



**Minutes of a Meeting of the RA Council held on
Tuesday 6th October 2020, at via Zoom at 8pm**

Present: Emma Howard (Chair), Peter McCluskie (Hon Secretary & Consam), Steve Morris (Hon Treasurer), Tony Brand (Events & Publications), Alan Brudney (T&OS), Tony Ghilchik (T&OS), Helen Leiser (Consam), Adrian Hodgson (Events), Simon Sackman, (Consam), Shelley-Anne Salisbury (Publications), Ann Spencer (T&OS & Consam), Phillip Harlow (Allotments), Selena Amado (RA Membership Secretary).

Guests: Peter Falk (T&OS), Evelyn Thomas (Allotments).

1. Apologies and absences

Colin Gregory, Marie-Christine O'Callaghan and Harry Simmonds.

2. New members of Council

2.1 Welcomed Phillip Harlow, the new Chair of the Allotments Committee and Evelyn Thomas, the new Secretary of the Allotments Committee.

2.3 RA Chair proposed Phillip Harlow as a member of the RA Council, Simon Sackman seconded. Approved unanimously.

2.4 Noted nomination of Patrick Ettwein at RA meeting on 4th February which was proposed by Alan Brudney, seconded by Simon Sackman. Approved unanimously.

3. Approved minutes of Council meeting held on 4 February and approved minutes of EC meetings held in March, May, June, July and September.

No questions were raised.

4. Trees & Open Spaces issues (including street tree maintenance)

4.1 Colin Gregory has stepped down as Chair and Tony Ghilchik has taken over on a temporary basis, including membership of EC.

4.2 Peter Falk provided the RA with updates for the Suburb street trees as follows:

- *LB Barnet has a 5 year plan to plant 900 trees annually in the Borough. Although this seems generous it is not enough to prevent the tree population in the Suburb from declining. Every three years Barnet carry out a survey of street trees and this was last done in the Suburb in 2018 resulting in 131*

trees being felled. In their plan , Barnet agree to replace these trees over a three year period before the next survey. During these three years further trees are felled for other reasons such as subsidence/ leaning over etc and these trees are not replaced. In the Suburb this seems to be running at 7/8 a year. Finally Barnet expect up to 10% of new planting to not survive the first three years.

- *The result of all this is that the amount of street trees are declining. Out of circa 2500 Suburb tree pits, over 350 are vacant. The RA policy of paying for a number of new plantings each year helps reduce the decline but not eliminate it. The T&OS want to promote a plan to reduce the amount of new plantings which do not survive by volunteer watering (In Lewisham such a scheme has reduced the no of trees dying to circa 2%) and also proposes introducing a sponsor a street tree scheme.*
- *Overall, it is less green in the Suburb. Certain species no longer thrive such as the rowans, possibly due to change in climate.*
- *There had been concerns about LB Barnet's watering system of new trees which is only two years in comparison to other Boroughs that have a three year watering period. This can affect the life of the trees.*
- *Due to LB Barnet having lack resources and financial restraints has affected the maintenance of the Suburb.*
- *There'll be an additional 41 trees planted in the Suburb this autumn.*

4.3 Following talks with Andy Tipping, LB Barnet have agreed to write off any money owed by the RA, due to Barnet Council not planting the number of trees stated in previous years. This leaves an increase in RA reserves.

4.4 LB Barnet will conduct another survey for 2021 and provide T&OS with a list of trees to be felled.

Action Peter F

4.5 Watering trees: It had been proposed to Barnet Council a three year period of watering new trees and awaits a decision.

4.6 Barnet Council provided 15 to 20 bags to water the trees. A thank you from Peter to the volunteers who've helped to replace the bags.

4.7 A group of volunteers are needed for the Suburb street trees and 6 have been recruited so far. Peter F will liaise with Action for Trees in Lewisham for more ideas.

4.8 Street Trees: There's been a count of approximately 60-70 dead trees in the Suburb. LB Barnet is still to remove these and all rowans are to be replaced.

Action Peter F

4.9 Advice had been sought from Paul Wood, (an author on London street trees) on what trees are to be planted but suggestions were rejected by Andy Tipping, LB Barnet.

4.10 Species: Agreement has been made for trees to be planted in Hill Rise and Southway are Amelanchier Arborea Robin Hill species to replace dead trees. They are also of low maintenance. Jacarandas are also being looked into.

Action Peter F

- 4.11 LB Barnet also lack resources for maintenance of epicormics growth. Contractors have been found carry out work for them to be cut and maintained.
- 4.12 Other concerns were raised regarding hazards from trees.
- 4.13 Points were raised towards problems with the Barnet Council contractors.
- 4.14 Replacements of dead trees in same pit will be looked into. Reassurance was given for more proactivity with LB Barnet for maintenance and agreement to work with Barnet.
- 4.15 Council was thanked for funding water bags and the survey done by Paul Wood.
- 4.16 Peter F had paid contractors £590 to tidy up certain streets in the Suburb such as Willifield Way, Erskine Hill and Asmunds Place.
- 4.17 The idea was proposed for an RA “Sponsor a street tree scheme” as it is being done in other boroughs. An individual would pay £250 for a tree and the RA would match with an amount of £150. This has been confirmed as included in the budget.
- Action Peter F**
- 4.18 Council voted unanimously for reimbursement of £590 to Peter F.

