



THE SOHO SOCIETY'S FORTY SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, 21 March 2019, commencing at 6.30pm

AGENDA

President of the Meeting: Nina Tempia

1. Welcome to Members and Guests
2. Apologies - [Simon Buckley]
3. Minutes from the Forty fifth Annual General Meeting and Matters arising
4. Treasurer's Report and Accounts for year ending 31 December 2018
5. Planning and Licensing Reports for 2018
6. Fete Update
7. Retirement and Re-Election
 In accordance with article 22.1 one third of the board retire and offer themselves for re-election at this meeting. They are:
 Jane DOYLE, Robert Timothy LORD , Robert Mahlon O'DELL, Richard Michael PIERCY, Marina Giorgina TEMPIA
8. Election to fill the 2 vacancies on the board
 The names of those persons who have been correctly nominated are:
Andy Mackay
Anna Ashford
9. Conor Savage - Community Engagement Manager for Soho (020 7641 8626)
10. Discussion - Gentrification and the Society's Response
11. Local Councillors comments - Tim Barnes, Pancho Lewis, Johnathan Glanz
12. Any other business

Followed by a Reception of drinks and light refreshments (provided by Masala Zone, Pizza Pilgrims, Bistro I, Said, Bill's and Gails) and a piano sing along care of Maxim Melton.

The Soho Society

44th Annual General Meeting Minutes

26 April 2018 at St Anne's Community Hall, 55 Dean St, Soho, 6pm

1. Welcome: Chairman Tim Lord opened the meeting, welcoming the members.
2. Chair's report: Tim concisely outlined the infrastructure of the Society, mentioning its charity registration, regular meetings of the Board of Directors/Trustees, as well as the Planning and Licensing meetings, noting that we now have no paid employees, but rely on volunteers. Current concerns include the Oxford Street pedestrianisation proposal, threats to the GP practice at Soho Square and the future use of the former Hospital for Woman building, and holding Westminster City Council to account for its ties to developers. Richard Piercy added information about the project to use photographs of local people on the Crossrail Dean Street ticket hall hoardings, as well as the project to promote a Soho brand beer that would provide additional funding for the Society. Tim also mentioned plans for a loyalty scheme for independent Soho businesses, our joint sponsorship with St Anne's of the annual Silver Tea, our Christmas fair, paella supper evenings, and the forthcoming Soho Fete on 1 July
3. Financial report: Lyn Blackman, Treasurer, reported that operations through December 2017 show a profit of £757, but this is after a prior year adjustment of £3,819; therefore a trading loss of £3,062 was posted for the year. Administration has now reverted to volunteer help and the Clarion has been revised to make sure it breaks even, thus avoiding the main factors contributing to the losses. It is expected that will post a profit for 2018. Revenue is targeted at £37,495, an increase of 10%. This is to be raised from membership, fundraising and events.
4. Planning: Matthew Bennett reported that the Planning Committee received 452 applications in 2017, of which 68 objections (14%) were made. Asking for conditions and suggestions for improvement were made for 38 applications (8%). The Government's continued liberalisation of planning law means that many things that previously required WCC's consent no longer do, e.g., phone "boxes" with the main function as advertising boards. Consent for multiple simultaneous planning use, gives the owners flexibility, but makes Council control difficult. The increase in internet shopping and the subsequent losses to retail shops has led landlords to seek conversion from retail to restaurant & café use. However there is evidence that restaurants and cafes are struggling financially. We support the many applications for tables & chairs if they are well run and do not obstruct the pavement. The Council's policy is that at least 2 metres of pavement space should be left free for pedestrians. If members have complaints about tables & chairs, they should complain to the Council. If they do so, also make sure their complaint is given a reference number; we can log the complaints and oppose further renewal of the street trading licence. Narrow streets and pavements in Soho mean that more people are walking in the streets. We may need to consider greater use of shared surfaces, where pedestrians and vehicles share the same space, which has the effect of reducing speeds.

Housing is a key issue and we were pleased by the Council's announcement that they will now expect affordable as part of large developments to be provided on site or in the vicinity

of the scheme. We were also pleased to see that a couple of applications for conversions into very small hotels with no facilities have been refused since such would become perpetual short-term letting spaces.

Although traffic is the main source of air pollution, roughly 40% is emitted from buildings. We therefore need to focus on heating & cooling, as well as efficient delivery & service plans. We have had concerns about the proposal to pedestrianise Oxford Street and have noted that on 20 March WCC confirmed that no decision will be taken until the Council and TfL have looked in detail at every issue raised by local residents and businesses.

