

Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association
Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 7th July 2009
at Fellowship House at 8.00pm

Present: Janet Elliott, in the Chair

Simon Abbott, John Boulter, Carol Boulter, Tony Brand, Alan Brudney, Charles Gale, Terry Brooks, Bridget Cox, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council), Colin Gregory, David Lewis, David Littaur, Richard Kemp, Tony McGuire, Steve Morris, Selwyn Nakan, Judith Samson, Gary Shaw, Ian Tutton and Richard Wiseman

Visitors: Elizabeth Byrne, Pia Duran, Derek Epstein, Tony Ghilchik, Joyce Littaur, Léonie Stephen

Council sent their best wishes to Richard Wakefield for a speedy recovery from his operation

1	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Peter Beesley, Douglas Blausten, Dave Brown, Nicole Gerber, Eva Jacobs, Rosalind Josephs, Max Petersen, Will Sowerbutts, Alan Walker and Richard Wakefield</p>	
2	<p><u>Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – 2nd June 2009</u></p>	
3	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda</u></p> <p><u>Min. 4 Finance - HGS Horticultural Society</u></p> <p>A letter of thanks for the RA contribution to the new flower bed had been received from the Chairman of the Horticultural Society. The official opening will take place outside Fellowship House at 12 noon on 18th July when it is hoped that the engraved plaque (for which the wording has been agreed) will be in place. Council members are invited to attend.</p> <p><u>Min.6 – Procedure Issues - Specific E-Mail User Group</u></p> <p>Steve Morris spoke to Council and explained his proposals. He would like to set up a mini HGS Discussion Group for Council members only. It would be a closed group and would enable information to be sent to Council members and be a means of communicating easily and quickly. There would be no cost to the RA and it would be easy for him to set up. Council members would be able to opt out if they wished.</p> <p>Alan Brudney said that would enable Council members to communicate between meetings. However, Gary Shaw was concerned at the amount of e-mails and information he might receive.</p>	

	<p>Bridget Cox suggested a pilot study which Simon Abbott supported. Richard Kemp considered such schemes could work well in a work environment but he did not think it appropriate for an organisation such as the RA which was fully dependent on volunteers.</p> <p>Carol Boulter pointed out that if there is a pilot study it is very quiet in August and this would not be indicative of what would happen at other times during the year. Some Council members do not look at their e-mails every day and it could become burdensome. There is already a list of Council members in use which could continue to be used to pass on essential information.</p> <p>Simon Abbott proposed a motion, seconded by Richard Wiseman. 'that Steve Morris be asked to set up a pilot trial for an e-mail user group for RA Council members until the end of December 2009. This was passed by 13 votes in favour, 3 against and 7 abstentions</p> <p><u>Min. 8 - Conversion of RA to a Company Limited by Guarantee</u></p> <p>Janet Elliott reported that a meeting on 14 July had been set up with Peter Beesley. Colin Gregory had agreed to attend with her.</p> <p><u>Min.9 Consam/Roads & Traffic - Supermarket Display in Market Place</u></p> <p>As requested by Council, Janet Elliott had written again to Brian Coleman, this time with a copy to Rudi Vis MP. She had not received a reply from Brian Coleman but the office of Rudi Vis had sent an acknowledgement saying that 'action is being taken on this matter and we will get back to you as soon as possible'.</p>	
4	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <p><u>Expenditure agreed by EC and not previously reported to Council</u></p> <p>There was none</p> <p><u>Outline Budget for 2009.</u></p> <p>Selwyn Nakan introduced the outline budget for 2009 which he had previously circulated. It had been produced with the help of John Boulter and others. He particularly drew the Council's attention to the deficit of £4,300 on income over expenditure which together with the budgeted committee expenditure, not included in the income and expenditure section, resulted in a budgeted deficit of £15,000.</p> <p>Terry Brooks pointed out that some of the budgeted items could legitimately be taken from the Centenary Fund where John Boulter said that there was approximately £24,000. Colin Gregory said that if we identify the exceptional items the deficit is not so alarming and there are different ways of presenting figures.</p>	