5. RA finances including quarter 3 accounts

- 5.1 The Treasurer stated that previous predictions of RA expenditure for 2020 being similar to 2019 have changed.
- 5.2 Q3 figures were circulated accompanied by explanations.
- 5.3 Events: All events have been cancelled apart from fireworks, and approximately £5,500 less of expenditure.
- 5.4 Membership Income: There has been an increase of membership income so far this year which has already exceeded 2019 income figures.
- 5.5 Fellowship Donations: Donations have increased much more to an amount of £12,000.
- 5.6 Overall, there is a positive result which has led to savings.
- 5.7 Suburb News: Due to lower advertising costs and increased distribution costs, a predicted deficit of £4,200 on SN.
- 5.8 It was confirmed that all outstanding invoices have been paid apart from one estate agent.
- 5.9 Overall, a £4,200 surplus is forecast for the end of 2020. Reserves are forecast at £72,000.
- 5.10 There had been an increase in the number of RA members of 1,816 which is more than last year at the same point in the year.

- 5.11 Expenditure for the Allotments Committee will be considered in due course.
Action Steve

6. Allotments Committee

- 6.1 Phillip is to organise a site walk around the allotments on 24th October and arrange a meeting with the Trust representatives. A meeting of all site secretaries will also be arranged together with HGS Trust. Emma would wish to attend.
Action Philip
- 6.2 An issue was raised regarding not all allotments sites being fully equipped such as no storage or water, low maintenance.
- 6.3 Council thanked Alan and, more recently, Adrian for liaising between the RA and Allotment Committee because for many years the Allotments Chair has not been a member of Council. This role was no longer required following Philip's appointment to Council.
- 6.4 Peter M proposed to Council amendment of the Terms of Reference for the Allotments Committee to remove the reference to the RA Liaison Officer. Council approved the proposal.
Action Peter M
- 6.5 Adrian suggested the terms of the Committee should be reviewed more comprehensively in due course.
- 6.6 Any money for Allotments Committee will be incorporated into the budget for 2021. Allotments Committee would like to appoint their own treasurer.
Action Steve

7. Publications update

- 7.1 Shelley-Anne and Marie-Christine were unable to join the meeting at this point and Emma covered the feedback.
- 7.2 Latest edition of Suburb News was distributed and there was positive feedback overall from readers and well received.
- 7.3 Advertising has held up quite well apart from the temporary loss of a couple of estate agents.
- 7.4 It was discussed at the recent Publications Committee to have an extra pull out page for the spring edition. Instead of 12 pages it will be 16 pages and will include the annual report and lists of local bodies.

8. Events update

- 8.1 The NYE fireworks event has not yet been cancelled,

- 8.2 The NYE fireworks may go ahead if government guidelines in place by then permit. Attendees will be personally responsible for social distancing and comply with the all guidelines. A concern was raised regarding legal liability of the RA. This will be fully taken into account when deciding whether the fireworks will proceed.

Action Adrian

- 8.3 Alternatives for normal collections were discussed instead of cash. Online or contactless methods will be looked into as a possibility.

Action Adrian/Steve

- 8.4 Payment from the Echo Ensemble concert has not yet been received and to be chased up.

Action Adrian

9. Events Schedule & next meeting

- 9.1 The Events Schedule was agreed and will be circulated. It was noted all meetings will be held via Zoom video-conferencing until such time as government health guidelines permit a return to in-person meetings.

Action Peter M

- 9.2 Emma gave feedback on the last Trust AGM via Zoom. The RA AGM scheduled for 22 March 2021 may have to be held in a similar manner depending on health guidelines at the time.

- 9.3 The next meeting of RA Council will be on 9 February 2021 at 8pm.

10. Any other business

- 10.1 Barnet Civic Awards: it was agreed that Debra Goodman and Lorna Page to be nominated for an award as outstanding Suburb volunteers. Emma to forward details for circulation to RA Council.

Action Emma

- 10.2 Ham&High Newspaper: Emma had a virtual meeting with Andre, Ham & High Editor. The newspaper has reached out to the RA and agreement has been made to co-operate and gather content from the newspaper to feature in Suburb News.

Action Emma

- 10.3 Emma to connect Phillipa (Ham&High) and Shelley-Anne regarding a column for Suburb and Ham&High readers.

Action Emma

- 10.4 Emma to attend a LB Barnet Area meeting on Thursday 8th October regarding safety concerns of the Meadway/Hampstead Way roundabout. Options have been suggested such as a zebra crossing and an island. A point was raised about the Meadway Gate roundabout and the similar issues there.

Action Emma