

Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association
Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 5 May 2009
at Fellowship House at 8.00pm

Present: Janet Elliott, in the Chair

Simon Abbott, John Boulter, Carol Boulter, Tony Brand, Terry Brooks, Dave Brown, Alan Brudney, Charles Gale, Nicole Gerber, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council), Colin Gregory, Eva Jacobs, Rosalind Josephs, David Lewis, David Littaur, Richard Kemp, Tony McGuire, Steve Morris, Selwyn Nakan, Judith Samson, Richard Wakefield, Richard Wiseman

Visitors: Bill Asprey, Andrew Botterill, Bridget Cox, Pia Duran, Derek Epstein, Joyce Littaur, Léonie Stephen and Ian Tutton

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| 1 | <p><u>Apologies for Absence</u></p> <p>Peter Beesley, Douglas Blausten, Max Petersen, Gary Shaw.</p> | |
| 2 | <p><u>Approval of Minutes of previous Meeting</u></p> | |
| 3 | <p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes not elsewhere on the Agenda</u></p> | |
| 3a | <p><u>Min. 3 - Proposal for Co-option of two further new Council Members</u></p> <p>Janet Elliott reported that Bridget Cox and Ian Tutton had confirmed that they would like to join Council. Bridget Cox would like to work on increasing membership among the flat owners and Ian Tutton was on the Centenary Committee and on Trees and Open Spaces. He is currently a member of the Club House and Museum Working Group</p> <p>A motion was proposed by Colin Gregory and seconded by Richard Wakefield that Bridget Cox and Ian Tutton be co-opted to the RA Council.</p> <p>This was passed unanimously.</p> | |
| 3b. | <p><u>Review of Council-Sub.Committees interaction (minuted as part of the Henrietta Barnett School Extension discussion at April Council)</u></p> <p>Janet Elliott told the Meeting that the RA will be taking up points made by Andrew Botterill regarding the tightening up of some procedural issues that have arisen in respect of contact and exchange between sub committees and the Council. Some further formalisation or changes to working practices or Standing Orders may be necessary.</p> <p>Carol Boulter asked what lessons had been learnt and conclusions drawn regarding sensitive issues, which would prevent future failure in due process. She was concerned at lack of consultation</p> | |

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| | <p>so far, when in the past there had been extensive consultation on issues which were not as important. She proposed drawing up a paper to present to Council raising some of these issues and the need to tighten up the existing procedures.</p> <p>Janet Elliott stated that she did not want the Council to be rushed on this issue, nor for a discussion in the Council to be based solely on the work of one member, however detailed. She was proposing a review which would be coordinated through the EC. She hoped CB would prepare her paper but first submit it to EC so that it could inform the wider review. Colin Gregory agreed and thought that it would be useful for the EC to digest such a paper and let it inform their debate before the issue is presented to Council.</p> <p>Carol Boulter asked if Council could be advised of any comments made by the EC.</p> <p>Janet Elliott said that the EC or a sub-group conducting a review would be happy to receive contributions from any member of Council.</p> | |
| 3c | <p><u>Publication of Minutes on HGS Web Site</u></p> <p>Derek Epstein and Gary Shaw (Hon Secretary) are preparing the minutes for publication on the website. November to March will be posted shortly. Future minutes should again be posted at regular intervals after the approval of the minutes.</p> | DE GS |
| 4 | <p><u>Question Time</u></p> | |
| 4a | <p><u>Banding of Trust Management Charge</u></p> <p>Bill Asprey asked a question about this which was subsequently dealt with under item 8.</p> | |
| 4b | <p><u>Reorganisation of Trauma and Stroke services by NHS London</u></p> <p>Pia Duran told Council about the proposed re-organisation of trauma and major stroke services. This would mean that LB Barnet residents suffering a trauma or major stroke would no longer be sent to the Royal Free Hospital but instead would go to University College London or Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel.</p> <p>As well as the greatly extended journey time for a seriously ill patient it could be more difficult for relatives to visit. She asked the RA to write a letter objecting.</p> <p>Rosalind Josephs said that the closing date for consultation is Friday 8th May. She said that it is vital for patients suffering a major stroke to be seen by a specialist in hospital within 30 minutes. She thought that an individual response to www.healthcareforlondon.nhs.uk would be more effective and she will prepare a note for distribution to the RA discussion group</p> | |

