



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

January 2022

South Bank & Waterloo Neighbours
Registered Charity No. 1189832

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1.0 Foreword by the Chair

Welcome to our second annual report on SoWN's activities in the year following the formal recognition of its status as a Neighbourhood Forum by Lambeth Council in January 2020.

I am pleased to report that it has been another year in which SoWN has moved forward and made good progress. This is particularly in the areas of Planning, Development Funding and the Environment.

The South Bank and Waterloo Forum met four times during the year and covered a wide range of topics of local interest. We were able to hold the first one in person in December and we look forward to this continuing.

The pandemic has held us back in some areas and we have not been able to extend our reach and membership as much as we had planned. Although we have continued to develop good relationships with many organisations and groups, all of which bodes well for the future.

In the pages that follow, you will find reports on SoWN's activities across many fields – despite the continuing stringencies of the pandemic. Our status as a statutory consultee on planning matters in the area has involved us at an early stage in many projects. We have been successful in encouraging both developers and planners to review their proposals for the greater public good, as we continue to support proposals that protect and enhance the character of the area, the environment and the public realm. And at the same time encouraging the widest possible debate. We have continued to engage Lambeth appointed staff with specific responsibilities for the area and we liaise with them on a regular basis across a number of fields, particular on how the projects in the Neighbourhood Plan will be funded and delivered.

But there is still much to be done and if you live or work in the area, we would be delighted to hear from you. As a voluntary organisation, we rely heavily on volunteers, so any offers of help in conducting our activities are always welcome. Finally, I would like to thank those who contribute their time so generously to SoWN.

John Langley
Chair

2.0 Overview of the year

The Neighbourhood Plan for South Bank and Waterloo was produced by the efforts of over five hundred contributors from the residential and business communities from early 2013 onwards. The Plan was approved in a referendum on 24th of October 2019, at which it was approved by a 90%:10% majority.

The Steering Group agreed that SoWN should work in three broad areas

1. Review Planning Applications in light of SoWN's Policies
2. Enlist local views on Planning Applications generally on behalf of Residential and Business Communities, and to **support developments that protect and enhance the character of the area, the environment and the public realm.**
3. Co-ordinate/Consult/Represent views of Residential and Business Communities more generally on current issues

To conduct this work it was agreed to establish Working Groups in the same way as in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

The following Groups have been formed

- Governance
- Planning
- Environment and Greening
- Development Funding
- Communications and Membership
- Local History

The work of these Groups during the year follows in the subsequent sections, and the Group convenors can be found in the list of Steering Group members in Appendix 1.

3.0 Charitable status

SoWN continues to operate as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Its constitution was drawn up, based on a Charity Commission model, with the following objectives:

To further the following exclusively charitable purposes for the public benefit within the area defined by the Neighbourhood Development Plan approved in 2019 for the South Bank and Waterloo neighbourhood (“the area of benefit”):

- 1) To promote high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit.
- 2) To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history, culture and architecture of the area of benefit.
- 3) To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features or areas of historic or public interest in the area of benefit.

4.0 Building relationships

The past two years has emphasised just how important it is for SoWN to build relationships in the local community and beyond. This enhances our position and reputation in the community enabling us to represent the area and its interests as a whole and allows us to be effective albeit with our limited resources, mainly relying on volunteers. Good progress continues to be made, but this has been hampered again by Covid-19 in that many of those we want to build relationships with have had other urgent things to cope with.

4.1 Local politicians

SoWN is building relationships with our two MPs, who chair the quarterly South Bank and Waterloo Forums, and with Florence Eshalomi in particular. With such a small proportion of our area being in Southwark there has not been the same opportunity to work with Neil Coyle, but this is something we need to address going forward.

We have had more contact with the three Bishops ward Councillors this year, but still not sufficient, particularly at the South Bank and Waterloo Forum. At the local elections in May 2022 the ward is renamed Waterloo and South Bank and will have only two councillors, so it will be doubly important to work closely with them, together with those from the part of Southwark the Plan covers.

We hope to organise a hustings before the elections and support for the Neighbourhood Plan and working closely together will be important issues to raise.

4.2 Lambeth and Southwark

Relationships are being built with the London Borough of Lambeth in a number of areas.

The South Bank and Waterloo Management Group

This Group was formed last year and is jointly chaired by the Chair of SoWN. Its main work continues to be to implement the post Covid-19 Recovery Plan for Waterloo and the South Bank.

The Planning Department

Relationships have continued with regular communications and meetings covering a range of topics. It is frustrating that these communications often follow rather than precede the discussions that the planners have with developers so that the views of the community and the Neighbourhood Plan principles are not given their rightful importance.

