



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 2 September 2014
at Friends Meeting House at 8.00pm**

Present: Jonathan Seres - in the Chair, Douglas Blausten, Tony Brand, Terry Brooks, Alan Brudney, Jeremy Clynes, Tony Ghilchik, Colin Gregory, Jeremy Hershkorn, Stephanie Hurst, Brian Ingram, David B Lewis, Rosalind Josephs, David Littaur, Amanda Reuben John Sells, Gary Shaw, Ann Spencer, Paul Wenham, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council).

Visitors: Jonathan Bentata, Joyce Littaur, Jennye Seres, Gary Sheldon.

1. (a) Apologies for Absence

Received from Peter Beesley, Charles Gale, Max Petersen, Richard Wakefield, Diane Walsh.

(b) Any Other Business not on Agenda

There was none.

.2. Questions from visiting residents

There were none

3. Council minutes

(a) Approval of Council Minutes of 1 July 2014

7.11 Central Square Tennis Court: This was updated in line with the Agenda paper and text agreed

(b) Matters Arising not on Agenda

See 7.4 below (Events Committee)

4. Financial Report

The Accounts had been circulated by the Treasurer who said that there was little to add. Although the Accounts show a surplus he told Council that there is a fair amount of expenditure pending.

Answering a question regarding the £8,985 production cost of Suburb News, the Chairman explained that this represented two editions at £5,080 and £3,905 respectively, as the latter incorporated the £1,200 reduction in printing cost negotiated in March, and a similar reduction could be expected in the print invoices for the July and October editions.

5. Spending Review Report

The Spending Review Report, as presented at the July meeting, had been re-circulated the previous week with a note from Membership committee and a summary of expenditure on publications and postage.

The Chairman said that the key matters for discussion were the format and delivery of the February/March Annual Report, Notice of AGM and Membership renewal request, per the July minutes that provided for decisions re these items to be taken at this meeting. The other items of the Spending Review would be discussed at subsequent meetings, starting in November.

Potential savings had been noted on both printing and delivery, albeit for the latter some changes would be needed to the Constitution, as set out in the Report.

A lengthy discussion followed

Annual Report

The costs for the Annual report this year were:

Design £290

Print £487

Postage £734 – but this included the Membership renewal requests

David Lewis thought that a designed glossy annual report would be more likely to be read.

Some Council members would like to have a glossy Annual Report in Suburb News and try to include the notice of AGM and the accounts if they are available, as well as posting the Report on the web site. The Annual Report had been in Suburb News in 2002 and several subsequent years, samples supplied by Terry Brooks being shown to the meeting, although in some years the accounts had been published separately, perhaps because they were not available in time for Suburb News – the Accountant's sign-off was not likely to be before February 14th. However, Richard Wakefield had confirmed that Suburb News could be put back a month so as to go to the printer mid-February, with possibly the Spring edition put back a fortnight or a month, and July similarly.

This would be unlikely to achieve a design or print saving, but would reach the whole Suburb, and for this reason was adopted by the meeting.

It will also be published on the website. It needs new photographs and a fresh approach to design and content, and this could entail liaison between Marketing and Publications.

Notice of AGM

If the RA uses email we would need a change in the constitution. David Lewis said that if emails are used they could go into spam or the emails could bounce but the Chairman said that Suburb News also always refers to the AGM, as does the membership renewal letter to residents, so the inadvertent bounce of the odd email would not prevent knowledge reaching most people, and the constitutional change, if effected, would continue the present provision that inadvertent failure would not invalidate the process

It was agreed that there could be no change to delivery of a paper Notice this year but that there is no harm in a Constitutional change to make a provision for emailing the Notice of AGM for future years, and that on 30 March 2015 there should be a General Meeting at 7.45pm before the 8pm AGM to vote on the change.

While it would be nice if the 2015 Notice of AGM could go in Suburb News, it was more likely to go with Membership renewal letters as the Constitution required it to include the Agenda.

Delivery

If ward representatives/organisers were used for delivery there is uncertainty about timing, and the Constitution has deadlines. Further, the meeting thought it unlikely that volunteers would wish to deliver during the winter months.

Brian Ingram suggested that the list of Ward representatives/ward organisers is reviewed, and the system of contacts refreshed.

Membership Subscription Renewal

This is printed and posted at present and it could be emailed or delivered by volunteers but the latter had been ruled out for winter months.

Both Membership committee and EC had a concern that the £11,000 received annually within 6 weeks would be at partial risk, as it is possible or likely that the response to an email could be significantly lower than to a letter which is a physical reminder. The responses to the May/June emails and letters tended to suggest this although that might be because those members not registered for email were older and more loyal – one couldn't know. John Sells suggested that a trial is conducted but this was thought to be too complicated and that the EC's recommendation should be accepted.

