



Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations

Campaigning for Housing Rights and Council Homes

*Bells Gardens Community Centre
19 Buller Close, London
SE15 6UJ*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

**Wednesday 25th September 2024
7.00 pm – 9.00 pm**

1. **Welcome & Introductions**

Chris welcomed everyone to the AGM and highlighted the agenda provided to be followed.

2. **Attendance & Apologies**

Staff: Margaret Onwuta, Amanda Carey, Ahmed Kabba, Eldezangela Gomes

In person: 17

Zoom: 8

Apologies: Colin Harrison, Brendan O'Brien, Carol Vincent

3. **Basic housekeeping by the Facilitator**

Chris explained where to find the facilities and the procedure to follow in case of fire for those in attendance in person.

4. **Business of the AGM**

- Minutes of AGM 27th September 2023

No Matters arising

Minutes agreed as a true record:

Proposed by Al-Issa Munu

Seconded by Emmanuel Ojomo

- Minutes of 24th April 2024

Matters arising:

Page 6, Item 3

(3) Residents Participation Framework

Action: Chair to investigate involving members alongside the boards sub-committee in campaigns.

Member questioned why no headway has been made in involving members outside of the board to get involved in campaigns and join the committee.

It was noted that there have not been any meetings arranged yet, and the Chair of the Campaigns sub-committee, Althea, will rectify this in the coming future.

Minutes agreed as a true record:

Proposed by Al-Issa Munu

Seconded by Kyle Simmonds

- Minutes of 24th July 2024
Matters arising:
Page 4, item 6

(6) Invitation to the upcoming AGM on 26th September 2024

Action: Invitation will be sent out for people to nominate themselves or others to run for the positions of Trustees in SGTO.

This notification was questioned, in that people cannot nominate themselves. Stephanie, the facilitator, confirmed that it is the TRA that nominates and not an individual. However, according to the Memorandum & Articles, it does not state that people are not allowed to put themselves forward. This will need to be clarified for next year.

It was pointed out by another member, that one nominating themselves is just an option, which they are more than happy with.

Minutes agreed as a true record:
Proposed by Kyle Simmonds
Seconded by Cris Claridge

Action: Memorandum & Articles needs to be amended, and AGM nomination process clarified for future requirements.

- Audited Account – presented by the Treasurer – Johnson McCaithy
Johnson spoke of the accounts being a reflection of our income and expenditure for the financial year. It was explained that the grants received, is not just funds received from the Council, but other funders and monies received for certain projects. A member pointed out the typo error made by the accountants in the form of an additional digit.

Action: Amanda to contact accountants to rectify error made on page 4.

- Adoption of the Annual Report – Chris Meregini, Chair
Chris made his presentation on the annual report, statement as follows:
We have laid out the range of programs and activities we carried out during the course of the year 23/24. We also outlined the challenges we encountered along the line. Our relationship with Southwark Council did not improve as desired rather made sudden turn down south.
You all witnessed on our July Group Meeting, the council made a shocking announcement that the services provided by SGTO was going out for public tender. To date we are yet to receive a formal notification and the formalities of that process. As a result, our operation especially our staffing has been badly impacted. Staff resignation and low staff morale has been manifesting. Be that as it may, we are still holding strong and working towards a better and brighter future for SGTO. Southwark Council has silently and systematically been undermining the existence of SGTO using our funding as a base. In the last couple of years, we have been in a state of stagnation as a result. Every appeal we have made to the council to scale up our funding to enable us upgrade our services have fallen on deaf ears. The announcement on the 24th July 2024 Group Meeting, was the last straw. The Board of Trustees have since embarked on extensive fund-raising campaign seeking for other sources of funding to sustain the life of SGTO. We have intensified

this effort and engaged with some funders who are willing to fund our projects based on crowd funding pathways. In the past two to three weeks most of you have been receiving our invitation for crowdfunding appeal.

We are embarking on this transition and you can rest assured we shall see the light of day. Therefore, we are appealing to our membership to reach out and support our funding campaign more now than ever before. You have always been our life line and as always, we are stronger when we work together.

In conclusion, I will end with this. It has always been my honour to serve you. And a humble privilege I do not take lightly

May I now ask for persons that have received this Annual Report to propose for the adoption of this report.

Once again, I say thank you and I salute you all. God Bless.

Adoption of Annual Report
Proposed by Emmanuel Ojomo
Seconded by Al-Issa Munu

A member thanked the SGTO staff for everything they do and their patience and went on to say how disappointed they were that no Council Staff or Councillors were in attendance. It was mentioned that they may not be willing to attend, if they feel that they are going to greet angry people and would be more inclined if they felt they would be treated respectfully. Emotions can run high, but we all must remain calm and address situations in a professional manner, this will help us get results.

It was said that at the last Scrutiny Meeting, the Director of Housing announced that he doesn't really care about how many TRAs' there are in the Borough, so it is time that we stand up and take action. It was noted that there was a time when an AGM could not be carried out without a Council Official present, so the Council should be here and hearing what we have to say. We are all angry and hurt and need to come up with a strategy before it is too late, as the Council appear to be on the side of SGTO, but we know they are not. The fact that no Council staff or Councillors are present, would give the impression that they've written us off, which we cannot allow to happen.

