

VSRA AGM Minutes

Monday 10th March 2025 6.30-8pm

**The Wellington Hotel
71 Vincent Square
London SW1P 2PA**

Committee members present at the meeting:

Jack Jerjian (Acting Chairman), Felicity Bullock, Louisa Taylor, Nitesh Palana, Kyle ap Simon
Apologies received from Julia Record and David Sizer

35 association members were present at the meeting and Cllr Selina Short was in attendance as a guest.

1. Acting Chairman's statement

(a)

- The last AGM was held on 13th March 2024 – the minutes of this meeting have been posted on VSRA website since then.
- Motion passed unanimously to approve the minutes of the last AGM.

(b)

- Many members at that AGM had felt strongly about the committee's initial response to the Warwick Way development so an EGM was held on 24th April 2024 to discuss how to proceed with this issue.
- At the EGM, those in attendance pressed for a vote to be taken to withdraw the conditional support that this committee had initially expressed to Westminster City council regarding this proposal.
- The vote was overwhelmingly in favour of retracting our conditional support for the scheme and this was communicated successfully to Westminster City council after the EGM. Members were informed of this by email. As expected it had no effect on the outcome other than Richard Harden, our previous longstanding chairman at that time felt he had lost the support of the attending members and resigned the day after the EGM.
- Jack was asked to assume the temporary role of acting chairman but has decided to step down from this role and in accordance with the constitution, a new chairperson needs to be elected at this AGM.
- After the EGM, a decision was reached by the executive committee that in future the committee will continue informing members about any relevant planning applications affecting Vincent Square but would no longer offer any opinion as a residents' association body. The committee agreed it was best to leave it to individual members to submit their own comments to the council regarding planning applications which in practice carries a lot more weight than a resident's association comment.
- Motion passed unanimously to approve the above as the minutes of the EGM held on 24th April 2024.

(c)

- There continues to be a number of developments and planning applications that are progressing and will have an impact on the square – information on these have been circulated by email to all members during the past year and include: Warwick Way; Hopkinson House; Gordon Hospital; and the Traffic Order notice for Douglas Street, Osbert Street and Vincent Square. Vincent Square ward councillor Selina Short has been invited to give an update on these in the latter part of the meeting.

(d)

- Acting chairman thanks all the committee members for their help during the past year, and also the Wellington hotel for its support of the Association by hosting our AGMs and summer parties.

2. Treasurer's report

- The association accounts and balance sheet for 2024 have been reviewed and approved by the committee. They were posted on the association website for all members to see at the time email invitations were sent to members for this AGM.
- With interest rates on the rise over the past year, a decision was taken by the committee to close the association's HSBC deposit account. This was done because the association's investment income, unlike membership income, is taxable and tax returns would therefore have to be submitted annually to HMRC. Quotes were sought from two accountants for providing this service, but the cost of their fees would have exceeded the annual interest earned on the association assets. There was therefore very little point in pursuing any investment income.
- An association member asked if the committee had considered investing in UK Gilts as capital gains on these are tax exempt. This point was noted and will be considered.
- Attention was drawn to the fact that our expenses exceeded the income for 2024. This arose because Westminster School had delayed issuing the 2023 tennis court invoice, noted as a liability in the previous year's balance sheet, and this had to be paid in the 2024 accounting year alongside the 2024 tennis court invoice.
- The balance sheet for 2024 shows that the association's accumulated surplus on 31/12/24 has increased by £2,383 and now stands at £25,223.
- The only liability on the balance sheet is £660 for tennis fob deposits. This amount will fluctuate year on year but will always be present because the association holds on to fob deposits for some members at the end of the tennis season if they want to maintain priority for their applications in the following year.
- Motion passed unanimously to approve the 2024 VSRA income/expenses accounts and balance sheet.

3. Tennis Secretary's report

- Louisa reminded members of the rules for use of the courts which she has also circulated by email on 4th March 2025 to all those who are subscribed for tennis this year.
- Clarification was sought about tennis lessons. Westminster School allows the association to use their courts for pleasure and will not permit the association or its individual members to make any financial profit from it. The tennis subscription is designed to be cost neutral to the association and no tennis lessons are permitted if there is money exchanged for it. A parent teaching a child to play tennis would therefore be acceptable but not if the lesson was being conducted by a tennis coach charging a fee.
- Tennis fobs were available to be collected at the end of the AGM.

4. Election of Executive Committee members

The following committee members put themselves forward for re-election

- Jack Jerjian (as treasurer but resigning as acting chairman)
- Louisa Taylor
- Felicity Bullock
- Julia Record
- Kyle Ap Simon
- David Sizer

- Nitesh Palana

other members were asked if they wished to join the committee, and a brief description was given of the work involved – on average about 4 meetings per year either in person or on Zoom.

Proposal for the renomination of the above committee members was made by one member from the floor, seconded by another and unanimously passed.

5. Election of Chairperson

- The constitution states that the election of the chairperson can only be carried out at the AGM.
- A request was made for any nominations for this position from the attending members but none were forthcoming.
- Nitesh Palana, who joined the committee in mid 2024, was therefore proposed by Jack Jerjian, seconded by Louisa Taylor and was elected as the next Chairman of VSRA.

6. AOB

Cllr Selina Short was introduced and gave a brief update on Hopkinson House which has reached the stage now for planning consent to be sought. She and her colleagues are still pushing for the development to be allocated for community social housing rather than temporary accommodation. However, as the council is controlled by Labour, she admitted that their voice may not carry much influence. She then explained the changes that will happen with the Traffic Order notice for Douglas Street, Osbert Street and Vincent Square and also a recent application for conversion of 1 Vincent Square from commercial to residential use. She reassured members that this will not cause any additional pressure for on-street parking as the residents of that building will not be entitled to be issued with parking permits for their cars.

Following her updates, a Q&A session was held and numerous topics were discussed including personal safety around the square, risk of drug dealing being pushed out from Victoria Street and its surroundings by the use of CCTV and migrating to the square, fouling on the streets from dogs and also people under the influence of a new type of spice drug, dangerous cyclists on electric bikes failing to adhere to rules of the road. Cllr Selina urged people to report these whenever it happened using the Westminster “Report It” website (<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it>) or the Police online website (<https://www.police.uk/pu/contact-the-police/report-a-crime-incident/>) or call 111. Selina could try to follow up some of these complaints if case numbers for these complaints are shared with her. There was a feeling that however many times complaints were submitted, nothing changed although Selina said that the number of complaints received would show statistically where resources should be directed so the message is to keep reporting.