

Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 3 May 2005
at Fellowship House at 8.00pm

Present: David B Lewis in the Chair

Simon Abbott, Jean Barraclough, Douglas Blausten, Andrew Botterill, John Boulter (Hon Treasurer), Carol Boulter, Terry Brooks, Derek Chandler, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council), Colin Gregory, Eva Jacobs, Rosalind Josephs, David Lewis, (Vice-Chairman), David Littaur, Georgina Malcolm, Michael Rowley, Steve Morris, Gary Shaw, Léonie Stephen, Richard Wakefield (Hon Secretary), Alan Walker.

Visitors: Jane Blackburn (HGS Trust Manager), Francis Mungai (LB Barnet Street Enforcement Officer), Mrs D Goodman, Mr S Graber, Dr & Mrs V Keats, Mr & Mrs H Laddie, Mr & Mrs Malvesi, Ms S Mindel, Mrs A Reid, Mr & Mrs S Stolerman and Mr & Mrs N Yentob.

1 Apologies for Absence

Received from Peter Beesley, Alan Brudney, François Crompton Roberts, Arnold Elliott, Richard Kemp.

2 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Suburb Centenary

Line 6, page 2:

'Events Committee' should replace 'Celebration Committee' and 'the Celebration Committee is proposing' should replace "they are proposing".

Dame Henrietta Barnett's Grave

Line 1: 'that' should replace 'this'

Line 4: 'has' should replace 'his'

Report from Roads & Traffic regarding meeting with LB Barnet on proposed CPZ: Page 5. Delete 'I' in line 8 after the word 'When'.

3 Matters Arising not on the Agenda

Street Lighting

The additional letter regarding the PFI has been sent to LB Barnet by the Chairman.

Suburb Gallery

Richard Wakefield told Council that the Jenny Dunn exhibition at the Gallery, where part of the proceeds will be donated to the North London hospice, is doing well. There is a 'meet the artist' day on 8 May from 11am-4.00pm

Suburb Centenary

The Chairman pointed out that King Edward VII did not in fact visit the Suburb although Queen Alexandra did. Carol Boulter considered that any proposed invitation to a member of the royal family must be for a specific

event. Colin Gregory said this could possibly be the completion of the restoration of the Henrietta Barnett Memorial. Alan Walker pointed out that the invitation would be made jointly with the Parish Centenary committee and could also mark the completion of the restoration of St Jude's Church.

Telephone Box at Meadway Gate

Rosalind Josephs told Council that, after a great deal of effort, BT had said the lighting to this box would be restored on 15 May.

Ward Organisers

Steve Morris said that he had received some offers of help but more was needed.

Standing Committee Membership

Léonie Stephen had spoken to Alan Brudney who wished to remain on the Trees and Open Spaces Committee for a further year and had agreed to attend meetings.

Report from Roads & Traffic regarding Meeting with LB Barnet on proposed CPZ

Gary Shaw is holding a meeting with the parking department of LBB at East Finchley to discuss the East Finchley CPZ on 19 May. He will report back.

Coffee Table Book

Although Richard Wakefield had spoken to the Trust, as yet there had not been any letter from them.

Parking in Hampstead Heath/Kenwood

Colin Gregory said that English Heritage plans to introduce parking charges at Kenwood but the level of the charge had not yet been agreed and formal consultation had yet to take place.

4 Question Time

A large delegation of residents mainly from Heathgate and the surrounding roads attended to discuss the problems with three vagrants who are living at Sunshine Corner at the bottom of Heathgate where it adjoins the Heath Extension.

A number of specific and serious complaints were made including the regular lighting of fires when it was cold, urinating in public, accumulation of litter and aggressive, abusive and threatening behaviour.

It was stated that many of the local residents now avoid the area because of the perceived threat from the individuals who are camped there. Two residents felt one of the vagrants needed help but agreed that it was inappropriate for him to be living there.

An incident where a resident was threatened with a bottle which was then thrown to the ground in the presence of children was described; it was

stated that the children were now frightened to walk there for fear of a repeat. It was reported by another resident that the police were prepared to prosecute over one incident where a brick was thrown at the ground in an allegedly violent fashion but the main witness, a woman, was not prepared to give evidence as she feared retaliation. She said the culprit knew where she lived.

The Chairman thought that something must be done.

Carol Boulter explained to the visitors that the RA does not have powers and that it can only put pressure on LB Barnet, the Trust and the Police.

Derek Chandler who is the Chairman of the Suburb Neighbourhood Watch told the meeting that although we now have a new Beat Officer, PC Pridham, he has to cover three Wards and is at present away on a training course for a month. As the land is private, the police have limited powers to act. However PC Pridham had said he visits the vagrants approximately twice a week and has asked the Community Support Officers to patrol the area in his absence.

Steve Morris said that the legal position must be established. Simon Abbott thought that any action taken must be done in a practical and humane way and one vagrant in particular needs support and that the residents should familiarise themselves with local organisations and act joint. Although David Littaur had been approached by this individual he had never found him to be aggressive. Jean Barraclough said that there had often been tramps living on Hampstead Heath but they had not been aggressive. She suggested contacting an organisation for rough sleepers to see whether they could help. Douglas Blausten felt sorry for the neighbours in Heathgate but had found the individual about whom most of the complaints were made to be an intelligent, non-threatening person.

