**SYDENHAM HILL RIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

**Note of GENERAL MEETING (via Zoom), 7pm, MONDAY, 29 MAY 2023**

A General Meeting had been called in the light of all 5 members of the 2022-23 SHRNF Committee having resigned between April and May 2023, rendering the Forum inoperable.[[1]](#footnote-1) The SHRNF constitution directs that in such a situation a GM must be held either to wind down the Forum or to elect a replacement Committee.

The meeting was opened and led by the former SHRNF Committee Secretary, D Hunter.

Cllr Andy Simmons (LB Southwark) joined for part of the meeting.

The attendees were:

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| Dena Attar (Southwark)  Phillippa Bradshaw (Southwark)  Patricia Bramble (Southwark)  Gill Daly (Southwark)  David Frail (Southwark)  John Hedley (Southwark)  Lesley Hedley (Southwark)  Daphne Hunter (Southwark)  Barry Kidson (Southwark)  Emma Mazzullo (Southwark)  Jan Morrison (Southwark) | Monica Ngobese (Lewisham)  Stephanie Potter (Southwark)  Muzamil Quereshi (Lewisham)  Alasdair Richardson (Southwark)  Dallas Swallow (Southwark)  Brian Sweeney (Southwark)  Jenny Sweeney (Southwark)  Pat Trembath (Lewisham)  Stephen Weil (Southwark)  Monica Weil (Southwark) |

Phil Mitchell sent apologies. His proxy at the meeting was Jan Morrison, both had confirmed this in writing to DH.

The election of a new Committee, which had been due to take place at the meeting, had been cancelled because only 4 candidates, all Southwark residents,[[2]](#footnote-2) had come forward ahead of the meeting. As it happened, a fifth candidate, Muzamil Quereshi, a mail-subscriber to SHRNF for a number of years and a Lewisham resident, had emailed SHRNF shortly before the meeting to apply for SHRNF membership and to offer his candidacy for the Committee. DH had emailed a response advising him of the process to register as a member. However, he had obtained the zoom link and joined the meeting, and advised that he had emailed with his registration ID. DH had not seen it as it had arrived in the SHRNF inbox 2 minutes before the meeting. At the time, the ID did not fulfil the requirements of the SHRNF constitution.[[3]](#footnote-3)

A discussion took place over the future of the Forum. Several members maintained it was unfeasible to continue the Forum in view of the difficulty of attracting both enough candidates to stand for the SHRNF Committee and sufficient volunteers[[4]](#footnote-4) to assist with, and support, both the regular running of SHRNF, and, in particular, the completion of the wide-ranging and complex project of writing the Neighbourhood Plan (NP), the main requirement of Neighbourhood Forums.[[5]](#footnote-5)

It was noted, however, that initial work, on defining the NP issues most important to the local community, had been completed by members of the Committee and its NP working groups. This had been intended to be the focus of a second community survey.

Others keenly argued that those who wanted the Forum to continue ought to be given a chance both to recruit at least one other candidate from LB Lewisham and to attract new volunteers. It was stressed that this would be outwith the parameters of SHRNF’s constitution but in a vote the latter view was carried 12:6.

Finally, there was agreement that all those wishing the Forum to continue would form a group to drive such a project, for which the period of a month was proposed and agreed, after which another GM would take place in the hope again of reconstituting the SHRNF Committee.

The group consists of the following members (candidates who had declared their candidacy for election prior to the meeting (statements attached) are marked with an asterisk[[6]](#footnote-6)):

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| Dena Attar (Southwark)  Phillippa Bradshaw (Southwark)\*  John Hedley (Southwark)\*  Lesley Hedley (Southwark)  Barry Kidson (Southwark)  Emma Mazzullo (Southwark)  Phil Mitchell (Southwark)\* | Jan Morrison (Southwark)  Muzamil Quereshi (Lewisham)\*  Alasdair Richardson (Southwark)  Brian Sweeney (Southwark)  Jenny Sweeney (Southwark)  Stephen Weil (Southwark)\*[[7]](#footnote-7)  Monica Weil (Southwark) |

D Hunter, SHRNF former Secretary, agreed to facilitate the formation of the ‘recruitment group’ and organise a second GM.

1. Holding a quorate SHRNF Committee meeting had become difficult even before that as the Convenor had difficulty in taking part for some while owing to ill health. He finally moved away from the area at the end of March. This left the Committee permanently inquorate and unable to continue as the constitution stipulates min. 5 members (max. 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The constitution also states that the SHRNF Committee should include at least 2 members from each borough. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. MQ sent his full ID on 5 June and was then registered as a member and candidate for the SHRNF Committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The almost total lack of community volunteers, despite various attempts on numerous occasions to recruit new and active members, left the Committee despairing of ever having enough supporters to achieve the Forum's main task, namely, writing a Neighbourhood Plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. NFs are governed by government requirements, are designated by local authorities, and receive public money to help complete these requirements. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Monica Ngobese (Lewisham) advised SHRNF on 9 June of her intention to stand for election to the Committee. Her statement is therefore also attached. She also subsequently became a member of the ‘recruitment group’. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Stephen Weil withdrew his candidacy on 13 June 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)