



MINUTES OF THE THCAT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

TUESDAY 5TH JULY, 7-8.30PM

ST PAUL'S CHURCH HALL, ST PAUL'S ROAD, THORNTON HEATH

1) Welcome, introductions, apologies, health and safety

Gill from St Paul's gave a health & safety briefing.

Andrea welcomed Cllr. Scott Roche to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Sue Ahmed, Jackie Cross and Averil Coutinho. Andrea also read a section of an email from Paul and Louise Wood, who are moving on from Thornton Heath Salvation Army very soon to a new placement in Plymouth. They thanked THCAT for the work we have done in the community during their time here and Andrea expressed our own thanks for the support they have given THCAT in hosting meetings etc.

2) Election of committee members

All candidates for committee offices were elected by a show of hands.

None of the posts were contested.

The members of the newly elected committee are:

Chair

Vice Chairs

Treasurer

Ambassador/Coordinators for approach to flytipping

Ambassador/Coordinator for approach to green
& sustainable living

Andrea Perry

Mohammed Mir

Graham Mitchell

David Fell

Barbara Benjamin

Gaëtane Jones

Linda Watson

Design and social media coordinator
Secretary

Tilly Pollard
Vacancy

Chris Milton has stepped down from the role of Secretary after 7 years. She was thanked for her work and given flowers and a card.

We need a volunteer or volunteers to undertake or share this role.

3) **Annual report**

Andrea passed around a copy of the Annual Report which had only just been completed as she has been ill. The report details what THCAT has done during the past year and can be downloaded at: <https://www.thorntonheath.net/thcat-annual-report-2022/>

4) **Financial report**

You can find the financial on the last page of the THCAT Annual Report 2022 which can be downloaded from our website here: <https://www.thorntonheath.net/thcat-annual-report-2022/>

David, our Treasurer, compiled the report which was audited by Gill Borthwick from St Paul's. David mentioned in particular, 2 large sums remaining in the budget: £2,500 from Alison Butler which was originally donated for a youth event to take place on the forecourt of Ambassador House which never went ahead and the remainder of the sum crowd funded for Cedric's Legacy (see 6 below) which is being given to THCAT for green planting.

5) **Thornton Heath in Bloom**

Entries for this year's Thornton Heath in Bloom competition closed on 1st July and judging is now underway. Tilly has done the promotion and will create the certificates. Averil has done the administration. Linda has appointed the judges and sourced prizes, generously donated by local businesses. Further prizes would still be appreciated. Members of THCAT have also helped with promotion, delivering leaflets etc.

The Prize Giving will take place on Tuesday 12th July at 7pm at St. Andrew's Church Hall, Quadrant Road. All entrants have been invited and Cllr Roche has agreed to come and present the prizes. Volunteers are needed to come to the hall at 5.30pm to help decorate with vases of flowers and heat pizzas. Donations of garden flowers would be appreciated.

6) **Cedric's Brook Road memorial**

Gaëtane told us about Cedric Monvoisin, a former THCAT member and great contributor to the community, who sadly died in November 2020. His partner, Craig Bailey, set up a crowd funded appeal to plant an avenue of Cherry trees in Brook Road as a memorial and legacy for Cedric and asked THCAT to help. Liaising with the Council was difficult but finally it happened. They did not know what was under the pavement and if it would affect where tree pits could be made. Finally 18 trees, not the 20 originally planned, were planted and bloomed this spring.

The official unveiling of a plaque to Cedric took place on 18th June this year. Because of Covid, there was a small funeral in France but nothing in the UK so this was a chance to celebrate Cedric's life. Cedric's parents came from France. Alisha Flemming, the Civic Mayor of Croydon, came along with some of the Councillors and many local residents and THCAT representatives attended. There was a reception afterwards in St. Andrew's Church with caterers and live musicians playing accordion and saxophone.

Linda said the Mayor was struck by the community spirit.

Gaëtane said it was a very emotional event as people realised how much Cedric has done for the community and his colleagues.