Eva Jacobs said she could not understand why actions and behaviour, that would not be legal if carried out by a resident, are tolerated and a different set of laws seem to apply to rough sleepers. Andrew Botterill had noticed the individual in Central Square and found him threatening and his behaviour deteriorating. Gary Shaw said that action should be taken.

Alan Walker suggested contacting Homeless Action in Barnet but the Chairman thought that an offer of alternative accommodation had been turned down. Colin Gregory had spoken to the Hampstead Heath Constabulary who are aware of the problem. However the Constabulary does not have jurisdiction as Sunshine Corner which is not part of Hampstead Heath.

Colin said that the statutory authorities must be lobbied .The Trust owns and maintains Sunshine Corner.

Léonie Stephen said that the Trees & Open Spaces Committee had discussed this matter but had not realised the extent of the problem. She

wished that the RA had been informed sooner.

Jane Blackburn, the HGS Trust Manager, said that she is aware of the problem. LB Camden had assessed the individual whom most of the complaints were about in March but he had been judged unsuitable for sectioning under the Mental Health Act. Mrs Blackburn had spoken to the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath and the Heath Constabulary whose powers are constrained by an Act of Parliament. She was told that the Constabulary is unable to remove any of the vagrants' possessions from Sunshine Corner. Mrs Blackburn said that unless there is clear reporting of all of the events, the police could not take action. She suggested obtaining a coherent list of complaints with dates and times.

Derek Chandler suggested that any resident who experiences violent or threatening incidents or saw a fire should dial 999 as this would then be logged as a crime statistic and would be dealt with. Rosalind Josephs suggested contacting the local schools to see whether any of the pupils had been affected.

The Chairman suggested contacting someone who is a facilitator for applications for Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Council agreed that he should lobby the appropriate authorities. He thought that the Trust could introduce regulations making it illegal to sleep on their land; appropriate notices could be served on any rough sleeper; and legal advice should be sought. Reports of incidents should be collated and someone should be appointed as a co-ordinator, probably the local neighbour watch co-ordinator. The next Suburb News could contain an article and could ask whether there are any other residents who have been affected.

The Chairman will contact Dr Jane Bailey, the neighbourhood watch co-ordinator for Heathgate, to formulate a course of action. He will also contact the Henrietta Barnett School to see if any of the pupils are concerned over the presence of the vagrants.

Mr Francis Mungai the LB Barnet Street Enforcement Officer said that LB Barnet might be able to serve a notice on the Trust about the accumulation of rubbish on Sunshine Corner. He will meet with Jane Blackburn and said he can organise patrols of the area and ask his superiors about the possibility of an ASBO.

5 Re-organisation of the 'Street Enforcement Service'

Mr Francis Mungai told the Council that this Service was set up to deal with environmental crimes. It is high visibility, intelligence led and all sources of information remain confidential. It deals with abandoned cars where there are now new powers to remove untaxed vehicles on the road in 24 hours. The service has powers to insist on obtaining names and addresses of dog owners who allow their dogs to foul the pavements and they can then be sent fixed penalty notices. The officers have power to fine people throwing litter. It can tackle discarding chewing gum, graffiti, fly tipping, fly posting, obstructing pavements, unlicensed skips/scaffolding, overhanging trees.

Mr Mungai had previously worked in the area of Claremont Road Cricklewood where there had been major problems with flytipping and dog fouling and with the help of residents this had been effectively dealt with.

The telephone number for the Street Enforcement Service is 8359 7532 and its e-mail address is SES@Barnet.gov.uk Francis Mungai is one of eight officers responsible for the Suburb and four other Wards in the south of Barnet. His e-mail address is francis.mungai@barnet.gov.uk The Chairman thanked him very much for attending and informing Council about this service.

6 Resolution for Bank Mandate

The Treasurer told the meeting that Barclays Bank require a new bank mandate for the new signatories to the RA's Community Account.

The Treasurer proposed a resolution for John Boulter (Treasurer), Richard Wakefield (Secretary) and David Lewis (Vice-Chairman) to be the new signatories. This was seconded by Michael Rowley and passed Nem Con.

7 Endorsement of other decisions and recommendations of the Executive Committee Meeting on 14th April

The Chairman reminded Council that under the RA's Constitution, the EC is only empowered to take decisions until the next Council Meeting.

He told the Council that the EC had recommended that the Lamp post renewal fund in the Annual Accounts should be consolidated into the Accumulated Fund because of Barnet's PFI initiative on lamp posts meant the provision was no longer required. The EC had also recommended that the £2,000 granted for Street Name Signs, when required, should be taken from the Greening Fund rather than current expenditure. These recommendations were proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Eva Jacobs and passed Nem Con

The offer by Andrew Botterill to carry out the RA's book keeping was raised. He was thanked again for his kind offer but he stated that the offer would not remain open indefinitely.

8 Centenary Mugs

Due to shortage of time, this item was postponed to the July Meeting.

9 Report on Political Forum held on 19 April 2005

David Littaur said that this was a successful and well attended event . Thanks were expressed to the Rev Alan Walker for his excellent chairing of the Forum.

10 Sale in Aid of the Tsunami Disaster

This will be held on 7 May at the Free Church Hall.

11 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

This will be held on Tuesday June 7 at Fellowship House at 8pm