Unfortunately from our view, the London Plan and Westminster's plans support hotel use in Soho. Current projects include 52/53 Poland Street and 18-24 Broadwick with 83 Berwick Street, which displace commercial buildings that provided permanent employment for people often in creative industries, thus changing the character of Soho. We have objected to such applications, considering the increase in noise and traffic also, but have been overruled by the Council. In Meard Street an application has been granted to transform the old film laboratory into retail, gym and office space. We opposed the ground floor use, but supported the aspect of the scheme that the Soho Housing Association to obtain a 999-year lease on the upper parts known as Royalty Mansions.

Soho Estates are proceeding with the Walkers Court & Boulevard Theatre project, which should be externally complete by the end of this year. Their other major project is the Ilona Rose House in Charing Cross Road on the old Foyles site.

Matthew also presented the Soho Society Planning Policies and asked for approval of additional policies on hotels, air quality, electric charging infrastructure, and freight consolidation. Approval of the additional policies was approved by the members.

5. Licensing: Marina Tempia spoke the written report, noting that the committee had considered 127 licence applications since the last AGM for premises selling or planning to see alcohol and for sexual entertainment venues. This was slightly more than the previous year and representations (objections) were made to 26 of these. Strategic management of licensing helps with prevention of crime, disorder and nuisance; we will object to applications that cannot demonstrate that they will not have a negative impact. Final decisions of course rest with WCC. Thanks again were given to Richard Brown of Westminster CAB for his advice and support. As with planning applications, if members have complaints, the Society can help. Residents are encouraged to write in and to attend hearings, which can help determine outcomes.

Marina and Jane Doyle surveyed the streets of Soho in September, counting the number of licenced venues in this small area bounded by Oxford St, Regent St, Shaftesbury Ave and Charing Cross Rd.; Restaurants 227, Cafes 90, Bars 52, Pubs 45, Take-aways 32, Clubs 15, Hotels 10, Ice Cream Parlours 9, Casinos 1.

6. Executive Board elections: Four members of the Board stood down for re-election: Margaret Bloomer, David Evans, David Gleeson and Lisa Sheehy. Lucy Haine and Quentin Thompson were nominees for the two vacancies. All were elected by acclamation.

7. Amendment of the Society's constitution: The Chair asked for authority for the Executive to amend the constitution to clarify that the Society may hold intellectual property rights and licence the same. This was granted by the members present.

8. Any other business: (a) Closing remarks were made by Matthew, noting the new energy and forward looking approach within the Executive.

(b) Leslie Hardcastle, Hon. President, reminded us of past campaigns and victories. He also called our attention to Soho Radio and the weekly programme, the Soho Society hour, which to date has had 254 guests.

(c) Wendy Hardcastle called for more people to join in the campaign to save the PG practice that has suffered from commercial pressures from management businesses and the loss of Chinese-speak doctors. The local health authority has not been co-operating with the Patients Participation Group. More protests from patients and the community are necessary to maintain the GP practice as well as the medical and community use of the Soho Square building, the former Hospital for Women.

The meeting ended at 7.05pm and was followed by lively hustings for the May 3rd local council elections chaired by Nina Tempia.

Bob O'Dell

Secretary

The Soho Society - Annual General Meeting 21st March 2019

Finance Report for the period to 31st December 2018 (Figures - subject to independent accountant's review)

Operations

The operations of the Society show a cumulative profit for the year to December 2018 of £7,760. This is subject to review by The Soho Society's independent accountant. Over the past fifteen months the Society has undergone a period of consolidation, due to losses being made year on year, which was unsustainable. At the end of 2017, and into the start of 2018, the two part time workers left and the administrative business that they covered has been done by voluntary personnel.

A lot of work has been done to build membership and The Soho Society needs the continued support from all members into the future. This is a voluntary Society and any help no matter how small is always appreciated.

Clarion

There were only two issues of the Clarion produced this year due to staffing and publishing difficulties. These showed a loss of £2,811. More support by way of advertising is needed for this publication to continue to be published in this format and distributed in the numbers that it has been, up to now, able to reach.

Fete

The summer fete made a profit of £13,880. This is much needed to pay for the rent and administrative expenses necessary for the day to day running of the Society. This was down on previous year by nearly £2,500. Efforts are being made by several of the Society's trustees and volunteers to improve the profitability for 2019.

Donations

Donations were up this year to £2,132. Any donation, no matter how small is always appreciated and helps to fund the social activities that The Soho Society hold throughout the year.

