

**Hampstead Garden Suburb
Residents Association Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on
1 March 2011
at Fellowship House at 8.00pm**

Present: Simon Abbott, John Boulter, Carol Boulter, Tony Brand, Alan Brudney, Charles Gale, Louise Felder, Tony Ghilchik, Colin Gregory, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council), Eva Jacobs, David Littaur, Jonathan Seres, Geoffrey Spyer, Ian Tutton, Richard Wakefield.
Visitors: Joyce Littaur, Léonie Stephen.

Richard Wakefield opened the meeting in the absence of Janet Elliott, who was unwell and the Vice Chairman who was away. Council wished the chairman a speedy recovery. Colin Gregory proposed a Motion which was seconded by Eva Jacobs and was passed unanimously. 'That Richard Wakefield should chair the meeting'.

Richard Wakefield announced that the surveyor appointed by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors following the Concerned Residents challenge to the management charge for 2008/9 had, after many months deliberation, now reported that: *"I am satisfied that the Trust has complied with the requirements of the Scheme as presented in the accounts for the year 2008/2009"* and *"I am satisfied.... that increased expenditure has been required. I do not consider that any of the initiatives that were shown to me on my visit to the Suburb were contrary to the obligations laid on the Trustees"*.

1. Apologies:

Peter Beesley, Douglas Blausten, Terry Brooks, Bridget, Cox, Janet Elliott, Rosalind Josephs, David Lewis, Steve Morris, Max Petersen, Judith Samson and Richard Wiseman.

2. Minutes

2.1 Approval of minutes of previous Council meeting - the minutes were approved subject to the following:

Min.7 Strategy Working Group The first paragraph should read: 'A progress paper on the second interim report had been circulated in advance to Council members and was introduced by Jonathan Seres. The report will be issued in March'.

Min.10a Suburb News The following should be added at the end of this item: 'Richard Wakefield pointed out that every issue of Suburb News carried a statement that Suburb News was published by the Residents Association and that views expressed are not necessarily those of the publishers'.

As a matter arising in respect of Min.3 Northway Gardens Centenary Playground Simon Abbott expressed his concern that the existing pre-school age playground may close when the new playground is completed. Ian Tutton said that there had been no suggestion that this would happen and Eva Jacobs reported that the Trees and Open Spaces Committee were continuing to seek funding for its refurbishment.

2.2 Draft minutes of the Executive Meeting on 16th February were received.

3. Finance

3.1 End of Year Financial Report from Treasurer and Hon Accountant

John Boulter had circulated the accounts. He reported that this had been a fairly normal year and the RA had made a small surplus.

Alan Brudney said that the Allotments Committee and allotment holders are most appreciative of the generous donation which the RA had agreed to pay and which will enable the Asmunds Place site to proceed with their project to provide mains water and install a new gate for the site.

3.2 Gallery

In reply to a question from Colin Gregory, Richard Wakefield said that he had agreed a reduced rent with Fellowship for the time being. Although the Gallery now had many volunteers, they were not selling enough pictures and are still running at a loss.

3.3 Request from Douglas Blausten re: Henrietta Barnett Fund

Douglas Blausten had circulated papers to Council prior to the meeting. He was seeking sponsorship for a series of events that the Friends of Dame Henrietta Barnett Fund wish to put on to raise money for the work of Toynbee Hall.

Council members supported the request in principle but wanted to see the Council's budget for 2011-2012 before committing themselves to a specific amount. Council asked Douglas Blausten to complete the application form in the usual way and to give an assurance that the RA will gain some public recognition.

DB

3.4 Civic Voice

Although some Council members expressed views in favour of joining Civic Voice, there was a concern at the cost. Eva Jacobs was concerned that nothing was known about the new organisation and the annual subscription of £500 is a large sum for the RA to contribute. She did not think that in the circumstances Council had been provided with any further information which would override the recommendation of the EC not to join Civic Voice this year.

4. Question Time

No questions.

5 Arrangements for Annual Report and AGM

5.1 Officers and RA Council Members for 2011

The Council had previously agreed to support Janet Elliott and David Lewis who had agreed to stand as Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Richard Wakefield now reported that Jeremy Clynes, a present member of Consam, had agreed to stand as Treasurer and Council agreed to support his nomination.

5.2 AGM Motion from Carol Boulter

The following motion for the AGM proposed by Carol Boulter, seconded by Ivor Hall had been circulated to Council for discussion at the Council meeting.

'This meeting regrets the failure of the Council of the HGS Residents Association, in respect of the new Henrietta Barnet School development on Central Square, to ensure that there was full public awareness at an early stage of this major project and that residents' views were actively sought and properly represented prior to permission being granted by the Trust and Barnet Council in 2008. We are also deeply disturbed that certain senior members of the RA Council

and of Consam kept to themselves the plans and their meetings with the school's architects, so preventing any kind of meaningful public consultation: I urge you to support this motion in the hope that reforms will be put in place by the Council of the Residents Association to ensure proper consultation with residents in future'

The chairman opened the discussion by questioning whether motions from Council members that appeared to be attacking the RA Council itself should be accepted. The AGM is for Council to report to members on 2010. The events referred to took place in 2008/9. Action has been taken to ensure that the committees now act in accordance with the constitution.

Ian Tutton said that the Council should not 'screen out' the Motion.

Geoffrey Spyer read a prepared statement from CONSAM which he said he would read to the AGM if this motion is discussed but he would refuse to take part in any discussion. Some Council members expressed the views that this Motion should have been proposed two years ago and was not appropriate at the present time.

Jonathan Seres said that Carol Boulter had a right to raise such an issue but it would reduce respect for the RA which would be seen as split at Council level. It seemed strange to raise it after three years when Council, in addition to changes in procedures introduced in 2009, had formed the Strategy Working Group to address other related issues. The Working Group's first two reports had been received and implementation in some areas had already begun. He felt that the motion was against the interests of the RA and the wording may be defamatory.