AS adopted Diane Walsh's July suggestion that emails are sent in early January and if there is no response a letter could be sent out.

The Treasurer pointed out that this depended on the volunteer who organised mailchimp. Subject to his availability, it was agreed to adopt that suggestion.

The Renewal letter could be sent with the Notice of AGM, although the members who pay by standing order would not be included.

At the end of the discussion, a **Motion** was proposed by John Sells and seconded by David Lewis:

‘That the forthcoming report and accounts should be printed as part of an insert in Suburb News and should also be posted on the web site’

This was passed unanimously

6. (a) Gallery

Paul Wenham (PW) had circulated a Paper to Council in mid-August which he had hoped would stimulate discussion on the future direction of the Gallery.

The Chairman reported on a meeting the previous Thursday, requested by Fellowship, where he was informed that they are re-thinking the basis on which the Gallery might use Fellowship House. They will finalise their thinking in September, but it is likely that they would want Gallery pictures to be in both rooms plus the reception and for RA volunteers to be in reception, with no identified “Gallery”. They would consider holding special exhibitions. By contrast their 3rd April email had stated “We are very happy that the RA Gallery should continue to rent our smaller hall [with provision for their commercial lettings if they get a booking]”.

The Chairman had informed Richard Wakefield and PW and offered to meet them on the Friday; by agreement he and PW had met. He had also obtained advice from the

artist who works from the RA office. The upshot was that he and PW believe there are two reasons for the RA to provide some form of art in the Suburb:

- To maintain, and if possible expand the RA's offering to residents, just as the series of Open Meetings and enlarged summer Fun Day have done.
- To adopt the artist's view that the Suburb should encourage as many cultural activities as possible – and the success of this year's Rowley event is a good pointer.

They saw Fellowship's rethink as an opportunity for the RA to have its own rethink. It enables the RA honourably to seek to use Fellowship House for occasional special exhibitions, but also to hold them in other venues such as pop-ups in empty shops at the bottom of Northway or an ArtFest alongside LitFest in the first weekend of the proms. The RA could also discuss with Toulous or other café venues to hang the sort of watercolours that we have had in the Gallery.

So the agenda items were:

- (1) Do we seek to adopt Fellowship's floated model ?
- (2) If not, do we go for special exhibitions, and possibly ArtFest and/or café-art ?
- (3) If we do, should we aim at a pop-up exhibition, perhaps including a children's competition, in early December when people are buying for Christmas ?

The meeting did not see a viable Gallery future with Fellowship's floated model, and also believed that at present Fellowship does not attract passing trade and would be even less likely to do so, but could well continue to be an appropriate venue for some special exhibitions, subject to discussion with Fellowship.

John Sells observed that pop up shops are difficult to set up and he mentioned the insurance problems with cafes. PW, supported by the Chairman, asked Council whether if the Gallery put on special exhibitions it should be limited to work by Suburb artists and on Suburb subjects. Council thought that this may be too restrictive.

David Lewis said that we need a website page to protect the name of the Suburb Gallery in any event, possibly with some content on it.

There was no appetite from Council to take up Fellowship's proposal in the format they had described but there was some enthusiasm for having special exhibitions, some of which might be in Fellowship House on terms to be agreed.

Colin Gregory requested that options be presented to the November meeting but meanwhile proposed **a Motion** which was seconded by John Sells:

'That we do not take up the offer on the revised basis proposed by Fellowship and that the Gallery should go forward, subject to liaison with Richard Wakefield to seek his view, on the basis of special exhibitions and other options to be outlined in a report for the November meeting; also that a website page be set up preserving the name'

This was passed with one vote against and two abstentions

Brian Ingram urged Council not to overlook the Gallery funds in the balance sheet

(b) Notice Boards:

15 new boards will shortly be completed, with spare metal brackets for potentially ten more. The Marketing committee has a sub-group seeking residents in N2 to host these. Two boards have been allocated, for Hill Top and Thornton Way respectively. BI would like to raise in Council the subject of new large boards; however, the Marketing committee awaits a feasibility study from the sub-group and will then liaise with Events before bringing recommendations, if any, to Council.

A new default poster is now on boards that otherwise would be empty.

7. Committees (reporting major items and others not in circulated minutes)

7.1 Executive & 7.2 Allotments There was nothing to report

7.3 Consam

John Sells referred to his meeting with the Trust Architect on which he would report at the November meeting.

Janet Elliott had been co-opted to Consam.