A demand was made that a letter from The Board of Trustees of SGTO be circulated to each Councillor for them to explain why they are not present at this AGM, because they are representatives of our community and voted in to perform on tenants behalf. It was pointed out that SGTO needs to take ownership also in how we increase attendance at meetings, as the numbers at the meeting today are minimal in comparison to the number of active TRAs'. Why are people not attending and how do we resolve this?

Juliette Taylor asked that it be minuted that she was in attendance in her capacity as Tenant and Homeowner Involvement Team Leader for Southwark Council.

Action: Each Board of Trustee to send letter to each Councillor for them to explain why they are not in attendance

Vice-Chair, Althea, read out a proposal for the email to send to Councillors.

- Adoption of Auditors – Kleinman Graham
Proposed by Emmanuel Ojomo
Seconded by Kyle Simmonds

- Election of Trustees to the Board

Stephanie explained the election process, where all board step down, and the election from the proposed nominees would then take place. It was noted that there have been nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair and the current board have been proposed. The recommendation was that the nominations for Board Members be accepted in their entirety, which was agreed.

The Chair and Vice-Chair positions were then agreed to be elected by a show of hands. It was noted that the Memorandum & Articles should be looked at to include a length of time that someone can stand in either position. It was suggested that could be a 2-to-3-year period, but that will be discussed by the new appointed trustees and amended if they feel necessary.

The Treasurer position was then agreed by a show of hands.

It was highlighted that there is no voting process for the position in the Memorandum & Articles, therefore, you could either continue and vote at the AGM, or it could be decided by the new Trustees which board member would hold the Treasurers role when they first meet.

Following completion of the election process, Stephanie handed the floor back to the new Chair, Chris Meregini, who thanked Stephanie for facilitating, everyone for coming, all for participating and allowing the board the opportunity to continue to serve the community.

Action: New board to decide whether they wish to put a timescale on how long the Chair or Vice-Chair can hold the positions for and adopt in the Memorandum & Articles if necessary.

Also, to add voting process to Memorandum & Articles for the position of Treasurer. Whether that be a vote at the AGM, a decision to be made by the new board or leave as it is so it is open to either way.

5. Election Results

Board of Trustees to SGTO for 2024-2025:

Chair	– Chris Meregini
Vice-Chair	– Althea Smith
Treasurer	- Johnson McCathy
Board Members	– Kyle Simmonds
	- Christina Metibemu
	- Mohamed Dris
	- Emmanuel Ojomo
	- Saidat Oketunde
	- Al-Issa Munu
	- Jacqui Gilmartin

6. **Any Other Business**

Chris invited Cris Claridge to speak of the last Scrutiny Meeting.

Cris reported that she had attended the Scrutiny Commission Meeting where a report entitled The Role of TRAs and TMOs in Wards was considered.

Cris went on to say that thanks to the SGTO circulating this report, (which she had only received 7 days before the meeting), to the membership, quite a few TRA reps had attended the meeting as observers. This was noted by the Scrutiny Commission chair. Ina, the Homeowners rep and Cris argued that the report was not a true reflection of the situation that TRAs find themselves in. The Commission agreed that the November Scrutiny would revisit the subject, and the Restructuring of the Resident Engagement Report would be presented by Nat Stevens for discussion. It was further agreed that a panel of TRA representatives would be invited to speak.

It was agreed that this should be an agenda item at the October Group meeting.

Chris acknowledged that the board will discuss this and compose a plan to take to the meeting.

It was suggested that SGTO request their own time slot and that TRAs' request theirs, as you only get one opportunity to speak for a certain length of time and this way, both areas get the chance to speak.

Gratitude was offered to everyone for all the contributions which can be combined and taken to the meeting in November.

Special thanks was given to Stephenie for facilitating and a warm thank you to all those who attended in person and online.

Action: Scrutiny committee to be an agenda item for October Group Meeting.

DATE OF NEXT GROUP MEETING: 23RD OCTOBER 2024

Actions:

Item (4) 27th July Minutes

Action: Memorandum & Articles needs to be amended, and AGM nomination process clarified for future requirements.

Item (4) Audited Accounts

Action: Amanda to contact accountants to rectify error made on page 4.

Item (4) Adoption of Annual Report

Action: Each Board of Trustee to send letter to each Councillor for them to explain why they are not in attendance

Vice-Chair, Althea, read out a proposal for the email to send to Councillors that she had composed.

Item (4) Election of Trustees

Action: New board to decide whether they wish to put a timescale on how long the Chair or Vice-Chair can hold the positions for and adopt in the Memorandum & Articles if necessary.

Also, to add voting process to Memorandum & Articles for the position of Treasurer. Whether that be a vote at the AGM, a decision to be made by the new board or leave as it is so it is open to either way.

Item (6) Any Other Business

Action: Scrutiny committee to be an agenda item for October Group Meeting.