Andrea congratulated Craig, Cynthia Maxwell and Gaëtane for their work with the Council.

Cllr Roche said if there are problems with the Council to contact him first. For events, send a message to the Executive Mayor and they will be shared out between him and the Civic Mayor. Unfortunately, the Council phone system is 15 years old, leading to problems for callers.

Gaëtane said that, despite the delays, Cedric's Mum was amazed that it was allowed to happen.

7) Ambassador House meeting

A meeting was held on the forecourt of Ambassador House with a representative of Redwing, who have a 66-year lease on the building, a planning consultant and communications person to engage with the community on their redevelopment plans. 3 local Councillors attended.

Redwing have permitted development rights for 66 flats but want to use the other floors for 2 bed flats but in the community plan, these are designated for community use. An application for this has been put in on pre-application they were told it was unlikely. They would have to market these floors for community

use for 2 years before permission would be granted even though the space has been empty for years. They wanted local support for their application. Most people want something to happen because the building is an eyesore. Redwing have not engaged before and for 2 years no business rates weren't paid after they leased the building to a management company Kirkstall Properties based Manchester which went in to administration.

Andrea said there is a need for community hubs here. CALAT has been designated to be closed and sold off. There is no investment in infrastructure eg. For health and youth. We need a balance.

Barbara agreed. The conversation needs to be had but we are having the same one as 9 years ago. Compromises need to be made. It is the first impression people get of Thornton Heath when they come out of the station. The people with power need to sit down with the developers and get it done. It needs flagging up by Councillors or planning officers as our efforts have fallen on deaf ears.

Cllr Roche said we should forward the details to him and he will send it on.

Andrea A significant number of people will be moving in once this is finished. There are also the flats to be built behind Iceland so facilities are needed.

Barbara We should benefit from improvement to the area.

Paul They need the other floors to make the development viable. The flats must be rented because of the length of their lease and the builders cannot miss out floors because of the infrastructure.

Barbara The 3 floors are spread out. It has been suggested one floor could be medical, but how would security be maintained?

Graham said there are 2 new developments in Bensham Lane and Bensham Manor Road as well as the plans behind Iceland so there will be a lot of people coming in. The Council must be careful how developers work and make them pay for community facilities. Too often they go into liquidation without paying. Rubbish, medical school and other facilities are needed. There is too much intensification and the money from Section 106 has not come to Thornton Heath.

Barbara Before the election we had people with lack of vision for the area. If business rates can be recouped, they should be. We are not in authority. It

needs action from someone at the top. Cllr Roche could take it back. Discussion with local residents has gone on too long.

Andrea The planning process has only been going on for 2 years.

Barbara Formerly we were told there would be compulsory purchase. Concrete proposals are needed to drive this forward.

David Quality is also necessary.

Andrea The Barclays Bank development is a disgrace and people are living there.

Barbara Thornton Heath is crammed with HMO's. Dodgy landlords are driven here and we are left to get on with it. We did not get what we were promised.

Andrea Infrastructure is a huge problem.

Mohammed Schooling and parking are big problems. Thornton Heath has become a dumping ground.

Linda said not all cities are like this. On her holidays, in Montreal and other cities, every little space was planted. There were lots of trees and it was very varied with lots of sitting places near planting and shelters with seating, planting and Wifi making it very pleasant. But who looks after it?

8) Report on Cabinet lead for streets, Cllr Scott Roche's, recent walkabout with committee members

Gaëtane has created a document to monitor the places visited on street walks with Barbara, Paul and sometimes Councillors and enforcements officers if they are available.