Financial Position

The Soho Society has unrestricted reserves of £15,068. This is now at a level that the funds designated for unforeseen eventualities are now covered. There is cash of £17,045 at the bank, and therefore the Society is in a position whereby it can cover its creditors and any high risk cost that the trustees have deemed needed to be provided for.

The Soho Society

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31st December 2018 (subject to independent audit)

	Jan'18-Dec'18	Jan'17-Dec'17
	£	£
Turnover		
Donations	2,132.29	1,712.40
Other Trading Activities		
Other Trading Activities	24,881.75	31,371.98
Membership	5,252.92	3,807.00
Investments	44.67	52.24
Total	32,311.63	36,943.62
Expenditure		
Raising Funds		
Costs of generating voluntary income	4,651.63	12,952.90
Fundraising expenses and other costs	17,997.90	23,112.28
Expenditure on charitable activities	1,902.21	2,228.69
Total	24,551.74	38,293.87
Net	7,759.89	(1,350.25)

The Soho Society			
Statement of Financial Position as at 31st December 2018 (subject to			
		31st Dec 2018	31st Dec 2017
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets		374.00	974.00
Current Assets			
Stock		1,110.49	0.00
Debtors		1,527.00	2,228.06
Cash		17,045.21	20,122.59
		19,682.70	22,350.65
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		(4,988.06)	(8,640.90)
Net Current (liabilities)		14,694.64	13,709.75
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		0.00	(7,375.00)
Net Assets		15,068.64	7,308.75
Charity Funds			
Unrestricted funds		15,068.64	7,308.75
Notes:			
1) Fixed assets relates to computers and general office equipment			
2) Stock relates to printed items not distributed and has been provided for plus beverages for forthcoming events			
3) Debtors relates mainly to Clarion debts which have been chased and they have all been paid prior to the AGM.			
4) Creditors mainly relates to deferred income on membership			

SOHO SOCIETY PLANNING POLICIES

POLICIES ADDED ON EARLY STAGE CONSULTATION, ACOUSTIC SURVEYS, SHOP FRONT APPLICATIONS, HOTELS, AIRQUALITY, ELECTRIC CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE, FREIGHT CONSOLIDATION for presentation to 2019 AGM

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To make Soho a better place for people to live, work and visit by preserving and enhancing the area's historic fabric, its existing character and its diversity of uses; and by improving its facilities, amenities and the sustainability of its environment
- To protect the amenity and interests of local residents and the interests of smaller businesses, traders and workers, where necessary, giving priority to local community needs over those of the tourist industry.
- To protect and enhance Soho as a home to a wide range of creative businesses.

WE WORK TO ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Commenting on all the planning applications and listed building applications sent to us to consider.
- Seeking to protect and enhance the Soho Conservation Area.
- Holding regular meetings with Council officers on policy matters. Receiving presentations from developers preferably when their plans are at an early stage. *The Soho Society warmly encourages developers to meet with us sooner rather than later to discuss their proposals with us. We are happy for you to use our informal feedback at those meetings which we may subsequently set out to you in writing in developing your proposals and to pursue any suggestions that we might make.*

However, we ask developers to be aware that there is a clear distinction between individual questions and comments in response to early stage proposals/presentations and our collective view on the final scheme that is eventually submitted to the Council. On several occasions, developers have inaccurately represented comments made at such informal meetings in their subsequent discussions with the council and with other consultees as being the definitive position of the Society on the application itself. This is not accurate or constructive.

The formal position of the Society is made clear in writing in its submission to WCC once they have sent us the validated planning application which is then considered by the members of the Society who are present at that relevant monthly planning meeting and our formal response is agreed on at that meeting.

Accordingly in future, we will only meet with you if you agree not to attempt to paraphrase what has been said in these initial discussions as the position of the Soho Society in any later meetings you and your team hold with third parties such as council officers or other stakeholders. If you are not able to

give this undertaking then we will have to reluctantly decline your offer of an early stage presentation.

- Liaising with the Society's licensing committee to seek to ensure that planning decisions and licensing decisions do not conflict
- Welcoming, suggesting and supporting proposals which reduce overall noise levels, such as noise from air handling plant and nighttime waste collections. Please note we expect acoustic survey reports to be held on a number of nights including the expected quietest night (usually Sunday and Monday nights and that WCC's noise reduction requirements should be achieved against the quietest noise levels achieved in the acoustic survey
- Welcoming, suggesting and supporting measures which reduce carbon emissions and make the area more sustainable.
- Pressing Westminster City Council to take firm measures, including compulsory purchase, where buildings or sites are used for anti-social purposes or where they remain vacant for many years.
- Welcoming comments on planning issues from members of the Society.
- Campaigning on specific issues with the support of our members.

