

**Spitalfields Community Group
Minutes of Members' Meeting
28 March 7pm; The English Restaurant**

1) Both new and existing members were welcomed to the SCG by the Chair and, as it was the first meeting of 2012 members were invited to stay for a drink afterwards. New members were reminded to collect the SCG discount cards afterwards. **Abigail Pogson, Executive Director of Spitalfields Music** and **Sarah Davies, Chief Executive, Futureversity** were the evening's speakers.

2) Abigail Pogson and colleague **Clare** announced the **Midsummer Event** to be held in Spitalfields on 23 June as part of the wider **Summer Festival (8-23 June)** and **Celebrate the City, 21-24 June** (organised by the City of London).

The **Midsummer Event** celebrates Spitalfields as the chosen 'neighbourhood borough' outside of the City. The festivities will centre on a main stage with plenty of activities for families and people of all ages. Music will include the Gabrielli Consort & Players at Christ Church Spitalfields which will be broadcast live on Radio 3. A new piece *Fire* by David Bruce with horns, 200 singers and fire artists will round off the day's events in Bishop's Square. **Stalls on the day:** SCG to be one of the main groups having ten stalls.

SCG will email members re donations to help support this ambitious Midsummer Event.

Other events: The Water Poet (pub in Folgate Street) to hold film screenings; a young people's 'Aspire' project based in Toynbee Hall will head a procession to demonstrate what a fantastic place Spitalfields is, culminating in Maypole dancing, an urban ceilidh .

3) Sarah Davies, Chief Executive of **Futureversity** charity (formerly Tower Hamlets Summer University), based in Fournier Street, spoke about the history of the charity founded by Lord Young to overcome youth crime in Tower Hamlets, and its current functions. Rushanara Ali (now MP for Bethnal Green and Bow), was one of Lord Young's first assistants.

Futureversity now runs a wide range of courses for young people (11-25 year olds) with clear learning objectives and also brings out a youth magazine with a global readership.

How SCG can help: Ms Davies invited members to offer to run courses for Futureversity in Summer e.g. fashion designing, cooking, flower arranging - all ideas welcome.

Futureversity's Job Ready programme needs businesses etc to offer volunteering opportunities to its young people.

Three SCG members have already offered their help with one-to - one CV advice and interview rehearsals. Please contact SCG if you have a few hours spare to help young people secure a job.

Sarah Davies is organising a fund-raising dinner at the Savoy on 17 May - contact sarah.davies@futureversity.org

4) Selina Mifsud, head of the Environment Group, referred to the closure of Public Life achieved through joint working with the police and community.

Off Licences: The stated objective of getting a saturation policy in place in Spitalfields remains but until then the focus is to curb late-night hours.

The **Truman** restaurant applications have been turned down and currently negotiating with organisers of an Olympic event to encourage them to provide security for crowd dispersal.

Two forthcoming hearings on 10 April - to stop Brick Lane Bar opening until 3.30am, and S&M extended opening hours. The former hearing is at 10am and the latter at 2pm, SCG would be very grateful if members could attend these meetings.

The public meeting with Rushanara Ali meeting and Councillors from City Hall took place on 1st March who added their support and will be lobbying the Council to adopt a saturation policy. SCG will be prioritising the problems caused by licensing hours and welcome more involvement.

Sub teams of members are welcome to work on individual campaigns such as objections to applications or issues e.g. more public lavatories. Procedures need to be followed relating to liaison with core group : copy in on email communication; hold regular meetings to provide updates; agree copy used in public communication e.g. petitions, press communications etc. This all seeks to protect and promote the SCG brand when working in our name.

5) Dan Cruikshank reported on the proposed developments to the **Fruit & Wool Exchange**. He referred to the planning meeting on 6 March and the crude, vicious, brutal and profit-oriented proposals on offer – eradicating Dorset Street in its entirety, with a mixture of mainly offices and some commercial property. The Council found in favour of the objections and chastised the architects for trying to orchestrate support in their favour. After giving evidence, the scheme was rejected.

SCG plans are to increase local employment, retain Dorset Street and enhance the area with a rich mix of buildings, harmonising with the architecture of Christ Church Spitalfields.

6) Matt Piper, head of the Community Group, updated members on the Community Programme to encourage socialising and volunteering.

The **Midsummer Event** will have ten stalls. The police will have one stall and will carry out security markings and the Spitalfields Medical Practise in Old Montague Street, have said they will participate.

Volunteers needed to set up the stalls, sell and generally help out - also to donate bric-a-brac which will raise money for a local charity. Do contact spitalfieldscommunitygroup@gmail.com

If members are at a loose end at 11am for an hour on 13th May - the date of the next coffee session at the English Restaurant in Brushfields Street. Do bring along any new residents who have moved into Spitalfields.

SCG is currently talking to **Spitalfields City Farm** regarding turning some of their land into a garden - called Spiral Garden - so green -fingered residents take note - a request for volunteers will be issued in due course.

Photos from the recent **Litter Pick** on the Chicksand Estate are on the SCG website and the next Litter Pick will appear on the website . A good opportunity to meet the wider community.

Three members are volunteering at **Christ Church Primary School** on the reading programme.

Young Spitz meet at **Spitalfields City Farm** every Wednesday at 10am.

Steering Group Member, Peter Boisseau is organising a **bridge course** for beginners which starts upstairs at the English Restaurant on 10 April. Please sign up if interested.

7) Deputy Chair, **Jon Shapiro**, responsible for Public Affairs spoke about:

i) The **forthcoming local Council elections** to replace one councillor. In conjunction with Spitalfields Trust, SCG will be arranging Hustings on 12th April in the Crypt of Christ Church Spitalfields at 7.30 to 9.30pm.

ii) **The SCG AGM** is to be held on 4 July at 7pm at the Water Poet, kindly offered by corporate member, The Water Poet in Folgate Street, which will include elections to the SCG Committee.

SCG members are therefore invited to nominate either themselves or others.

Rushanara Ali, MP for Bethnal Green & Bow, has invited SCG members to meet her at the House of Commons at 5pm on 13 June. Members to email reservations to spitalfieldscommunitygroup@gmail.com. This is a chance to bring young people to see and hear what goes on at Westminster.

8) David Gadd, Membership Secretary and Treasurer reported that SCG now has 128 paid up members with others currently being finalised. There has been an outstanding response from local retailers – with many more being progressed. New discount opportunities will appear on the website and also emailed when appropriate.

Kathy Boyle was thanked for developing the **SCG website**. Members were asked to contribute to the 'Did you Know' section to share their knowledge of the area.

9) Peter Boisseau spoke about the disruptive effects of **filming** to residents and reported that he is liaising with Tower Hamlets regarding any new filming being carried out.

Action: Should anyone get a letter regarding forthcoming filming to pass on the details to peter@spitalfieldscommunitygroup.org

Questions from floor:

A member asked for more involvement with SCG members in regard to local problems such as drinking and urination in Woodseer St and also for lobbying for more public toilets in Brick Lane.

It was noted that this issue has been taken up by the Green Party as part of their campaign.

Despite interest from Whitechapel residents to join SCG, their specific concerns would not fall under the SCG remit.

Charlie de Wet (acting chair) concluded the meetign by thanking **Kay and Peter Sinden** for use of their premises (the English Restaurant) and thanked the Steering Group and speakers for generously giving so much time and commitment to the group to improve the quality of life in our community.

The meeting ended promptly at 8pm