

THE CLAPHAM SOCIETY
Minutes of the 61st Annual General Meeting
held at 7.30pm on Monday 20 October 2025
at Omnibus, 1 Clapham Common Northside, SW4 0QW

1. Apologies for absence

Received from Mark Leffler, Anna Long, Simon Eagles, Sarah & Julian Lush and Gillian Robinson

2. Minutes of previous Annual Meeting 2024

Approved and agreed.

3. Adoption of the Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2025

Alison Macnair, (AM) Vice Chair, presented the Annual Report on behalf of Mark Leffler who was unable to attend the meeting.

AM reported that the financial position of the Clapham Society was much improved, expressing thanks to the following: The members who had paid the increased subscriptions; to Simon Eagles, David Brown and Jennifer Everett who had methodically supervised this process. Thanks were due to Audley Villages for generously sponsoring the Newsletter and to Ruth Eastman and Alison Inglis-Jones who had been responsible for effecting significant savings on the printing costs of the Newsletter.

AM added all Newsletters going back to 1975 were now available on the new website and thanks were due to Michael Barry for his work on this transition. The new website was proving to be a great success with details of all events and local history resources. AM added that Michael was a representative on Clapham Common Management Committee (CCMAC) and this year had organised the Bandstand Concerts – which had been the most successful ever.

AM expressed her appreciation to Ruth Eastman for the enormous amount of work she undertook as Editor of the Newsletter from the perspective of compiling articles, arranging interviews and for the Newsletter's consistently interesting content. AM thanked Jennifer Everett, who continued to work tirelessly in the background to ensure that membership lists were maintained and up to date.

4. Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

AM presented the Report and Accounts in the absence of Simon Eagles, Treasurer. She asked that queries or comments on the Report be brought to Simon later, outside the meeting, noting there were no major concerns and reaffirming the strong financial position. She conveyed Simon's thanks to David Brown and Anna Long for all their help during the transitional process of taking over as Treasurer and preparing the Accounts.

5. Election of the Officers and Committee Members for 2025-2026

Sinclair Johnston, President, welcomed members to the Annual Meeting. He suggested those standing for election on to the Committee to identify themselves by standing up.

The following were duly elected:

President	Sinclair Johnston
Vice President	Julia Barfield
Independent Examiner	Vacancy
Chair	Jake Johnson
Vice Chair	Alison Macnair
Legal Counsel	Saimo Chahal
Treasurer	Simon Eagles
Secretary	Gillian White
Membership Secretary	Vacancy

Committee	Michael Barry
	Ruth Eastman
	John Haworth
	Alison Inglis-Jones
	Jill Sheridan

6. **Appointment of the Independent Examiner**

It was noted that Anna Long was not seeking re-election as the Independent Examiner.

Sinclair (SJ) expressed his appreciation to Anna for the many years she had held this post and wished her well for the future. A successor to Anna was now required and SJ expressed the hope that one of the many super accountants in Clapham might volunteer for the post.

By way of a tribute to Mark Leffler, SJ outlined Mark's many years of contribution to the Clapham Society. He added that Mark's name is listed as a member of the Committee in the first Newsletter in 1975. He had been invited to join the Committee in 1974 and re-elected in 1975. This was in the light of his campaign against Lambeth's Redevelopment programme that threatened large areas of Clapham, including areas around Lillieshall Road and Rectory Grove and the Bedford Road, Acre Lane areas. As a result of this campaign and Mark's advocacy the Council lost a series of Public Inquiries. This was due largely to his promotion of refurbishment and conservation rather than site clearance. Mark was also involved with Roger Armstrong and Nicholas Long in preventing the demolition of Bedford Villas and the adjoining terrace in Clapham Park Road whilst a Buildings Preservation Order was being secured. These properties were then incorporated into a new 'Clapham Park Road and Northbourne Road Conservation Area'. Mark chaired the Planning Sub-Committee from 1974-1979 but resigned when he moved to North London for a time.

His academic background was as an economist followed by a post-graduate degree in town planning. He worked as a planner for Southwark Council, then Hammersmith & Fulham for several years before changing course and becoming Director of Development and Regeneration for a large housing association.

SJ noted that listed buildings are graded I, II, and II*, and that Mark would certainly qualify as Grade I. He concluded that all of us - members of the Society and all of us who live here and care about our surroundings - bear him a deep gratitude.

SJ outlined, aided by a descriptive Georgian Group video, the current problems with The Orangery on the Clapham Park Estate. He reported that years of neglect had resulted in its severe deterioration and partial collapse of the building.

SJ introduced Jake Johnson as the new Chairman. He added that Jake would also be outlining details of his initiative - an amazing architectural competition – the Gateway to Clapham Bridge competition, launched on 1 September inviting applicants to reimagine the railway bridge spanning Clapham High Street at Clapham North.

Jake (JJ) expressed his delight in seeing everyone at the Annual Meeting. He thanked Mark for his long service to the Society both as chair and for his work on the planning committee and wider community. JJ informed members that he was an associate architect at Foster & Partners with first-hand experience of balancing heritage alongside modern needs learning that thoughtful design and careful stewardship are essential. He added that he had worked on grade listed buildings, including several apartments in the Royal Crescent, Bath, and currently on a Grade II listed building on the Oxford Circus.

JJ said his three priorities as the new Chair would be (i) the long-term sustainable stewardship of Clapham Common (ii) to strengthen the Society's visibility in the community and (iii) to enhance beauty on our streets with smart growth.

JJ referred to the Gateway to Clapham Bridge competition, details of which had been published in the Architect's Journal and Clapham Society website receiving 1500 impressions/visits on the AJ and 700 views in the first ten days on our own website. Closing date for submissions had been the previous week and 23 teams had submitted. The jury, which would include Sinclair Johnston and Julia Barfield would meet on 6 November to go through submissions and shortlist applicants. JJ expressed his thanks to Michael Barry and John Haworth for their valued support, and to the Committee for a contribution of £2K – an amount which had been matched by The Clapham Bid. JJ added his thanks to The Clapham Bid and to Jeremy Keates. An amount of £1.2K would be presented to each of the three shortlisted applicants and added that an exhibition would follow in due course.

In conclusion, JJ introduced the speaker, Sarah Langford who would be giving a Talk on 'Sustainable Farming'.

Sarah explained that she had spent 10 years a criminal and family barrister before maternity leave when she and her husband rented some farmland in Suffolk during renovations and improvements on their family home in Clapham. This resulted in her eventual re-training at agricultural college as a farmer. Sarah delivered a captivating talk, enhanced by a PowerPoint presentation of the Suffolk countryside, her family, the farmland, tractors and outbuildings, the animals and her amazing journey!

She was applauded with much enthusiasm by the members – many of whom were very keen to continue talking with her after the conclusion of the Annual Meeting.

(Sarah's book, *Rooted*, on how regenerative farming can change the world, now available at all bookshops)