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| | encouraging residents to complete the on-line questionnaire or send a letter. She also agreed to draft a letter of objection for Janet Elliott to sign on behalf of the RA Council with copies to the local Councillors and Rudy Vis MP. These procedures were agreed. | RJ/ JE | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | <u>Finance</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5a | <u>Urgent Expenditure agreed by Executive Committee and not previously reported to Council</u> John Boulter reported on the following items of expenditure <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Trustee Liability Insurance from Blue Fin</td> <td>£80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AGM lighting and sound systems</td> <td>£313</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SAGE upgrade for Nedret McKinley</td> <td>£313</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data sticks * (for Consam's use in connection with Suburb Character Appraisal data)</td> <td>£68</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HGSRA entry in Institute brochure</td> <td>£50</td> </tr> </table> Richard Wakefield asked whether the information in the Trust's Character Appraisal would be available to other Council members via the data sticks. It was confirmed that this should be possible once Consam had completed its appraisal. It was agreed that the data sticks could eventually also provide a general Council facility if needed. | Trustee Liability Insurance from Blue Fin | £80 | AGM lighting and sound systems | £313 | SAGE upgrade for Nedret McKinley | £313 | Data sticks * (for Consam's use in connection with Suburb Character Appraisal data) | £68 | HGSRA entry in Institute brochure | £50 | DE |
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| 5b | <u>Executive Committee recommendations on provisions for Aged Debts, Risks and need for Risk assessment etc</u> The EC had agreed that a provision will be made at the end of each year in the RA accounts for all bad debts over one year old. Nedret McKinley will provide the Treasurer with a list of outstanding debts at agreed intervals. These will be discussed to ascertain which debts should be included in 'provision' (under assets) in the balance sheet and which will be written off because there is no longer a realistic prospect of their being paid. As the RA balance sheet already includes some debts going back several years in our accounts, the write off for the 2009 accounts could be of the order of £4,000. | JB/ SN | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5c | <u>Request from the Horticultural Society in respect of a permanent panel in the Horticultural Society Centenary garden in Willifield Way</u> Janet Elliott told the Council that this had been mentioned to Council in January and referred to the EC which had recommended a contribution of £1330 (50% of the total cost) should be made. This to be on the basis that a plaque would be erected stating that the RA and the Horticultural Society had been responsible for funding the flower bed. In February the RA Council again discussed and initially agreed to the payment. However, the Council was informed that the Hort. Soc had already made applications to other potential sponsors, so no | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| | <p>vote was taken by the RA pending clarification.</p> <p>Sadly the Horticultural Society has recently informed us that, apart from a small grant from the Trust, no further funding has been offered and the RA has been asked if they would reinstate their offer. The EC recommended the following:</p> <p>A Motion was proposed by Janet Elliott and seconded by David Lewis that the RA should make a donation of £1330 towards the construction of the permanent Horticultural Society flower bed in Willifield Way on the understanding that permanent plaque conditions are applied.</p> <p>This was passed with 12 votes in favour and one against.</p> <p>It was also noted that this flowerbed will be formally opened on 18th July and will be permanently maintained by the Horticultural Society</p> | |
| 6 | <p><u>To receive a proposal from the Events Committee to engage a Risk Management Assessor to reduce RA potential liabilities</u></p> <p>David Littaur explained that there are legal requirements to have a risk assessment for every public event and the Events Committee on behalf of the RA would like to retain the services of a professional to advise the Council and prepare examples.</p> <p>Richard Wiseman said that the Health and Safety Executive may provide free assistance and he and Richard Kemp agreed to assist David Littaur with finding this information.</p> <p>Selwyn Nakan pointed out that the RA cannot afford to risk invalidating their insurance and risk assessments must be correctly carried out.</p> | RW RK DLt |
| 7 | <p><u>Up-date on election/appointments to RA Committees and other bodies for 2009.</u></p> <p>(note:This was dealt with under Matters Arising but is recorded here for clarity).</p> <p><u>Election to the Executive Committee and other RA Committees for 2009</u></p> <p>Derek Chandler has agreed to remain on the London Forum of Greater London Amenity Societies but not on any other RA committee. He will keep the RA informed of any relevant matters which arise.</p> <p><u>Events Committee</u></p> <p>Tricia Dibb had agreed to become the Secretary.</p> <p><u>Roads and Traffic</u></p> <p>Derek Epstein had agreed to become a member and the Secretary.</p> | |

