

Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 6th February 2007
at Fellowship House at 8.00pm

Present: David B Lewis in the Chair

John Boulter (Hon Treasurer), Simon Abbott, Douglas Blausten, Alan Brudney, Jean Barraclough, Carol Boulter, Derek Chandler, Nicole Gerber, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council), Eva Jacobs, Rosalind Josephs, David Lewis (Vice-Chairman), David Littaur, Steve Morris, Max Petersen, Richard Kemp, Gary Shaw, Leonie Stephen, Douglas Thomas, Richard Wakefield, Alan Walker

Visitors: Joyce Littaur, Terry Rand, Will Sowerbutts, Angus Walker, Annie Walker

1 Apologies for Absence

Denis Baron, Peter Beesley, Terry Brooks, Francois Crompton-Roberts, Colin Gregory, Georgina Malcolm, Selwyn Nakan.

2 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – 2 January 2007

These were approved.

3 Matters Arising from the Minutes not on the Agenda

Centenary Mug

In response to a question from Carol Boulter asking what had been discussed at the Celebrations Committee regarding the Centenary Mug, David Littaur said that the Committee had referred this back to Carol Boulter as it considered that she was in a better position to take this matter forward.

Falldon Way: rebuilding and Suspension of Bus Stop

Gary Shaw said that it had been proposed by TFL that the West bound bus stop will be moved east and the East bound bus stop will be moved to the west. Roads & Traffic Committee will monitor the position.

Question Time

John Boulter had not yet received a reply from Harold Karton.

Revitalising the Tea House

There was nothing further to report. Alan Brudney reiterated that the Institute would like to sell the building rather than lease it.

Membership Committee Report

Steve Morris said that he needs more Ward Organisers due to retirements.

Matters Arising out of the Executive Committee Minutes including approval of Centenary Souvenir programme

Carol Boulter enquired what had happened regarding the circular letter from the Centenary Committee and the HGS Trust. David Littaur said that the Chairman had spoken to Eddie Caplin about the letter and to whom it will be sent. He awaits the return of the amended draft which will shortly be sent out.

4 New Year Fireworks

Alan Brudney thanked everyone who had helped him and explained that it had been a great deal of work and organisation. More stewards were needed and the collection from residents had not been as good as in previous years.

Alan Brudney said that the Centenary fireworks on 24 June will be the last one that he will be organising but he is happy to give advice and help to whoever takes over. The Events Committee will try to find a replacement. Council appreciated the efforts of everyone involved and particularly Alan who has carried out this difficult physical task since 2000 .

DLt

5 Question Time

Banding of HGS Trust's Management Charge

Angus Walker explained that he had been working with the Trust in a voluntary capacity to assist with their finance, strategy and general policy. He had suggested to the Trust that the Scheme of Management is altered to make the management charge relate to the value of an individual property but after initially publicly appearing to support the idea, the Trust had said that there were problems with the practicalities of implementation and it needed more time to consider this. He therefore decided to make an application to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal himself otherwise there was no chance of it being implemented for the current year. There had been a preliminary hearing of the Tribunal on 30 January where there had also been complaints from a few other residents about the level of the charge. Angus Walker said that the scheme would not be expensive to administer and would take one half a day of a bookkeeper's time. The Trust's solicitor had reserved its position on this and the Trust is awaiting legal advice this week. The total amount collected by way of management charge would be unaffected by these proposals. Dulwich Estate has a similar policy of banding.

Richard Wakefield said that the Chairman of the Trust and the Trust Manager decided not to attend this meeting as they were awaiting legal advice. Members of the Trust Council had been asked not to express their views about this for the time being. The Trust Manager's job is to advise the Trust and to execute policy.

At the preliminary hearing the Trust was told to write to every freeholder to explain how they are able to influence the decision made on this proposal. There will be a hearing at the end of March to discuss the level of the

charges and the case will be heard at the end of May.

The Chairman asked Council for their views and the vast majority stated that they were in favour of banding. Eva Jacobs said that she would like to hear the arguments against this proposal from the Trust before a resolution is passed by Council. Douglas Blausten gave his views on how he thought the Trust should be run more like a business and thought any decision by RA Council should be delayed.

The Chairman pointed out that the Trust had discussed its intention to proceed with banding in the May 2006 edition of their Gazette and then appeared to back track in the next edition published in August although it gave full details in that edition.

Richard Kemp pointed out that the rating system may change as in Northern Ireland which would mean that the banding levels would also have to change again.

The following resolution (as amended) was proposed by Vice Chairman David Lewis and seconded by Steve Morris:

“The Council of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association believes that it would be a matter of the greatest regret if there were a dispute about the Trust management charge in the Suburb's Centenary Year. It supports the introduction of a graded management charge based on Council Tax bands, as proposed in the May 2006 Trust Gazette and calls upon the Trust to conduct a postal ballot of householders to ascertain whether the majority of them agree with this view or would prefer the charge to remain at a flat rate.”

