



RA COUNCIL

Minutes of the HGSRA Council Meeting Tuesday 15th July 2025, at 8pm Held via Zoom

Present: Peter McCluskie (Chair), Steve Morris (Hon Treasurer), Francine Barsam (Hon Secretary), Helena Benes, Maureen Dor, Colin Gregory, Adrian Hodgson, Revd Emily Kolltveit, Steven Rowe, Jonathan Waxman and Shazia Riaz Ahmad (Minutes Secretary)

Apologies and absences:

Apologies for absence were received from Asher Budwig, Dominic Rose, Shelley-Anne Salisbury and Judy Smith.

RA Finances and Membership:

1. **Treasurer's Report:**

The Treasurer presented the financial statement for the second quarter and addressed questions regarding the statement.

2. **Grants Awarded**

The Council acknowledged the important role local schools play within the community and noted that each school was awarded a £5,000 grant last year in recognition of their contribution.

3. **Grants Policy**

Council discussed and reaffirmed its policy to fund specific, finite, identifiable projects; one-off initiatives that deliver measurable outcomes, rather than supporting everyday running costs.

3.1 Grant Applications

Brookland Junior and Infant School Parents Associations (BJSPA & BISPA)

A joint application submitted by the Parents Associations of both Brookland Junior and Infant Schools. Following detailed discussion, it was agreed to award a grant of £3,000 to each school, resulting in a combined total of £6,000, in support of their initiatives.

Action: Peter

3.2 Garden Suburb School Nature Garden

A proposal to enhance the school's Nature Garden, recognising its environmental and educational value. A grant of **£1,500** (as requested) was approved to support the development of this outdoor learning space.

Action: Peter

3.3 The Royal Free Charity

Council considered the application from the Royal Free Charity and agreed to award a grant of **£2,500** towards their surgery project. In addition, the Council expressed its wider support for the charity's fundraising efforts by offering a half-page fundraising appeal feature (advert and/or an article) in Suburb News, helping to raise further awareness within the Suburb community.

Action: Peter

4. **Membership:**

It was confirmed that the role of Membership Secretary (paid) was being brought out of abeyance. For some time all membership-related work had been temporarily managed by the Hon Treasurer, with support from the Chair. It was noted that the membership system had undergone a revamp, significantly improving its efficiency and reducing the amount of work a membership secretary would need to do. This would be reflected in the fee payable; Council discussed the amount in broad terms and agreed to the recruitment of a suitable individual. **Action: Peter / Steve M**

5. **Hand mailing to non-member households:**

The significant increase in postage costs had made traditional mailings financially unviable. As an alternative, the Treasurer proposed engaging young people from the Suburb to hand-deliver recruitment letters to approximately 2,000 potential households. A small fee would be paid and the budget for this work was discussed. **Action: Steve M**

6. **Publicity:**

It was agreed that an issue of Suburb News would have as its principal theme membership and activities of the RA. **Action (in due course): Shelley-Anne**

Events:

Summer Fair 7 June 2025

7. **Attendance:**

It was confirmed that, due to wet weather conditions, community attendance was lower than in the previous year. Nevertheless, the event was considered successful.

8. **Event Costs:**

The net cost of the Summer Fair to the HGSRA was £3,000.

9. **Halloween 2025:**

It was confirmed that a community event will be held in the autumn to mark Halloween. Adrian will confirm the event date, which will be announced in the *Suburb News*. The deadline for submitting the article to the newsletter is 1 August 2025. **Action Adrian**

10. **New Year's Eve Fireworks, 31 December 2025**

Arrangements for the New Year's Eve fireworks party are the subject of ongoing discussions by the Events Committee.

11. **Loans of the Gazebos**

The Treasurer confirmed that the gazebos have supported a number of local organisations through community loans. In June, they were borrowed by the following:

- Proms
- Henrietta Barnett School
- Brookland School
- Suburb Library

12. It was noted that the gazebos are currently not covered by insurance. There was a need to review the arrangements for lending them out, as there has been some damage. Clear guidelines are needed on what can be loaned out and under what conditions. **Action: Adrian**

Publications:

13. In the absence of Shelley-Anne, the Chair confirmed that there is nothing specific to update on publications. The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated with the agenda.

14. The deadline for articles for publication in the next Suburb News is 1 August 2025.

Trees and Open Spaces

15. The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated with the agenda.

16. **Areas of Focus**

Primary areas of focus:

- Barnet Council tree applications
- Planting new trees and identifying any dead trees
- Crowd funding for new trees
- Supporting and engaging with open spaces, such as Hampstead Heath and surrounding woods

17. **Street Trees**

Barnet's contractors are required to water newly planted trees for up to two years. However, it remains unclear whether this responsibility is being adequately fulfilled and what mechanisms Barnet has in place to monitor the contractor's performance. Some trees had died due to insufficient watering. Barnet has agreed to strengthen its monitoring processes. Residents are being encouraged to water trees planted outside their homes to support their growth and survival.

18. **Crowd Funding:**

The crowd funding scheme has been more difficult this year compared to last year, despite taking similar actions. It was suggested that the novelty of the initiative in its first year may have contributed to greater enthusiasm and interest. The deadline for this year's crowd funding is 31 December 2025.

19. The Trust manages its own open spaces and plants or replaces trees on its own land, as necessary. The policy on tree replacement will be queried at the next meeting of the Trust's Estate Committee.

Action: Steven R

Biodiversity and Community Gardening

20. **Henrietta Barnet School Garden Pond etc:**

There were no further updates other than to note that the project has been postponed until 2026. The £3,500 grant allocated is therefore likely to be paid out of the 2026 RA budget.

REACH (Environment Committee)

21. **New structure**

The minutes of the most recent meeting had been circulated with the Agenda. REACH had been undergoing a period of transition. However the REACH team and Council remained committed to the objectives. It was agreed that REACH will continue its work in a more flexible format without the need for a formal standing committee, which was accordingly dissolved. Progress updates and any funding requests will be submitted directly to Council by Asher and Jonathan who will remain on Council and responsible to it for REACH matters.

22. **Event with the Trust:**

A joint event with the Trust is being planned, aimed at engaging local architects, estate agents, and builders. The event will focus on raising awareness and understanding of heat pumps and their benefits.

Future Meetings:

23. The date of the next Council meeting to be confirmed in due course. **Action: Peter**