



Chair's Report AGM Oct 2023

Welcome all and thanks for coming to our AGM. First, I would like to thank the whole team - Charlotte, Bronwen, Alison, Linda & Pete - who work so tirelessly to serve the 500 or so businesses locally. Without them we could not have achieved all that I am going to speak about.

The last year has been a busy one! We have delivered on four externally funded projects worth a total of £240,000 and changed our working relationship with Lambeth who are now our subsidised recycled waste provider. We have also just launched our new digital town app, ChooSE27 (more anon!)

The Mayor's *High Streets for All Challenge fund* helped us find what workspace was needed locally, ways to promote the area as a great place to work and gave us capital funding to help 6 local businesses improve their workspace offer. Another Mayor's fund, the *Business Climate Challenge*, gave 19 businesses access to environmental audits of their buildings and supported them to lower their energy costs and their impact on the planet.

Funding from *Impact on Urban Health* helped us deliver our Happier Healthier Workplaces programme of interventions that you will hear more about from Marilena this evening. We also finally got our shared electric delivery van, which is subsidised for its first year thanks to *Economic Resilience* funding we got from Lambeth in the pandemic. It already has about 20 users signed up and we regularly see it driving about the area!

For a BID we have an unusual 'Venn diagram' of businesses - a traditional high street, a business centre with 150 companies and Lambeth's largest industrial estate. All have different needs and issues for our small team to provide services to - some of which help everyone, and some of which are sector tailored.

First - the help alls!

We have re-jigged how we run our board meetings. We now have a Steering Committee who will meet every couple of months around certain themes i.e., parking, recycling and waste collection services and making the area feel safer and cleaner. This will also provide a space for businesses to bring their issues and opportunities to us so we can better serve you all. The Directors meet quarterly to discuss finance, governance, and the general running of the BID.

Our Local Jobs board is still a fantastic asset and now being copied by other BIDs! Since it was launched in Feb 2022, we have had nearly 38,000 unique visitors to the page and over 500 job applications through it.

We also recognise how important a clean, green, and safe public realm is to all our businesses. Since switching over from First Mile to Lambeth Gold we have seen far better environmental services locally, with the street cleaning, fly tipping and graffiti all being dealt with very efficiently through a WhatsApp group. Although the commercial waste contract has not been without its issues (many thanks to all of you who have provided feedback!) we are working with Lambeth towards the extension of the Timed Collection Zone into Tulse Hill and Norwood High Street. This will remove unsightly wheelie bins and the fly tipping associated with



them and ensure a twice daily rubbish collection to keep the whole of the Station-to-Station high street cleaner and litter free.

We have also just launched ChooSE27, our digital town app for everything local, which we believe will be a much better way for businesses to market themselves. Local community organisations will also have space to promote their events and the app also provides news, weather, and travel information to its users. Marcus, the CEO of Loqiva, the company who makes these apps, also a local resident, is here to tell you a bit more later.

Now for our more tailored offers

High Street - last year we launched our Shoplifting Prevention Scheme which so far has seen numerous banning orders, a Criminal Behaviour Order served, and one individual sent to prison. It has also given us an excellent working relationship with our 7 chain stores and forged better links with crime prevention organisations.

We continue to work with our off licences and the licensing and outreach teams at Lambeth to stop the sale of high strength low-cost alcohol locally.

We also ran a series of successful events - Halloween and a Christmas market last year and this one coming, as well as the first ChooSE27 festival this year, all of which brought footfall and spend to the high street.

Parkhall - we are helping companies here with their business rates issues, landlord negotiations, networking opportunities and the Controlled Parking Zone coming to the area locally.

With the help of a board member, Mel, we are campaigning for the area to be considered by the council as a 'manufacturing zone' and for affordable business parking permits to be set aside for companies whose use of a vehicle is integral to their business.

Parkhall tenants also make up most of the users of the shared delivery van, and those who trade online will soon be able to access more affordable solutions via the ChooSE27 app.

Norwood Works - we have been working with Karma Kitchens who are opening a 'dark kitchen' to provide much needed cooking space for many catering businesses locally. There is concern from residents who live on the industrial estate as to the smell and traffic but for Station to Station and Norwood Action Group, these concerns have been allayed by the company's social and environmental ethics and a willingness to engage and communicate.

We are working with Lambeth Enforcement to stop office buildings being illegally rented as housing on Chapel Road and continue to engage with companies & the council to find a good fit locally for the empty plots there, as well as putting those who are looking for workspace via our ChooSE27 workspace finder with landlords who have empty properties locally.

And we have more Norwood Works murals on the much-graffitied shutters of Travis Perkins - no more graffiti since they were painted - and have extended the annual rental for the Norwood Works lamppost banners.

The latest footfall and spend data continue to show the area as resilient and inviting, with many new businesses deciding to 'Choose SE27' and take on premises locally. For the rest of our second term, our priorities remain the same; to ensure that all those who wish to remain part of our unique community are assisted to do the best business they can in a safe and clean environment and with the good working conditions they deserve. This support is especially important in the current 'cost of doing business crisis'.



Thank you very much for your support during the last year and we look forward to making our little London village an even better place to do business and live together in peace.