An amendment was proposed by Derek Chandler and seconded by Eva Jacobs: That the word 'principle' should be substituted for 'introduction'. This was defeated with only two votes in favour of the amendment.

A further amendment was proposed by Simon Abbott and seconded by Jean Barraclough: “That 'householders' should be substituted for 'freeholders'”. This was passed Nem Con with two abstentions

Council voted on the resolution as amended. This was passed Nem Con with two abstentions.

Fallden Way Bus Stop

Terry Rand wanted the RA to take a firm stand on this and thought that the TFL proposals were absurd. He thought that TFL should admit their mistake and the RA should insist that they restore the bus stops to their original position. Gary Shaw assured them that he had taken a very firm stand on this and nothing but the re-instatement of the original bus lay-bys would be regarded as satisfactory.

6 Approval of Centenary Expenditure

The chairman announced that so far the sum of £31,087 had been raised from residents. This excludes the gift aid contribution. The sale of brochure

space is going well and there will be a surplus. A sponsorship is also about to be agreed.

Council's approval was sought for funding items of expenditure for the Centenary celebrations:

John Boulter proposed this motion which was seconded by Jean Barraclough 'That the RA make the following sums of money available: £1,400 for the Big Birthday Party, £292.15 for the plaque and for its installation, in honour of Harold Wilson and £1,342 for the purchase of 500 Centenary Tea Towels'. This motion was passed Nem Con.

7 Matters arising out of the January Executive Committee Meeting

Honorary Life Membership

The EC had made recommendations for receipt of Honorary Life Membership to Council.

A motion was proposed by Steve Morris and seconded by Douglas Blausten: 'That David Rapson, Peter Phillips and Joan Beales receive Honorary Life Membership of the RA'. This motion was passed Nem Con

Award in honour of Michael Rowley

The EC recommended an award for £500 in Michael Rowley's name to an architectural student at Kingston University for the best essay on the Suburb to be announced at the AGM and put in place in 2007.

Alan Walker asked for confirmation that it is a one off and that the student could be from a different department at Kingston University, for example, the Suburban Studies department.

A motion was proposed by David Littaur and seconded by Jean Barraclough that 'An award for £500 should be given to a student at Kingston University in Michael Rowley's name, for the best essay on the Suburb submitted in the academic year 2007-2008'. This was passed Nem.Con.

Alan Walker, Eva Jacobs and Simon Abbott were asked to draw up rules for the prize and liaise with Kingston University with the help of Michael's son.

8 AGM Matters

There were none.

9 Vandalism in Willifield Green, graffiti and security for Centenary outdoor events

Derek Chandler had discussed these problems with Sergeant Edmondson who will arrange for police patrols to show a presence in the areas affected. The problem may relate to under age drinking. The police may be able to use their powers of a dispersal order,

Rosalind Josephs told the meeting about the extreme vandalism to the three telephone boxes which she was dealing with.

She is having little success with NTL regarding graffiti on their cable boxes. Leonie Stephen said that the problem with young people seems to have been made worse by the closure of the Royal Oak public house. There is nowhere for them to go on the Suburb. Richard Kemp said that the groups of youths could be intimidating and could prevent residents from walking in the areas where they congregate. Jean Barraclough said that a youth club had opened in East Finchley but two cars in Midholm had recently had their windows smashed. Gary Shaw thought that unless steps are taken now the problem will deteriorate. Carol Boulter considered that it may be necessary to organise street patrols. Simon Abbott would like the RA to do more on the social front and would like the wider problem discussed at a future date. Derek Chandler said that if residents have a problem the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team can be contacted during the day time. For an urgent police response they should telephone 999. In addition, incidents should be reported to Sergeant Edmondson by E mail or at the numbers in the Yellow Directory. It may be necessary to have security to protect the new flower beds in Central Square for the days leading up to the Grand Opening Ceremony on 2 May.

10 Other Urgent Business

Suburb Gallery

Simon Abbott requested that the future of the Gallery, whose lease will shortly expire, should be discussed at the EC.

St Jude's Proms

John Boulter explained that the St Jude's Proms committee need a commitment from the RA for the amount which they will give this year.

A motion was proposed by John Boulter and seconded by David Littaur

"The RA Council agrees that the RA will donate either £3,500 or £2,500 to the St Jude's Proms for 2007, the amount depending on the amount received by St Jude's by the main sponsor of the Suburb Centenary Celebrations. This was passed Nem Con with one abstention."

11 To confirm the date of the next meeting on Tuesday 6 March 2007 at 8.00pm at Fellowship House

This was confirmed