

Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association
Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 3rd May 2011
at Fellowship House at 8.00pm

Present: Janet Elliott in the Chair, Douglas Blausten, Carol Boulter, Tony Brand, Terry Brooks, Alan Brudney, Jeremy Clynes, Charles Gale, Tony Ghilchik, David Lewis, Max Petersen, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council), Eva Jacobs, Rosalind Josephs, David Littaur, Jonathan Seres, Geoffrey Spyer, Ian Tutton, Richard Wakefield, Richard Wiseman.

Visitors: Joyce Littaur, Leonie Stephen, Michael Fishman, Kay Thornley, Frank and Ludmilla Kriwaczek.

Before proceeding to the Agenda items Janet Elliott proposed and David Lewis seconded the following motion which was passed by Council.

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association sends its heartfelt congratulations to Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on the occasion of their marriage at Westminster Abbey on 29th April. The support shown by the nation and across the globe is welcome at this time of economic difficulty and of instability in parts of the world. We wish them a long and happy life together.

1. Apologies

These were received from Simon Abbott, Colin Gregory, Stephanie Hurst, Judith Samson, Gary Shaw.

2. Confirmation of Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting – April 5 - approved.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes not otherwise on the Agenda

Minute 8 – RA representation on other bodies

David Lewis confirmed he has arranged a meeting with the Head Master to discuss possible RA representation.

4 Question Time

Lyttelton Playing Fields

Michael Fishman asked Council whether the RA was aware of the state of Lyttelton Playing Fields, which is the responsibility of LB Barnet. In particular, the pathways, the benches and the non-existence of toilet facilities – which in his opinion were serious Health and Safety issues. He handed around several photographs. He said that LB Barnet appear to be doing very little about the situation other than to help the recently formed Lyttelton Playing Fields committee, whose sole focus is on refurbishing the children's play area.

He asked whether the RA is prepared to bring pressure on the Council, and help them to meet their statutory obligations. He had written to the MP and to the local councillors and he would like to work with the Trees Committee on this.

Eva Jacobs said that Sally Lewis, acting on behalf of Trees & Open Spaces Committee, had visited the Lyttelton Playing Fields. She had reported back that she was impressed by the wooded area and she thought that the playing fields, apart from the childrens' play area, were in good condition.

Tony Ghilchik invited Michael Fishman to attend the next meeting of the Trees and Open Spaces Committee when the Committee to see whether agreement on any action could be agreed.

Willifield Green

Kay Thornley asked what had happened regarding the sitting of the Mandelson Memorial Bench which had been raised at the April meeting of the Council.. Tony Ghilchik said that he had recently spoken to her and had thought that he had explained where the new bench would be sited. It was agreed that TG would leave the meeting briefly with Mr and Mrs Kriwaczek, so that together they could inspect the actual tree where it was proposed that the new bench would be erected. (See minutes 7.3)

5 Presentation by HGS Trust on Surveyors Report on Management Charge for 2008-2009

Angus Walker, Chairman, and Jane Blackburn, Manager, of the HGS Trust attended the meeting by invitation to talk on this issue. As background, Jane Blackburn told Council that under the Scheme of Management the Trust must charge to freeholders all the costs for running the Scheme in relation to the freehold properties and, where applicable, for areas to which individual freeholders have exclusive access (private roads and gardens). The leaseholders are not subsidised by the freeholders but, where necessary, by the Trust from its own funds. The annual Management Charge varies from year to year but she re-confirmed that the Trust Council is committed to keep it within the range of £100-140 subject to increases for inflation.

The conclusions of the surveyor are set out on the Trust website. The process took seventeen months. Many of the issues raised by the Concerned Residents had already been raised, and answered, some time ago. The surveyor was satisfied that the increased expenditure had been required. The direct cost of the exercise to each freeholder had been only £2.35 but in addition very large amounts of staff time had been spent on this issue. However, if residents can see that the charge is correct, it had possibly been a useful exercise. The Trust is committed to being in a financial position to enable it to litigate but only when necessary.

Jane Blackburn reported that in September 2010, and just outside the formal time for a challenge, a further petition had been presented by the Concerned Residents to the Trust. This time concerning the Management Charge for 2009-2010. Bearing in mind the findings of the surveyor, the Trust had written to the Concerned Residents to explain that they did not intend to proceed to again appoint a surveyor, to look into this further challenge. No response had been received.

The Trust is aware of the need to keep residents informed and future plans include for informing residents of their work including:

- upgrading their website;
- inviting Trust members to an open day in July;
- completing the design guidelines,
- improving the Gazette, and

- giving a talk to residents later in the year.

