borough?

**AL:** I don't see as Camberwell being on the edge of the borough. We have a long and narrow borough. The Camberwell Town Centre Action Plan is all focused on Camberwell. As stated before, our neighbourhoods plan is focused on understanding each neighbourhood and its individual needs and issues. We want a credible plan for Camberwell and each of the 10 neighbourhoods – and by making this real, there will be a senior officer attached to each neighbourhood – e.g. for Camberwell, it's Director of Environment Matt Clubb. Kieron Williams, leader of Southwark Council

also lives in Camberwell so I do get a lot of feedback!

**Marie Staunton:** Thank you Althea and there's an outstanding request from the community to take you on a walkabout around Camberwell.

**AL:** When I came to Southwark, part of my remit was to do various walkabouts, organised with the ward councillors. If there are any particular individuals who could accompany a Camberwell walk, please let themselves know.

**Question: Youth provision: Chris Owen, Zen Yoga** raised the lack of youth services. He was working with Hollington Youth Club in Comber Grove, which sadly closed. He asked how the local community can best support youth work?

**AL:** Althea agreed to put Chris in touch with their teams. We are currently setting the budgets and because of cuts from central government over the years, we are going to have to take another great slew out of our budget and it's a massive challenge. So we are always making these difficult decisions. E.g. yesterday we had a deputation at our cabinet meeting from a group of older carers caring for their adult children and talking about the difficulties from care charges imposed by the Southwark Council. Every day there's a balance I've got to strike. We need to look at how we do things as a council but also how we work with and support other organisations, especially the voluntary organisations, who might be able to access different pots of money to make more of what we've got. So the model of the council running lots of youth clubs is not coming back. But what we have got to do is a way to think how to bring together different resources in an effective way.

**Question:** There was a complaint from a member in the audience, who works as a nurse, about the lack of transparency by council planning officers and planning committee, in particular about the development behind Sainsbury's Dog Kennel Hill and not taking into consideration impacts on the existing residents.

**AL:** When I spoke about our 3 transforming objectives, the council's single biggest resource to make things happen is through our officers. I will stand here and say our council has some brilliant officers and excellent practice in local government. The culture I am here to amplify and enforce is that every council officer holds those values dear and values the voice of our residents. If you've had specific experiences and evidence that you feel warrant a complaint, then please submit a complaint and we will look into it.

**Marie Staunton:** Thank you Althea for your time and engagement. We will send you a letter to recap all the questions and topics so that you are able to follow up on what we've discussed and also to organise a Camberwell walkabout.

### **Final SE5 Forum business:**

#### **Treasurer's Report**

**Andy Murray, Treasurer,** shared a pie chart and accounts showing SE5 Forum's income and expenditure for 2022-23. SE5 Forum received core funding of £5,000 from Lambeth Forum Network (LFN), which pays towards a part-time freelance admin, insurance, digital costs, events and meetings, and SE5 Forum is very grateful for that. Other income needs be fundraised: this year, the Saturday market stall raised £600 profit, our monthly Camberwell Talks raised £1600 in profit. We have a separate bank account for our market stall, so we transfer from that into our main account to cover our activities.

We made successful applications for project funding for our events – first of those was our Feel Good Festival 2022 which was sponsored by Eversholt Rail Group. Community Kitchens in July and in December 2022 were from a Southwark Council Neighbourhoods Fund grant for £2.5k.

We completed work on the remainder of our £19k grant from Southwark Council's High Street Recovery Fund, which covered the services of a business marketer Jordana Leighton to run the Love Local/Camberwell Life Business Champions campaigns. Our carried forward funds were £3,581.

#### **Elections to SE5 Forum Board 2023-24**

Local resident Jane Ramsey was returning officer. The meeting elected the following 11 SE5 Forum Board members for 2023-24: **Sophy Tayler, Marie Staunton, Andy Murray, Barbara Pattinson, John Frankland, Gill Henderson, Christine Coleman, Simon J Taylor, Craig Francis, Mastoor Khan** and new board member **Catherine Gamble**.

Sophy wrapped up the AGM with thanks to everyone for coming, to members of the board, Southwark Pensioners and United Reformed Church for allowing use of the venue and invited all to stay to mingle and enjoy a drink and snack.

**Attendees:** 30 attendees in-person and 17 attendees on Zoom.

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