Head of Programme Delivery – Waterloo & South Bank

Abi Lewis, a member of the Sustainable Growth & Opportunity Directorate, ~~and~~ devoted a considerable amount of time to the area. She developed a basic funding strategy for the projects in the Neighbourhood Plan which is the basis on ongoing discussion. She left Lambeth in the summer and her role has been taken over by Matthew Dibben, Assistant Director – Neighbourhood Regeneration and Partnerships who shows a similar commitment to the area.

Southwark - As SoWN covers such a small area of Southwark building relationships with the London Borough of Southwark and the Councillors in St Georges Ward has not progressed and this needs to be addressed in 2022 so this area of the community is not forgotten.

4.3 Residents Groups

Developing good relationships with Residents' Groups is seen as fundamental to SoWN representing the Community as a whole, and the Membership and Communication Group is working to address this. Covid and lack of resources has not allowed this to develop as much as was hoped, but this should improve as we have an administrator in post. The aim is still to have an active SoWN member in each group to provide a two-way communication channel.

4.4 Local Groups

SoWN has a good relationship with many of the local organisations. The programme developed by Park Plaza Hotels together with Bright Futures, Coin Street Community Builders, Oasis and St John's Waterloo to provide employment skills and experience for local young people continues, and it is still the plan to encourage this arrangement with more local business.

4.5 Business Groups - SBEG, WeAreWaterloo, South Bank BID

SoWN works closely with the three business groups, South Bank Employers Group, the South Bank BID and the WeAreWaterloo BID, through the South Bank and Waterloo Partnership and Waterloo and South Bank Management Group. It is still the intention to work up a proposal for a renewed vision and future strategy for Lower Marsh.

5.0 Communications: Newsletter and Website

During 2021 the SoWN Newsletter became an important part of Waterloo and South Bank's communications networks, produced roughly every 6 weeks. Circulated to all our members and supporters, topics covered included urgent planning issues - for example on 72 Upper Ground- news about parks and open spaces, updates on businesses – for example on Lower Marsh reopening - and information on the work of community groups such as Coin Street and St John's, Waterloo.

The website www.sowneighbours.org was kept updated with information about Neighbourhood Forums and the activities of the SoWN Working Groups.

SoWN's Twitter feed has 673 followers and is a useful means of providing local information and interaction. It needs closer attention, though, to be really effective.

We have also regularly circulated details of the South Bank and Waterloo Forum and other key events to the members and supporters of SoWN.

6.0 South Bank and Waterloo Forum

We are pleased to report that four Forums took place during the year, three by Zoom and one in person. It has been a pleasure to work with Florence Eshalomi in planning the agendas so that a wide range of subjects of general interest has been covered, as well as ensuring the Forums are less adversarial. The emphasis has been less on individual planning applications, as these are often well covered elsewhere, and included more strategic items and things that are happening in the area.

7.0 Membership and Representation

An important challenge for SoWN remains to widen the existing membership. Overall representation is already wide; SoWN members represent a large number of the residents' groups, community groups and business groups covering the area. Several thousand residents and people who work in the area, and a large number of small businesses, are represented in SoWN through people who represent associations or groups of which they are members. Residents from across the geographic area covered by SoWN are represented.

Our membership increased from 400 to over 500. This includes residents and businesses within the SoWN area. We have also designed and printed posters about SoWN's work which have been displayed locally in prominent places. However, there are still significant associations and groups that are not represented.

SoWN's diversity also needs to be improved to make it fully representative of the area's demography. We do not have information on the membership's diversity. The Steering Group and Working Groups are open to all; however, a significant proportion of those who attend are representing organisations and groups in the area, and in practice those representatives are preponderantly (though not exclusively) white, male and over 50. SoWN cannot, of course, influence who represents constituent local organisations and groups; it also is not uncommon that people who have time available to give to community activities are somewhat older. At the same time, it is important that SoWN does whatever it can to encourage and achieve a diverse membership that reflects the area.

With administrative support we will start to promote SoWN membership more widely, using community noticeboards, TRA networks and other means. Posters have been produced and TRAs will be asked where possible to promote the SoWN newsletter. So far, however, there has been no time to think about social media options, but a member of the Steering Group has offered to take this up.

8.0 Working Group activities

8.1 Governance Working Group

Following the extensive work of the Governance Group last year it had a very quiet year in 2021.

8.2 Planning Working Group

SoWN has a well-established Planning Group that meets regularly to review development proposals in the area and to contribute to wider discussions about local and National planning policy.

