

# Forest Hill Society

## Annual General Meeting

7.30pm Wednesday 15 October 2008

### 1. Report from Chair and Treasurer

Michael Abrahams presented the Chair's Report and the Treasurer's Report. He thanked all the Committee members for their work over the past year.

Michael had decided to step down as Chair. Liz Hannaford thanked him for his contributions as Chair and presented him with a gift.

### 2. Election of Officers and Committee Members for 2008-09

The results of the elections were as follows:

#### Elected Officers

Chairman	Peter Irby
Vice Chair	Michael Abrahams
Treasurer	Helen McAllister
Secretary	Katherine Willett
Communications Officer	Liz Hannaford

#### Executive Committee

Rob McIntosh  
Pat Cove  
Hilary Satchwell  
Penelope Jarrett  
Andrew Reid  
Paul Murphy  
Richard Hibbert  
Jeff Lowe  
Charlie Welch  
Belinda Evans  
Rosemary Mann  
David King  
Quetta Kaye  
James Marmion  
Irene Mead  
Tony Petim

### 3. Priorities for Forest Hill in 2009

There were no guest speakers this year and time was spent discussing issues of concern.

**Referring to Jeff Lowe's presentation about shop fronts at the 2007 AGM, could the Society take this forward?** JL said he had recently received a reply from Lewisham's Regeneration Department about the issues he had raised with them earlier in the year. They had confirmed that they would enforce Lewisham's shop front guidelines but this would only apply to new changes to shop fronts and not to existing frontages. MA gave a recent example of

the Council's action: they had issued a section 205 notice to the owner of the former bakery in Dartmouth Road to force them to improve the appearance of the empty shop.

**Was there any news on the Council's review of the Forest Hill Conservation Area?** MA replied that it had been delayed due to staff shortage in the Planning Department.

**It was suggested that Lewisham lacked planning vision for this area while other areas, such as Deptford, got attention. Could we require the planners to (a) fulfil their duties and (b) encourage improvement in Forest Hill? It seemed that Lewisham only ever had two enforcement officers at most; could we put pressure on the Council to increase them?** JL noted that Greenwich had eight enforcement officers, although this may be partly attributed to Greenwich town centre being a World Heritage Site. He believed that more officers were critical for regeneration in any area, and their cost would be justified by the increased money brought in by regeneration. Hilary Satchwell had an idea for a one-day consultation event to focus people's thoughts on Forest Hill, eg with guest speakers about conservation etc.

**Traffic problems on Honor Oak Road. The road was often congested because of the timing of the traffic lights. At a previous meeting the Mayor had suggestion a pollution test – was there any news on this?** We would need to chase up the Council on that point. PI noted that Transport for London control the lights because they are part of the South Circular, and TfL were known to be resistant to requests to change, even from local boroughs. One suggestion was to approach the Mayor of London, because TfL were more likely to take direction from him. **A pedestrian crossing on the junction of London Road and Honor Oak Road would be useful, particularly as it was on the route to the Horniman Museum. The junction was frequently blocked because it wasn't a box junction. One set of lights spends so long on red that drivers think they're not working and drive through.**

**The 'Rockbourne Triangle', a group of roads around Rockbourne Road, had been declared the winner of Lewisham's eco-streets competition, partly in recognition of the Stanstead Road Community Garden. The area would become Lewisham's centre for excellence for eco-issues and this was a good opportunity for the FH Society to become involved.**

**What influence does the Town Centre Manager (Julie Sutch) have in Forest Hill?** MA said that we hadn't managed to meet with her yet. She does a regular walk of Sydenham High Road with members of Sydenham Society, and this is something the FH Society could consider copying.

**Abuse of one-way systems in Manor Mount and David's Road. This had been talked about within the Society and it was now time to address it.** MA noted that councils now have the power to set up mobile speed cameras.

**Fly-tipping: could the Council educate residents about the provision of collections of excess household waste, to help reduce fly-tipping of domestic waste?**

**The Forest Hill Society. The principle of such societies was people trying to defend what they liked about their area. This tended to engender a backward-looking, conservationist approach. It was difficult to create and agree upon forward-looking ideas for the future. What do the next generation need and want? The Society had tried to represent all of Forest Hill but more needed to be done. Should more publicity be gained, eg through direct action? The Society can't do everything itself, so could it do more to help local residents in their work?**

**Listing of Louise House. The Council must have been aware of the application to list the building as they must have arranged for English Heritage to have access to the inside. Yet residents were unaware of the application and had no opportunity to comment. Could one person have a building listed?** MA explained that anyone can propose a building

for listing to English Heritage, who then consider the building's merits and decide whether to list it. MA asked that if anyone else was applying for a building in Forest Hill to be listed, please could they let the Society know.

**Forest Hill Pools. Sydenham and Forest Hill Societies should press for an architectural competition. Southwark had received a good response to their competition. Local schools should also be invited to participate. Swimming should be the priority: the outside appearance is secondary.**

**At a previous meeting the Mayor had promised that the pedestrian underpass would be painted, and had offered to do it himself if it was not done. Could we remind him of that?** MA said Network Rail have a plan to do some refurbishment work to the underpass.

**Honor Oak Park station. The ticket machine had been vandalised and it would take six weeks to replace. People were having to allow an extra 10-15 minutes on their journey times in order to queue at the ticket office.**

**Planning applications. Advice from an experienced local resident: never assume common sense will prevail; do everything you can to object and never leave it in the lap of planning officers. Councillors are very dependent on planning officers and rarely overrule officers' advice. Weight of numbers seems to help when objecting, even though it shouldn't. Dealing with an unwelcome planning application in a neighbouring property can be very lonely and stressful: it would be a good idea to have an e-mail group or list of people to contact to ask for help.**