

Is there a problem that the RGS must solve? No

Is the name change necessary? No

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Will you and the membership benefit? No

Will it cost the Society? Yes

Is the change divisive? Yes

Preamble:

The membership of the RGS must understand the proposal to change the society's name is a vanity project. **There is no legal or other need for change.** Your vote must be given on that basis.

Terms of Reference:

I am a long-standing member of the RGS and a past Committee member and Chairman. I am opposed to the proposal of incorporating Putney into the name of the Society. On that basis, I was nominated by the RGS to oppose the motion at the EGM. In accordance with RGS Committee defined rules I am setting out the views of the opposition.

Introduction

What problem is the Committee trying to solve? There is none. The Roehampton Garden Society, or RGS, is a long established 'brand', well known in the local community: a respected and honourable amenity society that supports gardeners and allotmenters across the entire Borough of Wandsworth.

The RGS was formed from an amalgamation between two Roehampton GARDEN societies. Allotments only entered the RGS equation in the 1970s when tenancy of the plots was opened up to all Wandsworth residents, having previously been worked exclusively by the residents of the Dover House Estate. Thus the RGS was formed to allow collaboration between the affluent gardening residents of south Roehampton and the residents of the new estate (built in the 1920s as Homes for Heroes) at the north end of Roehampton, all of whom had gardens and many of whom worked the allotments integral to the estate. A strong and important historical thread.

The geographic argument for including Putney in the name is spurious. The Dover House Estate was built on land that, according to the Wandsworth Historical Society, was, from the 1600s, a Roehampton hunting park. Roehampton was and is a village located within the ancient Parish of Putney. This Parish includes Wimbledon Parkside, large swathes of Wimbledon Common and Kingston Vale.

There are many 'Putneys'. The current voting boundaries put the allotments in West Putney Ward; however, these are politically drawn and change frequently. But local residents speak of East and West Putney, Putney Heath and Common. There is only one Roehampton. And it is fair to say that the history and founding principles of the RGS trump any geographical considerations, fluctuating or otherwise.

So, does the Society need this change?

No

What is the benefit?

None

Will it cost?

Yes

- Foremost, any change is divisive without 100% support. Clearly this is absent.
- The loss of a century of history. All the cups and memorabilia pertain to the origins of the RGS and their relevance will become increasingly obscure
- Significant administrative adjustments not just within the Society but also amongst those with which and whom the Society interacts e.g. Wandsworth Borough Council, Banks and many more
- An excuse for Wandsworth Council to delay further the lease needed by the Society to secure its (and the allotments) legal future with the Council
- Confusion and the attendant risk of the Society ending up with three names

Please use your vote. Vote NO. Thank you