

2nd Interim Strategy Report - to Council Meeting 1st March 2011

The Working Group has met twice since the presentation of the interim report to Council, dated November 2010. This comprises our 2nd Interim Report.

As mentioned in our progress report of 25 January, we believe that we need to focus on implementation, and that there should be an implementation committee of Richard Wiseman and Jonathan Seres (we are happy to consider others). We are arranging the drinks evenings with the Trust and LBB approved by Council on 1st February, and will liaise with Janet Elliott before invitations are issued.

We recommend the following priorities:

1. Membership Committee: we believe that additional members should be co-opted to the committee who are prepared to spearhead a membership drive.. Their function will be entirely different from the continuing renewals function, but by being on the committee they will have access to the database and the opportunity to add inserts to the delivery/mail shots.
2. Focus groups – these should be established ad hoc to consider short-term issues
3. Communications (per the interim report) – the first step to updating the list of email addresses is, we understand, in hand to coincide with the February/March renewal delivery.
4. Structure – the Executive Committee and Council should function as intended under the Constitution.
5. Meetings with the Trust and LBB to be instituted on a regular basis.
6. Committees – encourage ad-hoc membership for particular issues, or generally to interest a wider net in HGS & add to RA's abilities

Our Action Recommendations are as follows:

1. **Structure: (a)** The governance of the RA should follow the Constitution more closely. The Executive should take and act on decisions (reporting subsequently to Council), except where potentially serious or irrevocable (the words in 6b of the Constitution). The Council should meet every 2 months, with special meetings convened if needed (albeit rarely). The Executive would meet about 10 times a year, and we recommend that at least two younger members (if willing) be co-opted to the Executive (& if necessary be co-opted to Council for that purpose).

(b) In accordance with 6a of the Constitution, the Executive should be elected after the AGM. As we recommend that it reverts to its wider functions, its make-up should be considered from scratch to ensure that it has the energy, resource and commitment to take the RA forward.

2. **The 6-year rule:** The rule in Standing Orders, regarding Committee service (19 & 22, as available on the Website) is a useful way of rejuvenating committees, and should operate when we have recruited more members to serve. Long-standing members would continue to be invited or co-opted where their special knowledge is important. The RA should work towards the full implementation of this rule from the 2012 AGM onwards, but should try to implement where possible during 2011/12

3. **RA Council Meetings:** should focus on policy issues arising out of Committee reports. Any amendments to Minutes should be taken if emailed to all in advance – not otherwise. The absence of a Council member at a meeting should be exceptional.

4. **Committees:** The invaluable work of the Committees needs more publicity. Council should not be shy to create more committees, using Suburb experts eg on environmental issues.

5. **Remunerated part-time Development Officer:** RA Council policy implementation needs an improved follow-through.. We have in mind a strong facilitator – perhaps a recently retired resident who would receive an honorarium to be agreed for 1 day a week's work..

6. **Focus groups:** a potentially powerful source of information and tool for consultation, these could usefully engage residents on short-term issues.

7. **Email database:** As HGS Lists is overwhelmed by transient issues of immediate interest and concern (albeit useful for its correspondents), there has to be a different method for the main RA communications to its members. The email database is crucial. The intended monthly newsletter highly welcomed.

8. **LBB/Trust:** As approved by Council on 1st February, the social meetings with the Trust and LBB will start now:.

This need not preclude LBB/Trust attendance at RA Council.

9. **Other groups (for informal meetings)**

- English Heritage & similar
- Other RAs in Barnet
- Possibly other Garden Suburbs such as Ealing and Letchworth
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10. **For 3rd report:** consideration of:

- RA spending policy (per January Council meeting).
- Widening the RA's social involvement in the community – should be deep & credible – RA is at present a 'closed society'.
- The RA should consider its role as potential conduit for matters of wider resident interest, for example: health service, education, social interaction, generally public consultation lists.