



PUBLIC MEETING 16 NOVEMBER 7:30pm 2023

STAR OF GREENWICH COMMUNITY PUB

MINUTES

- 1) EGRA Chair, Patrick Ives, announced that he will be stepping down from the role of Chair after over five years of steering the committee. Patrick invited all those present to consider volunteering themselves for this position and others on the committee.
- 2) Patrick introduced David Masters from [Southeast London Community Energy \(SELCE\)](#). David introduced SELCE:

- where they work (based at the Forum, East Greenwich, working in boroughs of Greenwich, Lewisham, Bromley),
- why it's important to improve our homes' energy efficiency.
- what they do ([Energy Advice](#), [FutureFitStreets](#), [Retrofit in Conservation Areas](#), [advice workshops](#), and much more.

He gave an enlightening talk about the things we can do to improve energy efficiency in our homes, the 'fabric first' approach to retrofitting older homes and how SELCE can help us make informed decisions with their [Retrofit Assessment Schemes](#).

If members are keen to contact SELCE to book an assessment at home, receive 1:1 advice or go to a free drop-in session, they can be contacted as follows: (please mention EGRA)

Email: energy.advice@selce.org.uk

Telephone: 020 4566 5764

- 3) **Topics of discussion in our area** (Patrick, Fiona, Sheila):
 - **Sale of Morden Wharf** (again!) to Galliard Homes and a developer from Singapore.
 - **Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA)**
Planning (re)applications for PBSA, eg: ex-Speedy Hire site on Woolwich Rd (appl. 21/3944/F) previously granted planning permission to construct 58 homes for residents has been sold. A new application has been made to construct PBSA for 200 students. Sheila explained that there are several concerns with this trend:

- PBSA currently offers the most profitable returns for developers as there is no need to provide things like balconies, landscaping and legal minimum unit size is much smaller than for homes.
- Higher education establishments can earn money from AirBnB customers in the holidays allowing them to offer low rental rates to attract students. Overseas students are often targeted as PBSA allows them to offer a package of place on course plus guaranteed accommodation. HE will, therefore, pay higher prices for the buildings.
- Higher profits for developers may lead to a proliferation of PBSAs to the detriment of residential housing need;
- Lower CIL rates received by councils than for residential builds;
- Student tenants are not required to pay Council Tax;
- Students and AirBnB customers are transitory and, therefore, may contribute less to the local community and economy;
- Developers are often not required by councils to ensure occupancy agreements are in place before permission to build is granted which could lead to empty buildings which are difficult/expensive to convert to homes.

EGRA is compiling a list of PBSA developments and has written to MP Matthew Pennycook on this issue in Greenwich.

- **EGRA Hustings for local/London Mayoral elections and (possibly) General Elections.**

This was a call out for help from volunteers to help arrange these hustings. It requires contacting candidates, organisations/people willing to host, setting dates. Previously, EGRA has held Hustings at Christ Church, East Greenwich, and St Mary Magdalene All-Through School in Peninsula Ward with the vicars as hosts.

- **Shoplifting and Street Crime.**

Patrick talked about theft problems at the BP Garage on Trafalgar Road. A member also spoke about nearby residents' issues with BP as an inconsiderate neighbour, installing external compressors without planning permission, noise insulation. Residents have written to MP Matthew Pennycook to ask him to approach BP. Matthew has only recently received a response from BP. The member has asked if EGRA can support their efforts. Patrick and Fiona attended the local Police Ward panel on 15 November where Patrick brought up the BP garage theft issue. Police responded, noting that M&S, unlike many retailers, do not use bans on repeat theft offenders and their CCTV footage is often not reliable.

Patrick advised that EGRA would be writing to the council Licensing Officer to find out if BP, as license holder, can be pressured into action via the four objectives to be achieved by licence holders: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance, the protection of children from harm, all of which are not, potentially, being met.

- **Introduction to the Greener Greenwich Community Network** (Fiona, Sheila)
GGCN was set up earlier this year by Helen Murati of [Eltham Enviros](#) and Tamasin Rhymes of [Greener and Cleaner](#), to bring residents and campaign groups together to address the Climate Emergency declared by Royal Borough of Greenwich in 2019. The council's consequent Carbon Neutral Plan is behind on its seven core missions and many residents are keen to help engage the council to improve outcomes.

Within the group of 50 individuals and representatives of campaign groups, residents' associations and Friends of green spaces, there is a lot of expertise to offer the council. Hubs have been created around some of the seven core missions, including one on the Natural Environment. This hub group's current aim is to address the Biodiversity Crisis by encouraging the council to

- stop using glyphosate (a dangerous, carcinogenic chemical) to kill the wild plants on our streets;
- set up a Conservation Unit to operate across all departments of the council.

On glyphosate, the hub is developing a template letter to be sent to ward councillors by residents asking how the council can organise themselves to stop their contractor from spraying it on their street. After discussions at the meeting, attendees asked if it could be shared with them and other EGRA members. Once the final draft is approved, EGRA will share this.

- **Talk on the [Star of Greenwich Community Pub](#)** from co-founder of the pub, EGRA member and venue host for tonight's EGRA public meeting, James Gadsby-Pete.
James spoke about how the community pub opened on Marathon Day 2023, the community groups it hosts, including [PlateFul Café](#) providing community meals, a regular group teaching refugees English and the restoration of a community space for local residents, some of whom have been regulars for 50 years. James said that he and his co-founders saw the establishment as a community space with a bar rather than a pub with a community space.
- **Summary and thanks from Chair**, Patrick Ives. Meeting closed.