

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 7th December 2004
at Fellowship House at 8.00pm

Present: Georgina Malcolm - in the Chair

Jean Barraclough, Carol Boulter, Rosemary Goldstein, Rosalind Josephs,
Leonie Stephen

Simon Abbott, John Boulter, Derek Chandler, Francois Crompton-Roberts
Arnold Elliott, Colin Gregory, Richard Kemp, David B Lewis, David Littaur,
Siddiek Meer, Steve Morris, David Rapson, Michael Rowley,
Douglas Thomas, Richard Wakefield, Alan Walker

An unusually large number of visitors included representatives from the Press, Mr & Mrs Myerson, Joyce Littaur, Mervyn Mandell, Mervyn Unger and Charles Zeloof from the Trust Council, and Gary Shaw.

1 Apologies for Absence

Received from Peter Beesley, Terry Brooks, Alan Brudney, Eva Jacobs, David Lewis, Denis Baron, Douglas Blausten

2 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were approved.

3 Co-option of New Member to Council

Georgina Malcolm proposed that Gary Shaw be co-opted to Council. This was seconded by Carol Boulter and carried Nem Con.

4 Matters Arising

Telephone Kiosks

Georgina Malcolm reported that the new telephone box at Meadway Gate still has a broken door and no telephone. Rosalind Josephs said when this has been reinstated she will remove the graffiti. RJ

New Year's Eve Celebration

David Littaur is liaising with the Trust and the insurers who have asked for details of Alan Brudney's experience with setting off fireworks. DL

Bookkeepers Fees

John Boulter had spoken to Eileen Whelan and this will be discussed at the next meeting of the Fellowship Committee in January.

5 St Jude's Church Rooms

Alan Walker spoke about the document he had e-mailed to Council members setting out the background of the proposed sale of this property. The Church has a long lease of 999 years granted to them by the HGS Trust and the use of the property is

restricted to 'church assembly'. The Trust is entitled to make a charge for any change of use. The Church Rooms were built in the 1960s and have a dated appearance. The structure of the building is rapidly deteriorating and vulnerable to vandalism and attracts rough sleepers. The Church has little use for the building but has an obligation to maintain it. Up to July 2004 it was used 7 days a week. Then the Institute left the site and it is now little used. Under the requirements of the Charity Act the Church is obliged to seek the highest bidders who may meet the educational or religious restrictions on the site and the highest bid has come from a local Jewish Group. If the Church Council decides to accept the offer the approval of the Diocese of London is needed. The Church is restricted on what it can do with the proceeds of a sale, which could not be used for the ongoing maintenance of the Church or the restoration of the murals. It would be used to install a kitchen and lavatory facilities with wheelchair access. The Hampstead Sephardi Group, which is the highest bidder, would like to construct a new building on the site and would need to fulfil planning requirements and obtain the approval from the Trust. The group has indicated that they would make space available for the use of the wider suburb community. They have expressed no desire to use the Church car park. Mervyn Mandell said that the Trust Surveyors are in touch with the Church agents and will agree the valuation figures and will then discuss the proposed deed of variation. The site was fully marketed by the Church Surveyor and the Trust was not involved with this. David B Lewis said that Consam had discussed this in principal and they considered that the design of any new building must be appropriate and sympathetic to the site. Siddiek Meer considered that this building is a local asset and if it were to be sold to the Synagogue Group would be unavailable to the community. He thought that car parking would be required other than on Saturdays. Alan Walker said that community events have rarely take place in the Church Rooms. Carol Boulter said that both the RA and the Trust had turned down the opportunity to develop the site. Colin Gregory said that the Centenary Committee had suggested that there should be a new building on the site and it should be well designed with a wide use and it must be viable. Siddiek Meer wanted all alternatives to be considered. Jean Barraclough said that the building is damp and it is deteriorating and the Institute had received many complaints from students about its condition. David Littaur thought that it would be an exciting opportunity to co-operate with the Centenary committee and Carol Boulter said that the Sephardi community had a reputation of mixing with the community. Simon Abbott wanted the needs of the youth to be addressed and wanted the Trust to be more proactive. David B Lewis said that the RA Council could not say that we do not wish to have a synagogue on the premises.

This matter was then opened out to the visitors to ask any questions.