7.4 Events

Item 7.4 of the July Minutes, re Fun Day of 29 June, stated: "It was hoped that the total expenditure would be lower than budget". As Council members may have noted from the EC Minutes of 17 July the net amount spent or due to be paid was just under £2,000 although the budget had been £3,000 - this was subject to return of deposit which had since happened. The EC Minutes stated that the lower figure arose because, with the help of the ward Councillors, LB Barnet had been persuaded not to charge £470 for coning off the road and there had been sponsorship of £700.

The new fireworks sub-committee would be meeting the following week. Tony Brand raised the need to check with HGS Trust re the use of the tennis courts.

7.5 Gallery – see 6(a) above

7.6 Marketing 7.7 Membership 7.8 Publications

There was nothing further to report

7.9 Roads & Traffic

Wildwood Road

Roads and Traffic have not taken a view regarding Barnet's proposal and the areas and extent of parking restrictions, as residents in different parts of Wildwood Road have differing interests and opinions. The role of the Committee, in this matter, is to facilitate and gather information and ensure that residents have a forum.

A new proposal had been made by Barnet at the end of July. As the new proposal now included the top end of Wildwood Road, residents there had convened their own meeting, taking place this evening, and a R&T member had been invited and would report to R&T at their meeting next week.

7.10 Trees & Open Spaces

Northway Rose Garden

TG said that no decisions had yet been made by LB Barnet.

Central Square

Tony Ghilchik said that Council had agreed to contribute £300 towards the design, on a one-third basis with the Trust and local residents, but as this had involved more work that had been anticipated Stephen Crisp had increased his charge to £1,250. It

was suggested that the RA increase their contribution to £417, one third of the cost. The Trust had also agreed to pay £417 and the balance was being sought from residents.

David Lewis proposed and Jeremy Clynes seconded a Motion:

‘That a further sum of £117 is made available by the RA, making a total of £417, towards the cost of the design scheme for Central Square prepared by Stephen Crisp’.

This was passed with 2 abstentions

Dams

TG reported that the City of London is being taken to judicial review by the Heath and Hampstead Society which will cost approx £100,000. The RA had been asked to contribute towards the cost of this and to support their action.

Colin Gregory said that the arguments are very complex and recommended that the RA does not take a view. The RA should rely on the legal position as clarified by the courts

There was a comprehensive article in the latest Suburb News which sets out the position.

Bigwood Group

Ann Spencer told Council that an application is being made for a grant of £4,000 from the Forestry commission for coppicing in Bigwood.

Tree Survey

Ann Spencer said that there are 71 missing trees which need to be replaced.

Central Square tennis courts

Minute 7.11 of July contained Rosalind Josephs report from the HGS Trust’s Estates committee, and a paper had been circulated to Council a few days ahead of the current meeting to report on ideas raised by Gary Sheldon (Publications) in support of resident Jonathan Bentata (in attendance at the meeting). JB presented the ideas. They suggested a booking system for using the courts with payment and that the RA provides an umbrella for this. JB had spoken to Jane Blackburn and asked whether the four courts could be refurbished and suggested a membership with a modest fee of, say, £25 in addition to membership of the RA. The courts should be padlocked and become self financing. He would also like floodlights to enable tennis to be played though the year

Tony Ghilchik said that there could be a sub group within Trees & Open Spaces.

The Treasurer said that the membership software may be able to help with the proposal.

RJ mentioned that the Estates committee are next meeting on 27th October.

The Chairman pointed out that there could be a problem for residents affected by noise if the lower courts came into use, and generally in relation to floodlighting, and JB in effect withdrew those suggestions from the discussion.

A **Motion** was proposed by Tony Ghilchik and seconded by Colin Gregory:

‘That Gary Sheldon, together with Jonathan Bentata, under the aegis of the Trees and Open Spaces Committee, are authorised to enter discussion with Tony Ghilchik for the Committee, and the HGS Trust, to explore further the concept of the tennis courts being run under the aegis of the RA’

This was passed with one vote against.

8. To note future programme of Council and Open meetings:

RA Council Meetings

Meetings will be held on 4 November, 2014 at Friends Meeting House, then 6th January, provisionally at Fellowship House, 3 March, 7 April, 5 May, and 7 July 2015. All dates are Tuesdays at 8pm.

Open Meetings

7 October (Councillors from Suburb and East Finchley wards, at Friends Meeting House) potentially (Wed 3rd) December, 3 February (Fellowship House), 2 June.

Trust AGM: Wednesday 10 September 8pm (drinks from 7.30pm) at Henrietta Barnett School Main Hall

RA AGM: Monday 30 March 2015 (General Meeting re constitution at 7.45pm, AGM 8pm, possibly 7.30 social – for discussion on 4 November) at Henrietta Barnett School Main Hall.

9. Any other urgent business.

There was none.