	<p>Carol Boulter thought that it was difficult for organisations such as the RA to budget for extraordinary items that emerge during the year. Simon Abbott said that he considered the budget very helpful and that many voluntary organisations have budgets including estimates for extraordinary expenditure.</p> <p>Janet Elliott thanked Selwyn Nakan for all the work he had done. The budget will be updated during the year and she hoped that from this an effective process for the presentation of RA budgets would emerge.</p>	
5	<p><u>Question Time</u></p> <p><u>Pavements</u></p> <p>Lêonie Stephen asked the Council if they would consider an approach to Barnet Council about the increasing replacement of paving stones by black bitumen. This had happened recently outside her house in Willifield Way. Derek Epstein agreed to look into this and into the pathway between Willifield Way and Central Square where the York stone had been stolen on two occasions and tarmac has now been laid. Colin Gregory suggested that there may be some reference to this in the document 'Greening the Suburb'.</p> <p><u>Parkview Café</u></p> <p>Pia Duran asked whether the RA Council shared her concern that Parkview Café had obtained permission for decking but this is now in disrepair and the café has not been opened for some time.</p> <p>Derek Epstein will also look in to this.</p>	<p>DE</p> <p>DE</p> <p>DE</p>
7	<p><u>Graduated Management Charge</u></p> <p>Janet Elliott had circulated a copy of the proposed letter to be sent out in August with the HGS Trust's demand for the management charge. She asked Council whether they agreed to the contents of the letter which would be sent out together with the extract from the Trust Gazette of August 2006</p> <p>All Council members had received a letter from Douglas Blausten setting out his objections both to a graduated management charge and to the conduct of a poll on the issue. However, the Council had agreed to take action on this at its May meeting following detailed debate at this and other meetings earlier in the year. Separately the question of whether the proposed letter should include a date by which the form should be returned had been raised.</p> <p>Carol Boulter asked whether there would be an opportunity to discuss the points made by Douglas Blausten. In response, Derek Epstein stated that the points made in Douglas Blausten's letter- that the proposal would be costly, that it will not succeed and that it</p>	