Stanley Myerson was concerned at the manner in which the site was marketed. He asked whether the price was in keeping with market value and asked the cost of maintenance. He offered the services of his company, the Daily Express of which he is managing director, who would be happy to market the property on behalf of the Church. Mervyn Mandell pointed out that there are a number of restrictions on the site. There is no vehicular access and the property falls under the UDP for Barnet which means that it has to be used for community and not for residential use. A nursery school wanted to purchase the building but it needed vehicle access for emergency vehicles and also parking facilities and it would have created a great deal of traffic. Douglas Thomas was concerned that the synagogue group really had sufficient funds to erect a new building. Colin Gregory asked the Trust to consult

with the RA about the terms of any agreement. Mervyn Mandell said that the Trust is bound by the Charities Act to get the best possible price.

5 Report on HGS Trust -Mervyn Mandell

Mervyn Mandell introduced himself to council as the new Chairman of the Trust. He said that there had been some 80 responses to the advertisement for the Trust Manager's position and they had appointed Jane Blackburn- an architect who had worked for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal Opera House. She will commence working for the Trust in three months time when her notice had expired. The Trust had renewed its planning permission for the erection of a house on the North Square site in 2003. They had received an application from the Electricity company who own the sub station site under a 999 year lease, for permission to build a house. Due to recent planning guidelines if the current planning permission is not used LBB may not grant permission in the future . The Trust is continuing to negotiate with the Electricity company and they will consult with residents of North Square, Central Square, South Square and the top of Northway and keep the RA informed.

With regard to the Centenary project many residents are concerned about Central Square and although LB Barnet are responsible for its upkeep they have no funds. Neither has English Heritage. It therefore seems that the Trust will have to pay for any improvements. An application for lottery funding has been made.

The Trust is aware that some of the Central Square buildings may be surplus in a few years time.

Sunshine Corner is also in need of attention.

Mervyn Mandell would like to see a more open approach at the Trust and the RA will be informed of developments.

6 Corporation of London

Colin Gregory explained that the Corporation of London has financial problems and is considering what cuts can be made to the budget for Hampstead Heath. The Corporation has an investment income of £58million. The Corporation contributes £5.5 million of this towards the management and maintenance of the Heath each year. The Hampstead Heath Trust Fund contributes a further £680,000. The estimated shortfall this year is £330,000. It was unclear how the shortfall had arisen but it was thought to be as a result of anomalies in the staffing structure. Plans put to the Consultative Committee for cutting back on expenditure include staff cuts and changing staff to more junior levels, closing the information centre, making charges for parking, cancelling free events, increasing existing fees for use of sports pitches and so on, and possible closure of the swimming ponds. The Corporation has not given enough time or information to enable the RA to respond to the proposals and the RA must work out its priorities. The Trees & Open Spaces committee consider that nature conservation should take priority.

Roz Archer explained that she is a year round swimmer and the ponds are threatened by the proposed cuts. She would like more time for consultation.

CG will write a letter to the Corporation of London asking for more information and ask for extra time. Steve Morris thought that until the various schemes had been costed it would be difficult to make any decisions. CG

7 RA Constitution

Two documents had been circulated to Council. A note of proposed changes to four

paragraphs in Clause 4 of the proposed revised Constitution as discussed at November Council, and a paper clarifying why the group consider there should be no change to voting rights. There should be one vote per household. Colin Gregory raised some anomalies that he wanted the sub committee to look at again regarding the members of each household being members of the RA but not being able to vote. Siddiek Meer proposed that Council accept the paper. This was seconded by Simon Abbott and passed with 11 votes in favour, 5 against and 3 abstentions.

8 CAAC

Michael Rowley would like to become the Trust's representative on CAAC instead of the RA's representative and Alan Jacobs had kindly agreed to take over as the RA's representative. This was agreed by Council.

9 CPZ

Siddiek Meer had received a letter from the Ombudsman indicating that he is unable to confirm the decision made by his assistant. He said that he is seeking further information from LB Barnet and was re-opening the complaint.

A petition has been received from residents in Addison Way, Hogarth Hill and Coleridge Walk with almost 100% objecting to a CPZ in their roads. Cllr. Jazmin Naghar is still working on organising a public meeting. David B Lewis said that Asmuns Place seems to be one of the few roads on the Suburb in favour of the scheme. Simon Abbott wanted to establish the income flow and cash involved. Siddiek Meer will draft a letter to LB Barnet objecting to the scheme.

SM

Mervyn Mandell said that the Trust had not yet discussed this in any detail but he took on board the views expressed.

10 Any Other Business

Bequest

A Kingsley Way resident - Joy Edelman has recently died and left the RA £5000. John Boulter will contact her solicitors to discuss this bequest, as the RA is not a charity.

JB

Standing Committee Reports

All the Annual Reports should be sent in by 16th December so they can be discussed at the next meeting of the Executive.

11 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

This will be held on Tuesday January 4th at Fellowship House at 8.00pm. There will be a short meeting followed by wine and mince pies