



MINUTES

Minutes of the RA Council Meeting Tuesday 28th January 2025, at 8pm at Fellowship House

Present: Emma Howard (*Chair*), Peter McCluskie (*Hon Secretary*), Steve Morris (*Hon Treasurer*), Adrian Hodgson, Steven Rowe, Colin Gregory, Revd Emily Kolltveit, Dominic Rose, Asher Budwig (attendance via Zoom) and Shazia Riaz Ahmad (*minutes secretary*).

Apologies and Absences

1. Shelley-Anne Salisbury, Jonathan Waxman, Helena Benes, Judy Smith and Gren Manuel were unable to attend the meeting.

Changes to the Committee

2. The Chair, Emma Howard, will step down from her RA duties after the AGM on 31 March. This meeting marked her final occasion chairing the RA Council. Council extended its gratitude for her leadership and significant contribution. The AGM notice contains a link to nomination details for Officer and Member roles. One nomination for Chair had been received already.
3. Maria Schlatter has resigned from RA Council. However, she will continue to serve the Trees and Open Spaces committee. The Council acknowledges and appreciates her ongoing commitment to this work.
4. Rabbi Marc Levene had expressed interest in joining RA Council but was unable to attend today's meeting. He has been given the date of the next meeting: 13 May.

Finances

5. Finances

The end-of-year accounts for 2024 were circulated to the Council. The Treasurer provided an overview of the expenditure, outlining the key financial figures as follows:

Total income: £72,345

Total expenditure excluding grants: £43,576

Grants: £31,715

Deficit after expenditure and grants: £2,946

Reserves (as of year-end 2024): £75,958

6. Membership

The year ended with 1,622 members which was down by 96 in comparison to the year before.

7. Publications

Publications net income was up by £2,000 in comparison to the previous year, due to advertising.

Membership

8. Council discussed issues regarding the (slight) decline in membership and possible initiatives to enhance the profile of the RA to attract new members. Ideas included:
 - Upgrading the website to feature short videos.
 - Expanding the RA's presence on social media.
 - Engaging in face-to-face conversations with the public to raise awareness of the RA's work.
 - Considering a potential rebranding.
 - Establishing an RA information and membership stand at every event.
9. It was agreed that these initiatives would be reviewed in greater detail, and a structured plan would be developed after the AGM.

Publications

10. The Minutes of the Publications Committee held on 19th December 2024 were circulated in advance for information.
11. The deadline for publication is **Friday 31st January 2025**.

Grants

Council discussed the following grants:

12. **Annual Proms LitFest Application:**
Proms had enquired about the annual sponsorship funding (£4,000) for 2025. Council discussed the ongoing support of the LitFest and explored ways to maximise engagement and ensure the funding delivers as much publicity as possible for the RA
13. Council agreed to continue to sponsor the LitFest. **Action: Emma**
14. **Kerem School Early Years Unit (EYU) Application:**
The grant application received from Kerem School was discussed. It is for the redevelopment of the EYU Nature Garden, which had been neglected and is currently unusable due to safety concerns.
15. The Council agreed to approve the grant application, subject to the condition that the funding is not used for AstroTurf. **Action: Emma**

Events

16. The minutes of the Events Committee meeting held on 17th January 2025 had been circulated in advance.
17. **Storage Space, The Free Church:**
Following up on actions from the previous Council meeting, it was confirmed that the undercroft has been tidied, and the back room has now been returned to RA usage. However, it remains unclear whether the hire charge had been reviewed. It was noted that significantly more space is now available, providing rather better value for money. **Action: Steve M/Adrian**
18. **Children's Carnival, 9th February 2025:**
A total of 21 tickets have been sold to date (maximum 25).
19. **Annual General Meeting, Monday 31st March 2025:**
20. Guest speakers will be our local MP and the area police inspector.
21. Light refreshments will be available prior to the start of the meeting: Events Committee will handle this.
22. Non-members wishing to attend the AGM may apply for membership at the door but will not be able to vote.
23. Details of the AGM will be advertised (again) in the next Suburb News.

24. **Summer Fair, Saturday 7th June 2025**

Arrangements are in place for the Summer Fair, with plans to include a maypole and morris men to provide a more traditional English Fair.

25. Council discussed the possibility of purchasing a second-hand marquee jointly with St Jude's Church. The marquee would be available for RA events, St Jude's events and as a hireable community resource.

26. The estimated cost was approximately £6,000, which would include the marquee, flooring, drapes, and tables. The equipment would either be stored in the undercroft or (possibly) at St Jude's.

REACH

27. REACH has primarily focused on promoting the installation of heat pumps within the Suburb. As part of this effort, they have designed promotional stickers for residents to display in their homes, raising awareness of air-source heat pumps and their role in energy efficiency.