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| | <p><u>Trees and Open Spaces</u> Léonie Stephen will remain on this committee.</p> <p><u>Litter Team</u> Rosalind Josephs confirmed that there were now 120 litter pickers.</p> <p><u>Yellow Suburb Directory 2009</u> Richard Wakefield said that the Yellow Directory is at second proof stage and will shortly be published.</p> | RW |
| 8 | <p><u>A Graduated/banded Management Charge - motion from the Executive Committee proposing a course of action on this issue.</u></p> <p>Janet Elliott explained that this proposal had been before the LVT who had ruled that the existing system of collecting the management charge was reasonable. There had been a discussion at the January Council when Richard Wakefield proposed that, as the Trust now considered it could not itself further consult residents on this issue, and the RA Council had expressed its support in principle, the RA should consult via a questionnaire inserted in Suburb News. There had been a more lengthy discussion at the February Council for which a detailed paper had been circulated but no definite conclusions had been reached.</p> <p>This issue was again discussed by the EC (see April Minutes) which recommended that the Council should use the September issue of Suburb News as the principal means of conducting a Survey. This would have only minor cost implications for the RA. That issue of Suburb News would also include quite detailed information to help residents to decide whether they were in favour of the proposal or not.</p> <p>It was understood that the Trust was now agreeable to the results being sent direct to their offices for processing. The Trust was able to ascertain which respondents were management charge payers and eliminate any duplicates.</p> <p>Some active canvassing by volunteers to encourage participation was also proposed and extra copies of this questionnaire will be printed for these volunteers to hand out to residents who may have lost the original.</p> <p>When asked what the Trust will do with the information Richard Wakefield said that the Trust was not itself expected to make an application to the LVT but would not oppose this. He thought that someone else would take this to the LVT.</p> <p>Bridget Cox said that residents could be reminded to respond via the Suburb Discussion Group or our web site.</p> <p>Steve Morris proposed that alternatively the questionnaire could be included with the Management Charge demand from the Trust</p> | |