OUR DETAILED AIMS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

- To oppose change of use from residential and normally to support the provision of new residential space where it does not involve significant loss of office and commercial space especially that used by small and/or creative businesses.
- To encourage the construction, restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance of social, intermediate and affordable rent residential accommodation with a mix of household sizes.
- We do not support new hotel uses where these involve the loss of permanent homes or of employment, cultural and leisure uses or erode the mixed-use character of the area.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

- To support the construction, rehabilitation or changes of use which increase the provision of work space which is made available to the creative industries and more specifically the craft, media, post production and creative industries and new start up small businesses.
- To oppose the loss of light industrial space and work space for small and medium sized businesses.

OFFICES

We will normally oppose the loss of small offices to other uses where there is likely to

be an adverse impact on employment. We will oppose the conversion of existing office space into large floorplate new offices unless many desirable planning gains are included (see list below of acceptable planning gains) as part of the proposals and to encourage the inclusion of small scale office units in all permitted office developments. We will oppose development proposals for hotel developments which result in the loss of office space and other commercial uses.

Where permission is sought for ground floor and basement premises that are underneath residential space, and where restaurant use would have an adverse effect on residential amenity, the Society may support as an alternative A1 (retail), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), B1 (Office), or residential use, provided that, where appropriate, provision is made for display or other treatment to improve any retained shop windows.

SHOPPING AND CATERING

- To support existing small and specialist traders and restaurants and encourage the inclusion in developments of small retail units.
- That all applications for new shopfronts should show the entire building which they are situated in and those either side so that we can assess the suitability of the application.
- To oppose applications for fully open-able shop-fronts in shops, restaurants and bars because of their potential to cause noise nuisance unless there are very clear and lasting conditions to control such nuisance.
- To support the retention of genuine A1 retail and to normally oppose an increase in further A1/A3 coffee shops and sandwich bars or sui generis uses such as betting shops or tanning salons.
- To support the City Council's Cumulative Impact Area policies in relation to licensed premises.
- To oppose changes of use to Class A4, A5, nightclub or D2 use unless there are very exceptional circumstances.
- To seek to ensure that all new A4, A5, nightclub and D2 uses are restricted to the 'core hours' which are those hours when the premises may be open to the public as set out in WCC's Statement of Licensing Policy, in summary: Monday to Thursday - 11.30pm, Friday and Saturday - midnight and Sundays - 10.30pm.
- To normally oppose changes of use to A3 and where infrequent exceptions are made on the merits of the case to ask that hours are restricted to Westminster City Council's 'core hours'.
- Where appropriate to press for conditions relating to these uses to be in binding legal agreements attaching to the permission.
- To seek to ensure that all such premises have on-site rubbish compacting or recycling facilities in order to improve the street environment and to press for the provision of internal onsite bottle crushers to limit the noise impact of glass

collections by lorry.

- To support the use of pavements for tables and chairs and for outside drinking, provided sufficient free space for pedestrians is retained (normally at least 2 metres); there is no loss of residential amenity through potential noise nuisance; any pavement use does not take up too great a proportion of newly created public realm; tables and chairs are removed by 11pm **and the tables and chairs are well managed to keep to their authorised area.**
- To support full cost recovery charges for the commercial use of the public footpath or highway where it is used for outside drinking or for tables and chairs.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

To support existing and new facilities such as local shops, schools, leisure centres, clinics, launderettes, health centres, doctor's and dentist's surgeries and to encourage Westminster City Council to treat Soho as a residential area in this respect

TRANSPORT AND PARKING

- To support initiatives aimed at improving and extending public transport services and over time a reduction in private car use.
- **To support proposals for 20mph zones in appropriate locations across Soho.**
- To support appropriate pedestrian priority schemes, improved pavements, traffic calming measures and the provision of timed pedestrian phases on traffic lights.
- To oppose provision of additional commuter car parking space or any additional non-residential on-street parking other than for delivery purposes.
- To press for rigorous monitoring and control of resident's parking by WCC to prevent fraud and abuse of the system.
- To support proposals for freight consolidation schemes and measures which discourage or replace noisy late-night collections and deliveries.
- To oppose the loss of the Poland Street and Brewer Street garages **to other uses** because these are useful spaces in which to house micro consolidation centres and other measures which may help to reduce traffic congestion.
- To oppose street widening schemes or the use of Soho by through traffic.
- To press for improved cycling facilities such as properly signed bicycle lanes, cycle racks, cycle hire docking points, secure cycle storage, cycle phases on traffic lights etc. to be included in traffic management schemes.
- To support greater provision of spaces for commercial loading/unloading and motor cycle and scooter parking.
- To support the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