<p>would not be fairer than the present flat rate system, would be decided by residents. He did not consider that it was the RA's role to carry out detailed comparisons but it is the RA's role to seek residents' views. Whether the present draft letter was biased, as DB argued, was for the Council to decide.</p> <p>Steve Morris thought the letter was too complicated. Carol Boulter thought that Douglas Blausten had made a good point that some retired people live in big houses on small incomes and some small cottages are let by developers who charge large rents. Simon Abbot said that now it is the poor who are subsidising the rich. If one of the large houses were to be pulled down four small houses could be built in its place and the Trust would receive four times the income. Tony Brand referred Council to Henrietta Barnett's original concept for the Suburb.</p> <p>Colin Gregory said that Council had made their decision but Carol's point should not be ignored. He would have liked a shorter letter written from the RA's perspective, explaining why the RA supports the proposed scheme. The draft letter is confusing as it does not explain the connection between approving the scheme and putting residents' names forward to the LVT.</p> <p>David Littaur asked whether there was a mechanism in place to help residents who could not afford to pay the management charge. Pia Duran confirmed this was the case.</p> <p>Ian Tutton described the exchanges as 'elegant filibustering', adding that this has been discussed on many occasions and we should now make a decision and proceed.</p> <p>Janet Elliott summed up the discussion by drawing the Council's attention to the fact that in agreeing to this draft they would be implementing their own earlier decisions, in particular to ask residents whether they supported change or no change. The Trust had agreed to the request from the RA Council that a copy of the RA letter be sent out in August with the Trust's own demand for the annual management charge. The letter before the Council had been drafted by Richard Wakefield and reworked by the Executive Committee before being sent to the Trust for agreement.</p> <p>Although the RA Council had itself expressed its support for a change to a graduated charge, it needed to know the views of residents themselves. This is what the letter seeks to find out. The RA was not committing itself by this poll to being the person/organisation initiating an approach to the Land Valuation Tribunal.</p> <p>Terry Brooks suggested that for clarity the three questions on the form be combined into two by amending them along the following lines;</p>	
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	<p>Question 1: I/we support a move to a variable management charge based on Council tax bands and wish my/our signature to be used in support of an application to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal to change the basis on which the management charge is made; and</p> <p>Question 2: I/we do not support a move to a variable management charge based on Council tax bands and do not wish my/our signature to be used in any approach to the LVT.</p> <p>Finally, that the boxes be removed in respect of the declaration of status as 'freeholder/indirect freeholder or leaseholder' and respondents be asked to delete as appropriate.</p> <p>Colin Gregory proposed a Motion, seconded by Terry Brooks, that the letter circulated to the Council and the Trust be approved by the RA Council as amended by Terry Brooks' proposal and that it should be included with the demand for the Trust's Management Charge and be inserted in the next edition of Suburb News, together with the reprinted extract from the Trust Gazette.</p> <p>This was passed by 11 votes in favour with 9 abstentions</p> <p>In conclusion Janet Elliott said that she had been advised not to insert a closing date for completion of the form. A date might encourage early replies but removed the opportunity for those who wished to canvass householders who were slow in responding.</p> <p>Richard Wakefield had written to say that some Suburb News deliverers wished to canvass for the banded management charge. Council agreed that it is up to individuals to decide if they wished to canvass for or against the change. But the Council would not be formally taking part except in encouraging residents to express their views by voting.</p> <p>The RA Council's position is that they have taken a view to support the banded management charge but will not take any further action until they have ascertained the views of residents.</p>	
7.	<p><u>LB Barnet Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals</u></p> <p>A paper had been circulated to Council which had been prepared by Tony McGuire and Derek Epstein.</p> <p>It is a statutory obligation that the Suburb Character Appraisal adopted by LB Barnet must be accompanied by a set of management proposals. LB Barnet had asked the Trust to prepare this and the Trust is discussing with LB Barnet what form the proposals should take. The draft proposals together with the character appraisal will be put out to public consultation in September and the RA must therefore make any representations before the next Council meeting.</p>	

	<p>The paper set out the recommendations from the Mill Hill Area Management proposals which were published in April 2008 and which have also been used by other conservation areas.</p> <p>Tony McGuire said that LB Barnet should be pressed to devote appropriate resources to planning the long term future of the Suburb and to produce a master plan. He thought that in actions taken by Barnet to date, there has been an over-emphasis on design. The Suburb also has a social agenda and plans for its future need to be presented in a social context. This is really the job of a town planner rather than an architect and he considered that the Trust is not the right organisation to undertake both parts of the exercise.</p> <p>Derek Epstein said that the RA should not do anything which prevents the design guidelines from being adopted. Barnet should be encouraged to commission an in depth study for the future of the Suburb over the next 100 years and perhaps update the Shankland Cox report of 1971. Colin Gregory agreed that it would be a good idea if that Report could be revisited.</p> <p>Simon Abbott said that the RA concentrates too much on planning and we should be more pro-active and forward looking. The Dame Henrietta Barnett fund would be happy to prepare a leaflet looking both backwards and forward to the future if Council would find it helpful.</p> <p>Derek Epstein said that he had wanted Council's endorsement that more should be done.</p> <p>Janet Elliott said that if Council wished there could be a meeting in the Autumn devoted to this and to discuss the various ideas that have emerged.</p> <p>Colin Gregory suggested that Derek Epstein speak to Jane Blackburn and that she asks LB Barnet to seek professional advice on a broader basis.</p> <p>Tony McGuire agreed to provide information on other conservation areas where the broader approach had been successfully pursued, and to prepare a draft letter which will be sent to LB Barnet</p>	<p>DE</p> <p>TM</p>
8	<p><u>Henrietta Barnett School</u></p> <p><u>Bricks and Display Panel</u></p> <p>Both the Trust and LB Barnet were asked to select two panels to enable competitive estimates to be obtained. The Trust preferred panel 1 or 3 and LB Barnet preferred panel 1 or 2.</p> <p><u>Report on Site Operation</u></p> <p>Ian Tutton pointed out that the builders were working regularly on Saturdays although this was only supposed to happen if it was necessary to recover lost time. He will try to ascertain the position.</p>	IT

