

LEEMANOR SOCIETY



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<p style="text-align: center;">Notice of Annual General Meeting By Zoom at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 14 October <i>Details overleaf</i></p>
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Notes of an informal Committee Meeting by Zoom on 22 September 2020

Present: Charles Batchelor, David Ford, Frances Migniuolo, Ralph White (Chairman), and Sheila Peck (Secretary).

Apologies to: Lorraine Burton (Treasurer) and David Plumer because we could not connect.

COVID-19

Like other Amenity and Conservation Groups our programme for 2020 has almost completely stalled. We have not been able to hold our ever-popular Annual Plant Mart and, because of the cramped environment we have not been able to open the Ice House.

Planning

However, not everything has ceased, and we continue to monitor and, if necessary, comment on the steady stream of planning applications within the Conservation Area. We enjoy a generally good working relationship with the Planning Officers and have seen several examples where our observations have resulted in satisfactory outcomes to all parties.

Planning enforcement, a vital element in the planning process, is a different matter. Never good at communicating with the outside world, they have outdone themselves in recent weeks. Initially ignoring our request for action at one property, where the owner was flagrantly ignoring a council planning directive, enforcement suggested that since they had already taken up the issue - though there was no evidence they had - there was no need to inform us of their actions. This smacks of a remoteness from the concerns of residents. Unlike private businesses that have lost revenues and been forced to close during the coronavirus epidemic, Lewisham council (like all others) continues to receive our council tax payments. They should continue to provide the service for which we are all paying.

Two matters which are still to be resolved are the shed which has been erected in the front garden of Pentland House, and the high fence and advertisement obscuring St Winifred's chapel in Manor Lane.

Trees

We are exploring ways to restart the popular tree walks in the area and especially in Manor House Gardens, but we are conscious of the need to manage group size and observe social distancing.

We recorded the loss of two mature street trees in Handen Road and these now appear to have been associated with Bracket Fungus – the fungus does not attack living wood but it does proliferate in dead heartwood and its presence, usually near the ground, indicates a likely

weakening of the tree. Some of the fallen trees in Manor House Gardens seem to have suffered from the same fate and, once you get to observe it, you will notice a seriously large number of trees are affected.

Society members continue to monitor local street trees and push for new plantings and replacements. David and Charles recently planted two trees - a liquid amber and red oak in Southbrook Road and Burnt Ash Road respectively.

David has suggested we align our tree-planting initiatives with organisations like Street Trees for Living (Lewisham Borough) and Trees for Livable Cities (an international organisation). This would give us leverage in fund-raising and support and at the same time we would seek to make the Lee Manor Conservation Area and its immediate surroundings our prime focus.

Low Traffic Neighbourhood

Lee Manor Society circulated concerns about the introduction but there is no doubt that some parts of Lee Green Ward have benefitted from the pilot scheme and informal conversations with residents consistently reveal a desire not to return to the previous cross-town traffic. However, there is no doubt that the changes have increased traffic on nearby roads and at junctions and added to pollution on these routes as well as delays for some emergency services.

Celebrating Diversity

Frances opened a discussion on finding ways for Lee Manor Society to include more diversity in the way local history is represented in the Conservation Area, for example more on the lives of women and ethnic minorities and their contributions and we agreed to identify and highlight examples that have contributed to the social fabric of Lee Manor and we will welcome your histories.

The Manor House

The Manor House is a Grade 2* listed building - the star being added because of the people associated with it, among them Sir Francis Baring. We noted that the plaque about Sir Francis Baring on the front of the building now languishes behind wooden shuttering. This cannot continue indefinitely, and we look forward to the Mayor's proposals to review local landmarks and plaques. We discussed how to accommodate our sometimes-unpleasant histories with the reality that they do not go away by hiding or destroying them and considered the need for educational panels where links between this building and its owners and the wealth gained from the slave trade could be explained and set in context.

Annual General Meeting

From 7.30 pm by Zoom on Wednesday 14 October 2020, Please email leemanorsociety@gmail.com if you would like to be sent a video link which will be sent out closer to the time.

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Chairman's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Adoption of accounts
5. Election of Officers*
6. Close of formal business
7. General discussion

*Dr Ralph White (Chairman); Ms Lorraine Burton (Treasurer) and Ms Sheila Peck (Secretary) are all standing for re-election. Nominations for the posts, and that of Vice-Chairman (currently vacant) should be sent to leemanorsociety@gmail.com by no later than Wednesday 7 October 2020.