28. The Garden Suburb School's boiler has broken down, presenting an opportunity for a pilot scheme exploring ground-source heat pumps. **Action: Adrian and Asher**

Trees and Open Spaces

29. Council was updated on the activities of T&OS:

30. **Collaboration with Barnet Council and the Trust**

The RA continues to work with Barnet Council and the Trust on various tree-related matters, including tree removals, filling pits, and addressing planning applications that involve tree work. Discussions are also ongoing regarding broader issues, such as pressure from insurers to remove trees in response to subsidence claims and strategies to address this concern through relevant groups.

31. **Representation on External Committees:**

T&OS continues to represent the RA on the Kenwood Landscape Forum and the Heath & Hampstead Consultative Committee.

32. T&OS is actively engaged with several green initiatives in the Suburb, including Britain's Biggest Garden, Lyttelton Playing Fields proposals, Henrietta's Orchards and other environmental projects within the community.

33. **Overgrown Hedges/Driving on Grass Verges:**

Concerns were raised regarding overgrown hedges obstructing pavements. It was confirmed that Barnet Council is responsible for addressing both overgrown hedges and the issue of vehicles driving onto grass verges.

34. It was suggested to report such issues via "Fix My Street" as Barnet Council is obliged to respond to submissions made through this platform.

Biodiversity

35. Council was updated on biodiversity matters:

36. **Kids' Garden at St Jude's**

The Kids' Garden continues to be a success, with 30-40 participants regularly attending. The garden receives frequent visits from local schools, nurseries and local people. Plans are in place to relaunch the club at the end of February, focusing on seed planting activities.

37. **Orchard Wildlife Garden**

The Orchard Wildlife Garden has seen great success, with two well-attended planting events, each attracting approximately 70-80 people.

38. **Biodiversity Grants:**

Applications had been made for various grants to support biodiversity initiatives. It was noted that

the Trust should have transferred £2,700 towards the Britain's Living Gardens project. Hon Treasurer to check and confirm receipt of this payment. **Action: Steve M / Dominic**

39. Additional Project: Wetland Area

A new project has been proposed to Barnet Council to develop a wetland area on the edge of the Orchard Garden in Lyttelton Playing Fields. The proposal includes creating a dug-out rain garden with boggy and marshy plants and the installation of a drainage swale.

40. A £4,000 quote for the work had been obtained for the work and it was intended to apply for a grant from the Trust. Additional funding support from the RA may be required in due course.

41. Flood Risk and Severe Weather Planning:

Significant work is being carried out on Hampstead Heath and the Heath Extension to address the potential impacts of severe weather and flooding. Barnet Council is also assessing flood risk across the borough.

42. Friends of Lyttelton

All key stakeholders involved with Lyttelton Playing Fields are represented on the Friends of Lyttelton Committee. This includes the Bowls Club, Kerem School, Community Orchard, Mutton Brook Action Group, Barnet Council and the Trust.

43. The first committee meeting was recently held and was productive and well received.

Member survey

44. Council held a detailed discussion on strategies for conducting a successful community survey.

45. Expert Consultation for the Survey:

Dominic (with Asher) had been considering a community survey. He also shared insights from his conversation with a community organiser who successfully built a community in Brent Cross. She recommended adopting a Community Listening and Engagement approach to ensure meaningful participation and impactful outcomes.

46. It was suggested that the RA hires a trained expert to conduct the survey, with an estimated cost of £5,000. The services of Groundwork, a company specializing in community engagement, was mentioned.

47. Previous Community Listening Survey:

It was mentioned that St Jude's Church had conducted a Community Listening Survey just prior to the arrival of the current incumbent, and some of the findings could be made available for reference.

48. De Groot Report and earlier survey

In 1996 the RA had conducted a community survey known as the De Groot Report. Prior to De Groot (exact date not known) the RA had sent out a paper survey to members and those results were also available. **Action: Dominic/ Colin/Peter**

Defibrillators

49. The next Defibrillators Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 30 January. The meeting will be attended by various Suburb community groups to discuss ideas and coordination.

Matters arising from EC and previous Council minutes

50. Correction to the Minutes, 15th October 2024:

It was noted that the previous minutes incorrectly stated that the Summer Fair would take place on 7th July 2025. **The correct date for the Summer Fair is 7th June 2025.**

51. Council Meeting Start Time:

The Committee discussed the possibility of moving the start of Council meetings to an earlier

time. This will be discussed further after the AGM.

Constitution (amendment)

52. Colin was thanked for his work on the proposed amendment to Clause 6 of the RA's Constitution, regarding the 'mothballing' of the Executive Committee and adding specific authority for Standing Orders and Committees.

53. Following discussion, Council agreed to submit the amendment for approval by the membership at the AGM. **Action: Peter**

Next scheduled meetings

- Annual General Meeting: Monday 31st March 2025 at Bigwood Hall (Doors open at 7:30 PM)
- Council Meeting: 13 May 2025, 8:00 PM at Fellowship House