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| <p>included with the Management Charge demand from the Trust. The Trust would be asked whether this was possible.</p> <p>Carol Boulter thought that Suburb News was not the best place to get a response and a flyer should be sent out/hand delivered to every Suburb household.</p> <p>Janet Elliott had received two lengthy letters opposing any further RA action on the Management Charge (from David Bogush and Douglas Blausten). Both had expressed concern about hidden and unquantifiable costs, although the present Motion did not commit the RA itself taking a case to the LVT. Douglas Blausten's letter had also expressed the view that there were more important issues with which the RA should be concerned and that pressure should be placed on the Trust to keep their expenses down rather than changing the basis of the management charge.</p> <p>The Council discussed the following Question raised at QT by Bill Asprey:</p> <p>‘ Would the RA be prepared to organise, in some way a ballot of members to show the Trust the support we believe there is for a change to a graduated charge and for the RA to then ask the Trust to reconsider its position and apply to the LVT, themselves, for a change to a graduated charge.’</p> <p>Janet Elliott thanked Bill Asprey for this question and suggested that, depending on the outcome of the motion at this meeting, the RA should be going a considerable way to taking up his concerns. It was also hoped that any action taken by the RA would attempt to bring into the process groups such as his which had already produced evidence of support for change.</p> <p>On the wording of the motion as circulated on the Agenda, Colin Gregory suggested that the words ‘which supports the principle of a graduated management charge’ be deleted.</p> <p>Eva Jacobs pointed out that the word ‘Council’ should be inserted in the first line of the Motion as the whole RA had not approved this proposal.</p> <p>At the end of the discussion and taking note of some of the issues raised Janet Elliott proposed and David Lewis seconded an amended Motion that</p> <p>The Council of the Residents Association which supports the principle of a graduated management charge, will canvass the views of management charge payers by means of a questionnaire in Suburb News and other means and with the help of volunteers will seek an adequate level of response to the question</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">‘Would you prefer to pay a flat management charge (the same for all houses and flats) or a graduated charge (banded like the Council Tax)?’</p> <p>The Questionnaire would be preceded by an explanation and</p> | <p>RW/ JE</p> |
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| | <p>graphs showing the effect of a graduated charge</p> <p>This was passed Nem Con</p> <p>After the vote Simon Abbot said that he had taken legal advice and he considered that the Trust is not following its own constitution which includes subsidising the poor. If the Trust follows its constitution the flat rate is inconsistent. Charities have to be active and not passive. If the Council does not take up this issue with the Trust he gave notice that he would raise it personally.</p> | |
| 9 | <p><u>Conversion of RA to a company limited by guarantee</u></p> <p>This proposal is being carried forward and it will be discussed at the June Council meeting.</p> | |
| 10 | <p><u>Henrietta Barnett School Extension</u></p> <p><u>Action taken by RA and the Trust post meeting at HB School on 24 March</u></p> <p>The plans seen at the school on 24 March were also on show at three evening performances of the Suburb Theatre held at the School and many residents had taken advantage of these opportunities.</p> <p>The plans were also on display by appointment at the Trust offices.</p> <p>A notice had been posted to members of the RA email discussion group telling them that the plans were available at the Trust office and all residents who attended Hopkins presentation were contacted.</p> <p>Further information has been provided about the fenestration but not about the bricks</p> <p><u>Other outstanding related issues</u></p> <p>The Trust PPC were meeting tonight to discuss outstanding planning issues including the fenestration but further information on the type and colour of the bricks had not yet been received and will not be available before 12 May when the full Trust Council discuss this.</p> <p>If the RA wishes to send a message to the Trust before their meeting the Trust will take it on board.</p> <p>Ian Tutton was concerned at the possible large increase in traffic movement, road closures and parking restrictions as well as the hours and days of working once the building work starts. It was agreed that Consam would pursue this matter with Barnet, Hopkins and/or the school, as appropriate.</p> | |
| 11 | <p><u>Reports from RA committees</u></p> | |

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| | <p><u>Events Committee</u></p> <p>David Littaur extended a vote of thanks to Dave Brown, Simon Abbott, Tony Brand, Richard Kemp and Richard Wakefield for their assistance at the AGM. This was gladly endorsed by Council.</p> | |
| 12 | <p><u>Any Other Urgent Business</u></p> | |
| 12a | <p><u>EC Minutes</u></p> <p>Carol Boulter asked for there to be an Agenda item 'matters arising out of the EC Minutes' included in each RA Council agenda</p> <p>This was agreed.</p> | |
| 12b | <p><u>Benefactors Board</u></p> <p>This is being finalised between Richard Wakefield and the Publications Committee</p> | RW/ TB |
| 12c | <p><u>Michael Rowley Memorial</u></p> <p>This will be held at Friends' Meeting House on May 9th from 2-5pm</p> <p>The title is 'Images of Suburbia - how others see us'.</p> | |
| 13 | <p><u>To confirm the Date of the next meeting on Tuesday 2 June at 8.00pm at Fellowship House</u></p> <p>This was confirmed.</p> | |