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## ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2022-23

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This has been another busy year for the Society, with an excellent programme of talks and walks; the regular production and delivery of our colourful and informative Newsletter; and our continued involvement with CCMAC on matters to do with the Common. Our Local History sub-committee remains very active, and contributes in many ways to a better and wider understanding of Clapham's past. Sadly, we have not been as active on the Planning front, due largely to changes in the personal circumstances of previously active long-serving members. This is an area in which the Society has been particularly strong in the past, and I would greatly welcome volunteers able to spare some time to sift through and comment on more contentious planning applications.

The Society was formed 60 years ago. Its inaugural meeting took place on 20 March 1963 at Macaulay School's then premises in Rectory Grove. A key concern shared by the Society's founders, and of several other amenity groups around that time, was a growing alarm at the pace and extent of redevelopment of much of the capital and other British cities. Architectural historian Hermione Hobhouse, one of our founding members, noted in her influential treatise *Lost London* (1972): "London is threatened with the grim prospect of a Manhattan-like future...of becoming a city of the very rich and the very poor, a city unattainable and increasingly unattractive

to the middle classes and to the younger families with children to bring up...." In parts of London this dystopic vision may have become reality, particularly on some former industrial land near the river. Back in the early '70s Clapham was itself threatened by the proposed Ringway 1 motorway box, and by Lambeth Council's own redevelopment proposals for much of the Old Town which were strongly resisted by the Society.

Before running through the work of the Society over the past year, I must refer to the troubling picture painted by our Accounts, which cover the 12 months to 31 March 2023. In this regard I am indebted to our diligent Treasurer, David Brown. He alerted me around Christmas that we were incurring substantial increases in expenditure while income remained flat, and advised that it was imperative we address this issue to avoid unpalatable cuts to our activities. We laid out the financial position to the Committee in January and started looking at options for bringing income and expenditure back in line. This has been a recurring item on our agenda ever since, building on work done outside the meetings.

The Society is heavily reliant on income from subscriptions. Some members generously make donations, which are greatly valued, but these make up a relatively small percentage of our total income, and are unpredictable in terms of size and timing. Our subscription income has been relatively static since 2019/20.

As an organisation we have three main areas of cost – production of the Newsletter; room hire for meetings; and hosting and design of the website. The massive hike in energy and other costs during the past year is largely to blame for the sharp deterioration in our financial position, and we must assume that inflationary and other cost increases will continue, albeit at a somewhat slower rate.

In 2021, and to a lesser extent in 2020, room hire costs were necessarily limited due to Covid lockdown measures. These made it impossible to hold our monthly meetings at Omnibus. Last year, when meetings in person resumed, these costs were some 54% higher than in the year ending in March 2020. Similarly, Newsletter production costs increased by 90% over the same period. Website hosting and design increased by 153% (though spend in 2019/20 was unusually low), and we had incurred considerable capital spend on redesign of the website during 2021/22.

Whilst Committee will continue to consider options available to curb expenditure and boost income, we know the Newsletter and monthly meetings are very important to members, and that further investment in the website is unavoidable if we are to modernise our dated Membership and Payments systems.

Irrespective of other changes that may be required, Committee has, with great reluctance, agreed that members' subscriptions must increase from 1 April 2024. Full details of this and other changes will be set out in due course.

I am immensely grateful for the hard work on behalf of the



Ruth Eastman



Society by all our volunteers – the Committee, and members of our sub-committees, all those who deliver the Newsletter, and those who help in other ways. Without you the Society could not survive.

Last year I paid special tribute to Alyson Wilson who stood down from the Committee after many years. I'm delighted that she continues to host our committee meetings, as well as convening the Local History sub-committee which does so much good work. This year I regret that Jennifer Everett has decided it's time for her to stand down after 20 years of service on the Committee. She will be sorely missed, but I'm relieved she has agreed to continue to assist our move to an online membership system, and I'm sure we will still be seeing her at our meetings at Omnibus and at other events. Andrew Summers, our very able representative on the CCMAC, is also standing down due to work commitments. I have greatly valued the clarity he brings to discussion of difficult issues as well as his passion about the Common and improving the public realm in Clapham.

We welcome hearing from members who might be interested in helping us fill the Membership and the Common and Open Spaces positions that are falling vacant.

I must again pay tribute to Alison Macnair, my indispensable Vice-Chair who has been a great support throughout the past year, and has led on key issues concerning modernising our systems.

Turning to specific areas overseen by individual members (in their own words), read on....

**Jennifer Everett (Membership Secretary)** Membership (as of mid-September) was a little down on last year at 731 individuals (in 505 households) and five business members. Since the start of January this year 23 new members (in 15 households) have joined. Attendance at meetings has remained consistent at about 50 members. There is a different make-up of audience depending on the topic of the talk, though there is a core who tend to come to most meetings.