SoWN is now seen by developers as one of the most important local community groups to consult with on major developments, and we have been forging close working relationships with other local and national groups to ensure effective comment is provided on all the key planning applications.

We have channelled feedback to developers on the concerns of the local community during pre-app consultations during the pre-app process which has led directly to changes on their design proposals. We have also organised successful public meetings which have provided a local forum for the dissemination and discussion of complex and contentious developments.

On a number of planning applications which would have an adverse impact on the area, SoWN has submitted detailed appraisals and comments to Lambeth. These comments have contributed to the application for a completely inappropriate tall building opposite the Old Vic being refused, another application being placed on hold, while several others are still under consideration, some for quite extended periods of time.

SoWN also helped establish and co-chair the Emma Cons Gardens Steering Group (alongside WCDG and BOST) which is leading the consultation and emerging design proposals for this pivotal public space at the heart of the neighbourhood.

Key developments that we have engaged with over the last year include:

Planning Pre-Applications (ongoing)

Waterloo Estate – Bourne Capital
Royal Street Development – GSTT and Stanhope

Planning Applications (ongoing)

72 Upper Ground - ITV Building
79-87 Westminster Bridge Road - Park Plaza Hotels
30 Wootton Street – Homes for Lambeth
54 Kennington Road – Waterloo Hub Hotel
97-108 Lower Marsh – Ruby Lucy Hotel

Planning Applications (permitted)

76 Upper Ground - IBM building
Evelina Children’s Hospital extension - GSTT

Planning Applications (refused)

124-126 The Cut
121 Westminster Bridge Road – Necropolis Building

8.3 Development Funding Working Group

The Development Funding Group, whose remit is to maintain and update the SoWN Projects list and coordinate discussions with the local authorities has met a number of times in the past year. In addition, SoWN officers have met four times with Lambeth members and officers to understand how s106 funding agreed between the Council and developers and Community Infrastructure Levy collected by the Council from developers can best be applied to neighbourhood community benefit in line with the priorities set out in SoWN’s Projects List. The latest version of the list can be seen on the website. Recent changes agreed by the Steering Group have included a greater emphasis on achieving net zero in the neighbourhood, under the auspices of the Environment Group.

Discussions with Lambeth have

- led to a better understanding by the Council of SoWN’s and neighbourhood priorities

- the allocation by Lambeth of £1m of neighbourhood CIL for SoWN to use to further its project objectives.
- discussion about Lambeth's proposed Community Connections Fund, which will prioritise community-led projects in a number of Lambeth wards including the SoWN area.
- communication of SoWN's disappointment that green initiatives, including improvements to and extension of open space in the neighbourhood, have not been given sufficient priority by the Council in CIL plans or s106 negotiations.

Current and imminent activity includes

- communication between SoWN and the leaders of each of the projects to understand their status and funding needs and sources, as a basis for future work in prioritising the funds that SoWN controls or can influence.
- decisions on the approach to be taken to the spend of SoWN's £1m NCIL allocation.
- initiating discussions with Southwark on similar lines to those held with Lambeth.

8.4 Environment Working Group

The Environment Group was formed in July 2020. We want to make Waterloo and South Bank a place which is greener, more biodiverse, more welcoming to everyone and a more pleasant place for people to live and work. We have around 15 members, who are all people who are passionate about improving Waterloo and South Bank for everyone who comes here. It is chaired by Giles Goddard and the secretary is Jenny O'Neill.

Our work has four strands: **Parks and Open Spaces, Trees, Air Quality, and Planning.**

Our main focus over the year has been to identify how we can work with Lambeth on the climate emergency. We have embraced the vision of creating a carbon-neutral zone in Waterloo and South Bank by 2030, and we worked closely with Lambeth in preparing a Future Neighbourhoods bid to the GLA to help us achieve this vision. We were delighted that the Mayor has made feasibility funding available for this and look forward to developing a plan, working closely with local stakeholders.

The Parks and Open Spaces group has liaised closely, identifying the priorities for Section 106 and CIL Funding.

The Trees Group has used SoWN Newsletter/Mailing to share information

- regarding tree maintenance
- National Tree Week - including a suggested walk.

It has contributed to Planning Applications and is developing relationships with We are Waterloo and have met with the local authority Arboricultural officer. It hopes to maintain current links made with the "Spine Route" Team & develop a working relationship with GLA.

It has continued to monitor trees but also wishes to encourage individual responsibility in reporting concerns about trees in the neighbourhood. There is a need to discuss tree care issues at neighbourhood management level.

The Air Quality group, led by South Bank Employers Group, has been instrumental in developing a strategy for air quality monitoring locally, so that we have the necessary information.