ENVIRONMENT

- To support the retention of existing buildings where demolition will impose an unacceptable burden on the local area or will not bring about sufficient environmental benefit
- To support measures which improve air quality and reduce the carbon footprint of the area in order to help to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. We will particularly support new combined heat/cooling and power plants where they use energy more efficiently both on individual sites and where they can link a number of properties together as effective ways to help Soho towards meeting the 2050 target of an 80% reduction in carbon use.
- To support noise-insulation, pollution control and recycling measures, with particular regard to extract and ventilation plant
- To oppose the use of environmentally harmful products such as external space heaters and hot air curtains in place of doors on retail shops or other actions which waste resources such as leaving lights on unnecessarily.
- To monitor the impact of the Cross-Rail projects on Soho.
- To discourage the establishment of any noisy activities in Soho and to urge the City Council to reduce the ambient noise level.
- To discourage light pollution of the night sky.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

- To support the retention, repair and maintenance of existing listed buildings, and to support the listing of worthwhile buildings.
- To press WCC to use Compulsory Purchase Orders if listed buildings remain neglected or vacant

TOWNSCAPE

- To support the maintenance and improvement of existing squares, public places, alleys and courts etc.
- To resist the systematic raising of street heights (“canyonisation”) and to oppose any redevelopment scheme that is out of scale with the existing character of the area in size or design.
- To resist the siting of any new tall buildings within the Soho Conservation Area.
- To support and promote the planting of trees or other greening measures such as the creation of Quiet Zones where appropriate.

FACADES

- To support the retention of authentic facades on each floor of a building to help keep a building’s integrity and authenticity.
- The Soho Conservation Area is typified by individual buildings on relatively small building plots and small floor plates. We support refurbishments and designs which support this character by emphasising the individuality of buildings and shop fronts rather than horizontal homogeneity.
- To encourage the reduction of noise emissions and wasted heat by supporting all

doors normally falling closed and, normally, by opposing the use of fully openable shop fronts.

Each application is looked at on its merits and where there are truly exceptional circumstances we may be prepared to accept a scheme that does not completely fit these policies.

PLANNING GAINS (Not in order of precedence)

When deciding whether to support or oppose a planning application the Society will count the provision of any of the following as a community benefit to be balanced against the disruptions and losses consequent upon any planning permission being implemented.

Applications which provide the following **through Section 106 agreements or otherwise** will stand the best chance of our support - if none of these criteria are met then alternative gains will be sought:

- Permanent low rent or otherwise affordable residential accommodation with separate access; completed before commercial premises are occupied; inclusion of ground floor storage for prams, disability equipment, bicycles etc.; balconies; roof gardens. Where off site affordable housing is provided it should be within the West End ward or within the vicinity of it. Where the only solution is that payments are made in lieu of housing to the Affordable Housing Fund these should be recorded as having been generated in the West End Ward and then used in the ward or the vicinity to provide or contribute to affordable housing schemes.
- On-site waste disposal, storage and/or recycling facilities (including glass crushers) for the users of the particular site and the immediate neighbourhood linked to the general waste collection service. See also policy on shopping and catering above.
- Rainwater capture, reducing rainwater run off, CHP and CCHP micro-generation plants and other measures which mitigate and adapt to changes in climate.
- Traffic calming measures, pedestrian refuges; pavement widening and other measures to enhance pedestrian comfort and safety.
- New loading and unloading bays to ease the problems of servicing and deliveries.
- Bicycle racks, lanes and other facilities for cyclists.
- Special features - fountains, trees, green-walls or roofs, increased biodiversity, seats, works of art, open spaces, signage etc.
- Affordable market barrow storage in the Berwick St and Rupert St areas and/or Section 106 protected light industrial accommodation.
- Permanent, free public lavatories.

- Public, social and environment facilities, particularly at ground floor level.
- The provision at concessionary rents of ground floor space for community use, such as meeting rooms, social clubs, creche etc. in all new non-residential developments exceeding 2000m sq. lettable area, or a financial contribution from the developer in lieu.
- The provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Other planning gains will be considered on merit

This Planning Mandate is prepared by the Soho Society's Planning and Environment committee, circulated to the membership and was first approved at an Annual General Meeting in 1991. It has been revised in 1996, 1999, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018, the revisions in each case being endorsed by the Society's membership at its Annual General Meeting.