The same issues have been going on for the past 8 years: reporting, meetings re regeneration, plans for and the value of Thornton Heath as a neighbourhood but the outcomes have been very disappointing. Shops with only 1 star hygiene rating selling fish are allowed to continue trading, there is dangerous paving in the High Street and rubbish has been dumped in the same places for years. At residential addresses there are problems with bins, parking on double yellow lines and abandoned vehicles including continual problems with a garage on Parchmore Road. A property on St Paul's Road (previously an HMO) which was raided some time ago by counter terrorism police has been abandoned after the owners wanted to make it bigger. Next door now has mice because of rubbish in the garden and had to pay £300 to get rid of them. Junctions are

blocked with illegal parking, yellow lines have been painted out by people wanting to park in a specific place and all this causes road rage.

THCAT and our members have constantly complained to the Council but nothing is done.

Cllr Roche has a spread sheet re yellow lines and he is getting frustrated by the answers he is getting on this topic because excuses are made but the illegal parking happens every day. The DVLA should take away vehicles if they have been abandoned for months.

Michael -That is the kind of chasing we need.

Cllr Roche said a culture seems to have formed around parking and that needs to change. He is working with the new executive director to try to get a new system in place.

Currently flytipping will not be cleared unless it is reported and that needs to change. Jason Perry promised this at our hustings meeting. We need to know very specifically why the Council cannot do things at the moment, eg. Which budget is involved?

Andrea – THCAT spent 7 or 8 years working on this then there was money but no solutions were found by the Council. Now there is no money and it feels too late. Will it change?

Cllr Roche – We need to be doing all we can within the existing contract to ensure they are carrying it out properly.

Andrea – They make up figures re recycling.

Cllr Roche – It is one of my initial task priorities. I need to keep asking the questions and come back with the facts.

Barbara – If Council officers are not doing their jobs, at all management levels, why are they there?

Paul – There was a dangerous structure at a church but the residents at the flats at 179 Brigstock Road were told that the Council has no jurisdiction.

Barbara – We are getting no value for our Council Tax money.

Paul – Why don't Councillors have the power to say, "This property is empty. It must be looked after"? They can't just say that there is no planning application. If there is a danger, they have a responsibility. There are many properties in Thornton Heath that are just deteriorating.

Andrea – This is not unique to Croydon. The Council has powers. Ours does not use them. Most Council officers have worked in other authorities so they should know what their powers are.

Gill – They don't seem to know their powers over vehicles.

Cllr Roche – I will flag this up.

Graham – Veolia has an 8 year contract with the possibility of extensions.

Cllr Roche – They might not get it next time. We need to go back to them. There is a meeting tomorrow to discuss Veolia with the Mayor involved in the conversation.

Graham – Why is there such a difference in the number of flytips between the north and the south of the borough? Eg. "Love Clean Streets" figures for May/ June showed 357 for Thornton Heath Ward and 19 for New Addington South.

Andrea – We have been speaking to Councillors about this for years. Do they not have a responsibility to deal with it? Is there a reporting system for Councillors not doing their jobs?

Cllr Roche – I can log this. It shouldn't be up to one person to deal with what happens in their ward, which is why we have 2 or 3 depending on the size of the ward. When people report things on Love Clean Streets, there are too many questions to answer. There needs to be customer ease of use to encourage people to report. People will guess the answers to some of the questions asked.

Mohammed – Why aren't Councillors treated like normal people: 1st warning, 2nd warning, 3rd and then action if they cannot do their job?

Cllr Roche - There is whip and the chief executive. You can contact the Chief Whip or Mayor with issues concerning Councillors.

Michael – These are single instances but we need a visible matrix of what Councillors do.

Cllr Roche – You can see attendance at Council meetings on the website. Asking senior officers to come back to you is the best bet.

Barbara – Shouldn't there be a timeline on complaints, eg 7 days? Some things have statutory control and we can go to the Ombudsman but this is not followed in Croydon.

Cllr Roche – This process happens in parliament. I don't know here. I will ask the question.

Graham – A stage 1 complaint should be 20 days to investigation.

Barbara – We should invite Jeet Bains to the next meeting.

9) **AOB** – There was no other business.

10) Date of next meeting – Tuesday 16th August 2022, venue to be confirmed.

CWM 18/07/22