**Andrew Summers (Common and Open Spaces)** It has been a busy year for people involved in the maintenance and care of the Common. The Society's efforts are mainly channelled through our membership of CCMAC and we continue to work closely with the Friends of Clapham Common (FCC). Members should be aware that there have been no major events on the grassed area since August 2021. Conversations with Lambeth's Cabinet Member responsible for events imply that the Council is open to persuasion regarding the future of major events on this space, casting into doubt the long-established link between hosting events and the need to raise revenue. That said, the Council has vigorously (presumably at great expense) defended its right to permit such events at the Public Inquiry in June. We are grateful for all the hard work put into the inquiry by many people in both the Society (in particular our Chairman) and FCC. Whilst the outcome is far from certain, given the differences of opinion regarding the legality of these events, it was important to establish the correct interpretation of the law. From there, we can plan our next moves.

We are glad the children's water play area opened in time for the school holidays. We look forward to summers when it can be fully utilised, although despite mixed weather this year it has been fantastic to see so many families enjoying it. Plans are afoot for planting around the facility to provide a degree of privacy and an attractive backdrop to the bustle of The Pavement on one side and Holy Trinity on the other. We were also delighted with the first-year display of wildflowers opposite Royal Trinity Hospice. The new café kiosk at the

Windmill Drive playground has been welcomed by parents (and grandparents!), and everyone should benefit from the new lighting and CCTV installed across the Common. Landscaping of the stretch of Windmill Drive that has been closed to cars should proceed shortly, and we are hopeful that the mini-wetlands project next to Eagle Pond will finally go ahead.

The Society supports FCC's proposed Six Acre Wood initiative which would create a tree canopy along open footpaths northwest of the Bandstand. Lambeth has also created a series of interconnected Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) running through the middle of the Common, totalling more than 16 hectares. These areas are afforded additional protection, and must be "sustainably managed, improved and enhanced for public use and benefit".

Finally, the bowling greens on West Side, and the associated pavilion remain derelict. The Society continues to support the plan for one bowling green to be used for commercial sport or recreation, the pavilion operating as a café, and the second to be a community sensory garden. Funding remains an issue.

**Mark Leffler (Planning and Transport)** The overriding concern on the planning front has been the proposal by South Bank Colleges in association with London Realty to redevelop Lambeth College on Clapham Common South Side to create 550 apartments. This has been amply covered in the Newsletter over the past year.

Transport for London (TfL), no doubt due to the impact of the pandemic on their finances, has demonstrated a marked reluctance to pursue agreed projects or consult on suggested schemes that would help to improve pedestrian safety, declutter the High Street, or undertake tree planting. Of particular concern is the lack of progress in providing the promised pedestrian phase crossing at the Cavendish Road junction with Clapham Common South Side.

Many members are aware that Peter Cobley, a long-serving and very active member of the planning sub-committee sustained a severe injury resulting from a fall last October, necessitating a long stay in hospital. Thankfully he is now recuperating at home.

**Alyson Wilson (Local History)** Our regular programme of guided walks has been going well, and a new walk of the southern part of Clapham Park has been added, with a new guide. The Newsletter series of articles – *Unbuilt Clapham*, followed by *Unsung Heroes*, written by different members of the group in turn – has introduced new stories about the area.

We continue to receive regular requests for research and information about Clapham, many of which can be answered easily, but others encourage us to investigate new topics. We also do original research in relation to walks and possible publications. An article about Georgian Clapham, by Timothy Walker published in *The Georgian Group Journal* this year, may lead to a future publication.

The Society had a stand with an historical display at St Paul's Church Fair and the Clapham Town Fair in June as well as at Lambeth Local History Fair at West Norwood Library and Picturehouse in September. These are valuable occasions to promote the Society, though publications do not sell as well as in the past. We remain fortunate to have Clapham Books as an outlet for our publications.

Members have helped with the packing up of Lambeth Archives, prior to their move to new premises in Brixton Hill. The building was handed over in July and is expected to open in November. We are excited by this state-of-the-art building in a central location with a window display, which should give local history a boost.



We have also supported Wandsworth Museum Action Group's efforts to save the museum collection. There has been some progress, as the council has agreed to provide £90,000 to safeguard the collection, and a councillor with responsibility for heritage now attends the meetings. Special thanks are due to Tom Jansz, Gillian Robinson, Michael Tuffrey and Timothy Walker.

**Christine Armstrong (Events)** The last year has once again been an eventful one, with a mix of walks, talks and parties, and thanks must go to the happy band of unsung volunteers who make it all happen. Our monthly meetings at Omnibus Theatre covered a variety of topics including the theatre, creative writing, local pioneers, a talk linked to a photography exhibition at Clapham Library, well-known figures from history and the fascinating importance of bees to the human race through the pollination of crops. Every meeting was well attended and several times we had to put out more chairs.

