



Minutes of meeting held 13th January 2026 at 8.00pm

Present: Peter McCluskie (Chair), Adrian Hodgson, Jonathan Waxman, Francine Barsam, Maureen Dor, Stewart Roiter (Treasurer) Judy Smith, Shelley-Anne Sailsbury, Asher Budwig. Bernadette Rae (Membership & Minutes Secretary).

Guest: Lynda Cook

Apologies: Helena Benes, Colin Gregory

1. Chair's introduction.

2. Finances

The RA had £94,264.61 at the end of 2025. But some money (approx £10k) needs to be paid to Fellowship (their donations collected by RA). Cost of printing gone up for Suburb News. Currently the advertising more than covers it; there is a substantial surplus. Question raised – is it worth registering as a charity. Not a matter of worth – we are not eligible to be registered for several reasons; we provide membership benefits, for example.

3. Grants, sponsorships and donations

3.1 Proms request is a sponsorship not a grant application. £4000 last year for LitFest and they are asking for a similar amount this year. One declaration of interest from the RA panel as a committee member. Some of the banners for need to be updated. There are pledges from other sponsors. However, RA is the major sponsor of LitFest, sponsoring 55% of the funds. Separate festival within Proms. Advertised in local and some national papers, bookshops. Question raised – we have donated gazebos to Proms and there was damage, so a fee of £450 for Proms (not LitFest). Adrian will reiterate. Agreed unanimously to sponsor LitFest: £4000.

3.2 Friends of Bigwood want £5000 for 2 years. Application seems unclear about what the application is for – it is for children's activities. Community nature learning. May ask for a year-on-year funding with specific activity identified. Wants risk assessment and safeguarding/CRB checks to be clarified. Agreed unanimously to offer £2500, but subject to clarification of expenditure.

3.3 Friends of Lyttleton grant application. We can't fund capital funding (such as fabric). Querying the amount of money and number of applications already made, disparity about amounts. £150,000 (GLA rejected. Lottery is still live) / £20,000 / £52,000+VAT – but what for? Council advised that GLA application was made on behalf of the RA with a commitment for £6k match funding and responsibility to review quotes with LBB. None of which had been agreed by Council. Needs to make a proper tender. Barnet Council will assess the quotes and go with the best. They will contribute £7-£10,000 on the basis it is match-funded. Barnet consulted the residents, they said it would compromise their security. Planning process has been

circumvented as Barnet owns the land. RA here to support the amenities for the residents / local area. Approach from Linden Lea – come in on a solid path then straight into the field. Path would give greater access. Crushed rock is proposed. Can't ride on that surface (buggies, prams, children's scooters). A lot of money ear marked for biodiversity, 10-20meters. £50K for the path, the rest for biodiversity. Trust giving FoL £5K, on condition he gets all the funding. Path 1KM, likely to attract ParkRun. They use but don't contribute to maintenance and very difficult to apply conditions to stop Park Run using the park or enforce maintenance contribution. Might have to specify ParkRun cannot use it to protect from erosion. Need to have more information and firmer costings before deciding if we give the grant. Costed specification, materials and why. Consider that if RA supports something the local residents don't want, it can make relationship difficult. There is standing water. In principle for a path but need more information. All agreed. Will put a document round council. FoL need to demonstrate they can do quality work to receive financial support.

3.4 Henrietta Barnett Orchard – apparently taken over by Friends of Lyttleton. Some discontent with decisions made, for example, the donated Cox tree was not on the original FoHBCO planting plan as they were too big and prone to disease. Action for T&OS to revisit planting plan and review orchard condition and status of FoHBCO.

3.5 Donations – John Marshall discussion on WhatsApp had not been resolved. An online facility for donation to North London Hospice was available. An informal vote had been taken but amount not agreed. A memorial bench suggested. Would cost up to £900-1400. Peter to discuss with the family. Unanimously agreed.

4. Website including budget

Needs an upgrade. Set up about 6 years ago. Needs to be brought onto a less bespoke platform, such as SquareSpace or WordPress. Have approached three local web designers. Budget – must have a tight specification and be clear about what we want the website to do. Showcase, renew membership etc. Don't give free reign to the designer. Need more than one person to be able to update, manage plug-ins. Initial outlay and annual updated. 2000 visitors / month, average stay 25 seconds, look at two pages. Ask for shopping list (what is possible, how much they would cost). Look at our website, what would they suggest, cost it. Such as animations, virtual walks. Suggested about £5K for this purpose. Monthly hosting cost needs to be budgeted for also.

5. Membership

1500 members at the end of 2025. There was an uplift since mail out in September, however, we have lost approximately 100 members per year for the last two years. Monthly schedule of email reminders to renew. Flyering to target non-member households. Need to find people willing to help with distributing the flyers, for modest remuneration.

6. Events

6.1 NYE had a good turnout. Drinks licence in church gave upper limit of 499 in the ticketed St Jude's party; which apparently had 40% no show due mainly to availability of free tickets so additional numbers not a problem for crowd management. No public access to welfare facilities due to paid event in Church and low temps resulted in a late walk up. No access to cover, as paid event in the church. Estimated about 6-700 people this year. Costs £3500 for fireworks and £1500 for Security/barriers against 40% reduction in income from donations due to reduced time to collect and confused marketing for Church party ticket sales that included fireworks. Headline sponsors donated £2k but were also approached by the church

to sponsor their party creating further confusion and bad feeling. All agreed to try to maintain a good working relationship with the church.

6.2 Two children's events this year, end of Feb. Summer fair also. Hort Soc have been invited but want to change the date to 13th June. Aiming for Sunday 7th June to accommodate the Jewish Community and avoid the Highgate Fair on the 13th. Halloween event was successful. Used to be members only, but more people when open to all and presents an opportunity to sign up new members.

7. Publications

Good feedback. 5250 homes in the Suburb. Please send in any contributions by 1 February

8. REACH

(Residents Action on Climate Health). Not many active members. Had a small committee, now disbanded as everyone busy. Asher and Jonathan doing what they can.

9. Trees & Open Spaces

No additional comments to the circulated report.

10. Report back on RA/Trust Liaison

Had a meeting with Will Hawkins and his colleagues. Much of the meeting was about publications. Trust currently has a half page advert in Suburb News (£700). May have a regular column instead - £1000 requested. Awaiting their decision

11. Representation on outside bodies

Steven Rowe has stepped down from Trust Estate Committee. He is still rep for Orchard Housing Society (which might be taken over by another housing society). Looking for a new RA rep to look after Trust's spaces, including Central Square and other open spaces, allotments. Adrian volunteered: unanimously agreed to nominate. Trust Council has to approve.

12. Complaints procedure and safeguarding

12.1 Needs updating. Peter will circulate draft.

12.2 Safeguarding – none at the moment. RA can join NCVO, get all the template documents to put safeguarding policy, complaints procedures and whistleblowing policy together. Comment that no RA in Barnet has a SG policy. “Adults at risk” are not necessarily obvious. All agreed to join NCVO; Adrian to action.

13. Life membership

Steve Morris has done a great deal of work for the RA over many years. Unanimously agreed to grant him life membership.

14. Next scheduled meeting – 14th April Free Church – Elders Vestry. (Note AGM on 30 March).