9	<p><u>Oral Reports from RA Committees</u></p> <p><u>Roads and Traffic Committee</u></p> <p>Gary Shaw reported that LB Barnet have distributed a questionnaire to residents in Temple Fortune Hill, Asmunds Hill and parts of Hampstead Way and Meadway asking for their views about traffic. This he saw as a gesture to residents who would like to see the CPZ extended. He considered that the questionnaire is divisive and does not take into account the views of residents who live outside this limited area. If there is no provision for parking for shopkeepers and shoppers there is a danger that the Temple Fortune shopping parade will go into decline.</p> <p>Alan Brudney said that the shopkeepers should be encouraged to get together and canvass LB Barnet but he did not know of one prepared to take the initiative. When the Temple Fortune CPZ was first proposed this role had been carried out by Michael Cohen, who is now unwell.</p> <p>Gary Shaw said that the RA should reiterate the RA's concerns and perhaps circulate the shopkeepers and ask them to make representations. He proposed that a letter should be written to LB Barnet repeating the RA's concerns about the possible expansion of the CPZ. This was passed by 14 votes in favour with 6 abstentions.</p> <p>A further Motion was proposed by Gary Shaw asking the Roads and Traffic Committee to prepare a leaflet alerting the shops to the implications of any expansion of the CPZ and asking them to make representations to LB Barnet.</p> <p>This was passed by 16 votes in favour with 6 abstentions</p> <p>Richard Wiseman suggested that the blocks of flats should also be alerted and David Littaur said he hoped that personal dialogue with LB Barnet would be encouraged.</p> <p><u>Events Committee</u></p> <p>David Littaur asked Council to make the sum of £3050 available for fireworks on New Year's Eve, to cover the cost of drinks, fireworks, contributions to St Jude's Church and the St John's Ambulance.</p> <p>In reply to a question David Littaur said that between £450 and £800 had been donated by residents to the costs of these events in previous years.</p> <p>John Boulter said that the RA has been providing fireworks for the last ten years and the RA was in a position to afford it this year.</p> <p>The Council confirmed the expenditure and that they were in favour of the fireworks, with a show of hands.</p>	<p>GS</p> <p>GS</p>

	<p><u>Membership</u></p> <p>Steve Morris asked the Council to make the sum of £2500 available to fund final reminders for subscriptions to be sent out in September and October. In the past the return has more than covered the costs of these mail shots. Council agreed to this.</p>	
11	<p><u>Executive Committee</u></p> <p>The Council received the draft minutes of the Meeting of June 10. Simon Abbott said that there seemed to be a belief that charities are unable to campaign. He wished to repeat his view that they can campaign on political issues but must not take a specifically party political stance.</p>	
12	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p><u>Suburb Gallery volunteers needed</u></p> <p>Richard Wakefield urgently needs more volunteers for the Suburb Gallery. Council members were encouraged to consult their friends and anyone who may be interested should contact Gerlinde Crossley.</p> <p><u>Open House Scheme -19/20 September</u></p> <p>Ian Tutton informed Council that LB Barnet are the only local authority in Greater London not to participate in the Open House Scheme this year. They have said that this will save them £3500. The Churches require publicity to enable them to open and the Council agreed that Ian Tutton should draft a letter for Janet Elliott to sign on behalf of the RA asking LB Barnet to reconsider this decision.</p>	IT/ JE
13	<p><u>Date and venue of next meeting of Council</u></p> <p>There will be no meeting in August.</p> <p>The next Meeting of the RA Council will be held on Tuesday, 1 September at 8.00pm at Fellowship House.</p>	