**Ruth Eastman (Newsletter Editor)** With so much happening in Clapham, the Newsletter continues to be a packed publication both to publicise local events and issues, and to support local bodies such as Royal Trinity Hospice, St Paul's Opera and Omnibus Theatre to name but three. I am grateful to all our contributors. Our printers remain a joy to work with and do their best to keep costs as reasonable as possible. After some discussion, Committee expressed the view that most of our members prefer a printed Newsletter to digital (some of you already receive it digitally), but of course this may need to be reviewed. We would welcome sponsorship to help defray printing costs (about £320 per issue). If you think you might be able to help, email [news@claphamsociety.com](mailto:news@claphamsociety.com). Thanks are due to fellow committee members for their support, especially Jennifer Everett for co-ordinating distribution and Alison Macnair for being my second pair of eyes. Thanks, too, to the volunteers who deliver in Clapham and Balham, and to Dana Kubick whose beautiful photographs are such a defining feature of the Newsletter. It remains a privilege to edit it. Feel free to submit ideas and stories – and any thoughts about sponsorship.

**Alison Inglis-Jones (Social Media)** The Society continues to gain traction on X and Facebook, as well as Instagram which the Newsletter Editor looks after. It is particularly good to see additional people tagging, commenting and liking our posts on a wide range of issues in Clapham. Postings on environmental issues that affect the Common, as well as on proposed major developments, have received increasing attention and it has been most helpful to work in conjunction with the Newsletter to provide further detail on issues raised. Residents from Clapham and the wider area have attended walks and talks flagged on social media, and we welcome the higher profile the Society enjoys as a result.

#### **Closing remarks**

While much has changed since formation of the Society 60 years ago, Clapham today is home to a diverse community, living in attractive streets, with good amenities, and a wonderful Common. The Society has played an important role in helping to achieve this, and I hope it will continue to do so for many years to come.

**Mark Leffler, Chairman,  
September 2023**

## **COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS 2022-2023**

### **President**

**Martin Drury**

### **Vice-President**

**Julia Barfield**

### **Chairman**

**Mark Leffler**

[chairman@claphamsociety.com](mailto:chairman@claphamsociety.com)

### **Vice Chair**

**Alison Macnair**

[vicechair@claphamsociety.com](mailto:vicechair@claphamsociety.com)

### **Legal Counsel**

**Georges Chalfoun**

### **Treasurer**

**David Brown**

[treasurer@claphamsociety.com](mailto:treasurer@claphamsociety.com)

### **Secretary**

**Gillian White**

[secretary@claphamsociety.com](mailto:secretary@claphamsociety.com)

### **Membership Secretary**

**Jennifer Everett**

[membership@claphamsociety.com](mailto:membership@claphamsociety.com)

### **Christine Armstrong**

[events@claphamsociety.com](mailto:events@claphamsociety.com)

### **Ruth Eastman**

[news@claphamsociety.com](mailto:news@claphamsociety.com)

### **Alison Inglis-Jones**

[socialmedia@claphamsociety.com](mailto:socialmedia@claphamsociety.com)

### **Lee Roberts (Resigned April 2023)**

### **Andrew Summers**

[openspaces@claphamsociety.com](mailto:openspaces@claphamsociety.com)

## **SUB-COMMITTEES AND GROUPS 2022-2023**

### **Common and Open Spaces**

Andrew Summers.

### **Meetings and Events**

Christine Armstrong (Convenor), Ruth Eastman, Alison Inglis-Jones.

### **Local History**

Alyson Wilson (Convenor), Tom Jansz, Gillian Robinson, Michael Tuffrey, Timothy Walker.

### **Planning**

Roger Armstrong, Philip Ashford, Mark Leffler, Gery Roberts, David Whitestone.

### **Roads and Transport**

Mark Leffler, Jenny Cobley, Robert Williamson.

### **Newsletter delivery**

The following members were responsible for distributing the Newsletter: Lisa Barash, Caroline Booth, Claire Brown, Pamela Eden, Bill Emmett, Jennifer Everett, Marian Gleeson, Rosalind Hedley-Miller, Sue Keegan, Pauline Khng, Val Johnson, Alison Macnair, Lili Massey, Nigel Parker, Jennifer Pearson, Stewart Pedge, Martin Richards, Stephen Savage, Joan Sinclair, Andrew Summers, Roberta Tarran, Jean Virgoe, Deryn Watson, Helen Widgery, Alyson Wilson.

(If you would like to know who delivers to you, please contact the Membership Secretary.)