The Planning group has commented where appropriate on planning applications – noting the ways in which they conform to or depart from the aims of the Neighbourhood Plan.

To get involved in the SoWN Environment Group, please contact Giles Goddard – giles@stjohnswaterloo.org

8.5 History Working Group

The Group does not currently have a working membership beyond the convenor.

A neighbourhood mapping exercise was completed in the early months of the year in terms of identifying what history records are available, where they are held and in what form. This has been shared with individuals on request.

Development of a website in terms of listing heritage links is a resource decision that will need to be made. A number of organisations carry history links and resources. SoWN can call on these resources to support responses to the heritage aspect of planning applications. Individuals can access information and SoWN has included a history piece in its regular Newsletter which is prepared in such a way it can be used for different levels of access. It is then added to the History page.

A local History Society in process of constituting itself. It is possible that the work of individuals in the group may be called on to support SoWN planning submissions and the work of other member organisations.

9.0 Finance

During the financial year 2020/21 we were registered as a charity and took control of our finances.

In the period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2021, our income, including a grant from the Lambeth Neighbourhood Forum of £5,000 and income brought forward was £18,722.58

Our expenditure, mainly on provision of the South Bank Forum was £2,609.85.

We therefore carried forward into 2021/22 the sum of £16,112.73

Full details of our income and expenditure are at Appendix 3.

We are very grateful to South Bank Employers' Group for managing our funds for us until June 2021. We have now moved our funds to be managed by St John's Church, Waterloo, while we open a new bank account in the name of SoWN.

10.0 Objectives and Targets for 2022

1. Strengthen relationships with the part of Southwark within the area of the Neighbourhood Plan at both a political and local group level.
2. Continue to engage with the local Council at a more strategic level, particularly in the areas of planning and the environment.
3. Develop a costed and funded programme to deliver the projects in the Neighbourhood Plan.
4. Encourage the business community to be more engaged with the day-to-day work of SoWN.
5. Grow the membership and interaction with local groups.

APPENDIX 1

Steering Group Membership

Steering Group represents a cross section of residents, tenants' associations, businesses, not for profit organisations, charities and other stakeholders.

Christopher Bagot	Resident	Convenor Planning Group
Michael Ball	WCDG	
Lisa Bewick	St John's Waterloo	Resigned 2021
Suat Binkaya	Park Plaza	
James Bird	Southbank Centre	Appointed 2021
David Clarson	Resident	Secretary
Teresa Collins	Resident	
Ibrahim Dogus	Local Councillor	
Nic Durston	SBEG / South Bank BID	
Paul Dyson	Resident	
Giles Goddard	St John's & St Andrew's Church	Treasurer and Convenor Environmental Group
Ken Hamilton	New Cut Housing Co-op	
Tim Hollins	Resident	Convenor Governance Group
David Hopkins	Coin Street Community Builders	
Adrian Hyrylainen-Trett	Resident	
Ted Inman	Jubilee Gardens Trust	Convenor of Development Funding Group
Issa Issa	Resident	
Michael Johnson	Nagan Johnson	
Gerald Jones	Morley College	Appointed 2021
John Langley	National Theatre	Chair
Carmelita Lee	Resident	Convenor Membership Group
Abi Lewis	London Borough of Lambeth	Resigned 2021
Alison Mara	Resident	
Joe O'Meara	Resident	Convenor Communications Group
Jenny O'Neill	Resident	Convenor History Group
Sybil Pereira	Resident	
Lucy Phipps	Network Rail	Appointed 2021
Hannah Quigley	Resident	Vice Chair
Natalie Raben	WeAreWaterloo	
Elly Rich	Resident	
Mike Sprinz	Resident	
Jenny Stiles	Waterloo Action Centre	
Steven Taylor	Network Rail	Resigned 2021
Mike Tuppen	Octavia Hill TRA	
Max Weiner	Resident	Appointed 2021
Danielle Welch	Oasis	

APPENDIX 2

Trustees

The Trustees appointed in June 2021 are

Suat Binkaya, David Clarson, Giles Goddard, Michael Johnson, John Langley, Carmelita Lee, Hannah Quigley and Max Weiner.

APPENDIX 3

Income and Expenditure Statement

Financial Period 08/06/2020 to 31/03/2021

Income

Total Income inc c/f	<hr/>
	£16,112.73

Expenses

IONOS SoWN Web Hosting	£ 52.80
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Poster printing	£ 69.00
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Job Ladder	£ 275.00
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Town Legal	£ 1,100.00
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	<hr/>
	£ 1,496.80

Net Operating Surplus c/f	<hr/>
	<u>£14,615.93</u>