Simon Abbott said that the RA should not be afraid of a forum to express dissent for the sake of its future.

Carol Boulter pointed out that the motion was intended for consideration by the full membership of the RA and not only for Council.

Colin Gregory said that there were things that went wrong regarding the school extension, but if we damage the RA Council we damage the RA. How we behave with each other affects what the RA thinks of the RA Council. We must be positive and constructive at the AGM.

Eva Jacobs said that Carol's motion was based on a tendentious and selective rewriting of the history of the events of 2008-9 which had recently been circulated to Council Members. Consam was being falsely accused of holding certain attitudes and taking certain actions, neither of which had ever been the case, and individual members, though unnamed, were being targeted. She proposed a motion, seconded by Geoffrey Spyer
'That the RA Council deplores the AGM motion proposed by Carol Boulter and seconded by Ivor Hall on the grounds that:

- 1. The communication issues of three years ago have already been dealt with, and*
- 2. The actions of Consam at that time cannot possibly be debated sensibly in the course of an AGM and innuendoes will be left unresolved in a way which will cause permanent damage to the RA and unwarranted injury to Consam.'*

This was carried by 6 votes in favour, 5 against with 4 abstentions.

Jonathan Seres proposed a Motion which was seconded by Eva Jacobs
'That the proposers of the AGM's motion be requested to consider amending it, as it may be defamatory.'

This was carried nem con.

5.3 Other AGM Matters

David Littaur asked Council to approve the expenditure of £1,200 for the AGM. This included £400 for refreshments and £420 for sound engineers. This was agreed.

6 Strategy Working Party

Jonathan Seres reported on the progress on the implementation of the second interim report. The social meetings with the Trust and LB Barnet are being implemented and a meeting has been organised with representatives from the Trust.

Colin Gregory was not convinced that Council should meet only every two months as suggested in the report and concerned that the implementation of the six year rule would give rise to practical implications.

Simon Abbott said that the RA's role is to be responsive to residents and he thought that having council meetings every two months cannot fulfil this function.

Colin Gregory said that, in the 30 years of his experience, Council had always been the prime body. The Strategy Group's proposal was not inconsistent with the Constitution, but regular monthly meetings help to keep members engaged. He would propose to accept the report and revisit this 'monthly meeting' question, after the AGM.

Jonathan Seres thought that the RA had a role to communicate with LB Barnet and the Trust which is not best done through Council meetings and the RA should be a positive force in the community. JS added that Richard Wiseman, as Strategy group chair, had brought a proposal on this issue to the first meeting of the Working Group. It had been revisited and discussed fully at the January meeting and incorporated into the interim report to the Council. As the report said, the Executive membership would need revisiting, but that would be done anyway by the new Council after the AGM.

Ian Tutton pointed out that every Council member is now able to interact with each of the committees at the touch of a button. Tony Ghilchik was concerned at the proposal for a development officer and the potential costs involved. Jonathan Seres said the figure was an initial thought, and it may be possible to find a local person, for one day a week, at less.

Colin Gregory proposed a Motion, seconded by Tony Ghilchik that 'The Council welcomed the Strategy Report as a basis for further discussions'. This was passed nem con.

7. Henly's Corner Road Works

Papers had been circulated to Council. Transport for London had commissioned reports which concluded that the gantries, to which the RA had objected, are necessary. However, Gary Shaw was still of the opinion that the size of the gantries were unnecessarily obtrusive and was asking R&T to consider taking the matter further.

8. Recent Live Issues in Committees

8.1 Consam

Geoffrey Spyer said that one BT box had been erected without planning permission and he is working on getting this removed.

8.2 Events

David Littaur reported that the Michael Rowley Memorial Lecture will be given by Gavin Stamp on 21 May from 2-5 in the Free Church Hall.

David Littaur informed the Council of the main items of expenditure on the Summer Picnic on 3 July and Council agreed to make the sum of £1,850 available for this event as part of the summer celebration of the Centenary of the RA.

8.3 Roads and Traffic

Charles Gale reported that this committee had now met and Will Sowerbutts had agreed to be Chairman with assistance from Gary Shaw. There are nine members on the committee. They had discussed LBBarnet's proposed increases to parking charges relating to CPZ and Pay and Display, Councillors' free parking permits and the removal of free bays and Willifield Green. The Council hoped that R & T minutes would continue to be distributed in the same way as other committees and that in future the Chairman would be able to attend Council meetings and become more active.

8.4 Trees and Open Spaces

Erskine Hill Oaks

Tony Ghilchik reported that LB Barnet had now agreed that only three tree would be cut down and that each of them would be replaced.

EDF Site

The application to remove the oak tree had been refused by LBB.

Bigwood Open Day

This had been great success and Tony Ghilchik hoped that more similar events will be arranged.

8.5 Hampstead Heath

Colin Gregory reported that in order to reduce costs by 10%, the flower beds in Golders Hill Park will be replaced with herbaceous borders and shrubs, although sponsors are still being sought. In addition, the number of cricket pitches on the Heath extension will be reduced.

9 Other Business

Richard Wakefield thanked Louise Felder for her contribution over the last year as she was not standing for re-election at the AGM. Thanks were also expressed thanks in their absence to to Brigit Cox and Steve Morris, neither of whom were seeking re-election.

As this was the last meeting with John Boulter as Treasurer of the RA, Richard Wakefield thanked him for all the work he had done over many years for the RA.

David Littaur thanked Richard Wakefield for chairing the meeting.

10 Date of next meeting. Confirmed as Tuesday, 4 April at 8pm at Fellowship House.