# THE CLAPHAM SOCIETY

(Charity No. 279595)

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2023

Note	2022-23			2021-22		
	Un-restricted £	Restricted £	Total £	Un-restricted £	Restricted £	Total £
<b>INCOME</b>						
Subscriptions: Standing Order	5,912		6,318	6,285		6,285
Other	406		0	596		596
	<u>6,318</u>		<u>6,318</u>	<u>6,881</u>		<u>6,881</u>
Donations	1,154		1,154	725	900	1,625
Income Tax recoverable	2	1,085	1,085	1,081	187	1,268
Summer Party	240		240	0		0
Donations for Trees	0		0	1,205		1,205
Interest receivable	42		42	12		12
	<u>8,839</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>8,839</u>	<u>9,904</u>	<u>1,087</u>	<u>10,991</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
Newsletter costs	3,826		3,826	4,144		4,144
Printing, postage and stationery	125		125	144		144
Meeting room hire	3,420		3,420	0		0
Summer Party	458		458	300		300
Events expenses	110		110	125		125
Subscriptions & affiliations	315		315	169		169
Insurance	152		152	202		202
Donations: FOCC	0		0	1,165	2,000	3,165
Omnibus	0		0	500		500
Website hosting & design	2,871		2,871	2,604		2,604
Legal fees	0		0	0	600	600
Sundry expenses	119		119	0		0
	<u>11,396</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>11,396</u>	<u>9,353</u>	<u>2,600</u>	<u>11,953</u>
<b>Deficit</b>	<b>(2,557)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,557)</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>(1,513)</b>	<b>(962)</b>
Surplus/(Deficit) from publications	13		413	(3,886)		(3,886)
<b>Deficit for the year</b>	<b>(2,544)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,144)</b>	<b>(3,335)</b>	<b>(1,513)</b>	<b>(4,848)</b>
Balance brought forward	13,881	3,975	17,856	17,216	5,488	22,704
	<u>11,337</u>	<u>3,975</u>	<u>15,712</u>	<u>13,881</u>	<u>3,975</u>	<u>17,856</u>
<b>Publications</b>						
Sales	1,239			1,385		
Stock brought forward	2,554			2,549		
Purchases	0			0		
Other publication expenses	479			88		
Stock carried forward	(1,807)			(2,554)		
Cost of sales	1,226			83		
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>13</b>			<b>1,302</b>		
<b>Cost of Redesign of Website</b>	<b>0</b>			<b>(5,188)</b>		
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	13			(3,886)		
Balance brought forward	11,777			15,663		
<b>Designated Fund</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11,790</b>		<b>11,777</b>		

## FINANCIAL REPORT

### Treasurer's Report

The figure for Meeting room hire includes the cost of streaming meetings during the Pandemic. Measures are in hand to increase the income and bear down on the expenditure of the Society.

David Brown ACIS, Treasurer

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

### Independent Examiner's Report to the Committee

I report on the Accounts of the Society for the year to 31 March 2023, as set out above.

### Respective Responsibilities of Executive Committee and Examiner

The charity trustees are responsible for the preparation of the Accounts; you consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the Accounts presented with those records.

It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the Accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Committee Members concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

### Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- (a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act;
  - (b) to prepare Accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the Accounts to be reached.

Anna Long FCA, 47 Hambalt Road, Clapham SW4 9EQ

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

Note	2022-23			2021-22		
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>						
	Website/ Software	CD of News letters/Display	Total			Total
Cost	1,331	1,462	2,793			2,793
Less: Depreciation	(1,331)	(1,462)	(2,793)			(2,793)
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>			<u>0</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>						
Stock of publications			1,807			2,554
Debtors: HMRC	2	4,730			3,645	
Other & Prepay		1,698	6,428	316		3,961
Cash at bank and in hand:						
NatWest Bank			7,162			11,466
			15,397			17,981
<b>Less: CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>						
Creditors			85			125
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			<u>15,312</u>			<u>17,856</u>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>						
			<u>15,312</u>			<u>17,856</u>
<b>UNRESTRICTED FUNDS</b>						
Represented by:						
General Fund			(453)			2,104
Designated Publication Fund	3		11,790			11,777
			<u>11,337</u>			<u>13,881</u>
<b>RESTRICTED FUNDS</b>						
Local History Fund			453			453
Legal Action and Special Purposes Fund			3,522			3,522
			<u>3,975</u>			<u>3,975</u>
			<u>15,312</u>			<u>17,856</u>

### Notes to the Accounts

1. **General** - These Accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with: the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.
2. **Income Tax Recoverable** - Represents estimated sum recoverable for four years ended 31 March 2023.
3. **Unrestricted Funds** - The historic surpluses on publications are held in a 'Designated Fund' for financing future publications. The upgrade and redesign of the website was taken from this fund.
4. **Risk Policy** - The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems established to mitigate those risks.
5. **Other Statutory Information** - Details of the Society's Committee are shown elsewhere in this Report.

The financial statements were approved and authorised by the Committee on 10 July 2023