

Minutes of the EGRA AGM - Thursday 11th April 2024 at the Star of Greenwich

1. Daniel Bernstein from Emergency Exit Arts presented the plans for an East Greenwich Carnival on Saturday 13th July. There is some funding available and the intention is to have activities going on in various areas as well as a street party in Mauritius Road. DB hopes that other streets will also seek street closures and hold events.
2. Re-election of EGRA Committee. Patrick made it clear that without new members of the Committee it would be impossible for EGRA to continue for more than another year. The current Committee members were unanimously re-elected and Nathan and Gregg have also agreed to join the Committee.
3. Fiona highlighted the impending financial problem given the current cost of maintaining the website and email address which outstrips memberships dues. Rashmee will look into alternative cheaper hosting arrangements with her contacts. We could also organise a fund raising event and look into ideas raised below.
4. How to increase active membership. The following ideas were floated:
 - a) Leaflet local streets
 - b) Personal contacts/door knocking
 - c) Posters in local shops, pubs, businesses (Rashmee to design something once the highlights of EGRA's work are finalized).
 - d) Make contact with the University and see if students will get involved
 - e) Raise annual dues to £10 (with flexibility if required)
 - f) Just Giving Page (and link on posters via QR code)
5. Tree planting - there is scope for tree planting on Vanbrugh Hill and Christchurch Way where street trees promised by developers were not installed. We discussed the use of the EGRA ring-fenced greening money and the potential Silvertown Tunnel mitigation money (£700,000 for TfL improvements and £40,000 for greening). There is concern that the Silvertown money will melt away and be spent elsewhere in the borough because it is too difficult to find plantable spaces on the Peninsula and in East Greenwich.
6. Traffic - there is general despair about the postponement of decisions on the LTNs and the perma-chaos in East Greenwich. The next year while drastic road changes are happening pre-Silvertown will be bad and RBG indecisiveness is not helping. EGRA members want a shuttle hopper bus between North Greenwich and Greenwich Town Centre particularly given the huge numbers of tourists now visiting and the increase in population from new developments which overwhelms the existing two services.
7. Leaseholder issues - there is great concern that service charges are becoming unaffordable in many new developments. There is also complete lack of clarity about what leaseholders are expected to pay for e.g. the current stand-off between Mace (the Greenwich Centre developers) and RBG over who is going to be responsible for maintaining the public space at the entrance to the Library/Swimming Pool. Strangely, none of the issues over long-term management seem to be included in s.106 Agreements between the Council and developers and it looks as if no-one will be doing any maintenance in some cases. This is a general problem, not specific to Greenwich and we will endeavour to find out more from other groups like The London Forum which deal with planning issues.

8. Need for more community activities to combat isolation and loneliness. Funding cuts and lack of inexpensive venues have made any kind of drop-in or activity groups very difficult to organise post-pandemic. The People's Parlour at Rothbury Hall had no funding and the hall rental was not sustainable from subscriptions. The summer carnival may provide the impetus for future activities particularly if groups collaborate.
9. Vote of thanks to James and the team at the Star of Greenwich for providing us with a (free) venue for the EGRA AGM.