An opportunity for questions and comments was provided and the following issues were raised:

Eva Jacobs would like to see changes to the Scheme of Management in order that a petition covering identical issues could not be delivered every year.

In answer to a question about costs: Jane Blackburn said that the surveyor's costs had been less than anticipated as he had not found it necessary to seek his own legal advice but had relied on the legal advice taken by the Trust.

The Trust welcomed feedback from residents and is always happy to talk to them and discuss any problems they have.

The question of the Trust's position on banding was raised by Alan Brudney. Angus Walker replied that the Trust represented all residents and the Lands Valuation Tribunal had confirmed, in an earlier judgment, that the flat rate charge was reasonable. Therefore the Trust cannot take a position on banding, but would not oppose a petition asking for a further application to be made to the LVT. Signatures from residents in favour of this are being collected by Ann Walker. In 2009 there had been an opportunity for residents to do this via Suburb News but an insufficient number had responded.

Carol Boulter said that as the Trust encourages residents to talk to them, what opportunity had been taken to talk with the Concerned Residents. Angus Walker said that meetings had been held but not all of the spokespersons for the Group had wished to enter into discussions. In the end the Group had not been persuaded to drop their challenge. Generally the Trust encouraged members of the RA to talk to their neighbours and to clarify the details of the Scheme of Management.

Ian Tutton said that there may be a situation where the RA must support the views of residents against the Trust. However, he was concerned that a small group could engineer a petition and he suggested the Trust to increase the number of signatures necessary to initiate this process.

AW reported that the Trust is considering a review of the Memorandum and Articles and the Scheme of Management and this was likely to address some or all of the issues raised.

At the end of the exchange, the Chairman thanked Angus Walker and Jane Blackburn for agreeing to discuss this issue with members of the Council.

6. Financial Reports

Jeremy Clynes said that he had met with Nedret McKinley and the EC will be discussing the budget he had prepared at their May meeting. He will also produce a set of management figures. **JC**

7. Committee Reports

7.1 Strategy Working Group Update

Richard Wiseman said that the meeting with the Trust was helpful and it will be repeated and supplemented with informal meetings. Unfortunately they had not yet been successful with organising a meeting with LB Barnet and the Councillors.

The email list is progressing. They considered that there is a need to refresh the Committee membership and the Working Group would like to see the 6 year rule implemented by the next AGM.

The Working Group thought that the time has come to determine the nature of the Council Minutes. They considered that amendments and matters arising should be considered only if notified in advance of the Council meeting so that valuable time is not taken up at the meeting, discussing these issues. Richard Wiseman will circulate a note regarding procedure for amendments to the minutes, for discussion by Council at a later meeting RWi

Richard Wiseman was content for other aspects of the report to be raised and discussed at a subsequent meeting or meetings

7.2 Consam

Garden Suburb School planning application

Geoffrey Spyer had looked at and discussed the latest set of drawings. Overall they considered that the scheme was acceptable but there were some concerns at the quality of the drawings and the fenestration. A letter had been written to David Davidson who had agreed.

Richard Wakefield said that the PPC had considered that the scheme was good. It will go before the LB Barnet planning committee on 4th May, although Douglas Blausten was concerned that it has not yet been considered by CAAC who have their next meeting on 13th May.

Jonathan Seres was concerned at some of the windows which are horizontal and appear to breach the Trusts Guidelines. Geoffrey Spyer said that they had been chosen to emulate the original dormers on the school but this has been noted.

BT Cabinets

Geoffrey Spyer said that Consam have the support of the planners who object to the siting of some of the boxes. He had obtained a copy of the refusal document from LB of Kensington and Chelsea which is also a Conservation area and this had been forwarded to the Barnet Planning officers concerned with the current application.

Lighting

The concerns of Central Square residents have been discussed with the contractors and most have been met but it is felt to be unlikely that their request for lower posts will be agreed by Barnet. .

7.3 Trees and Open Spaces

Bigwood Open Day

Tony Ghilchik said that this will be held on Saturday 7 May and he asked Council members to attend.

Willifield Green

Tony Ghilchik reported that Mr & Mrs Kriwaczek accepted that the Mandelson Bench be put around the tree nearest to the Asmunds Hill/Willifield Way junction. TG also reported that the Committee had now ordered the new Tony Mandelson Memorial Bench

There followed a discussion on perceived problems of antisocial behaviour on Willifield Green and other public spaces on the Suburb. Charles Gale expressed his

concern at such anti-social behavior, especially as reported on Saturday nights during summer months and the distress caused to the residents. He proposed the setting up of a small Working Group together with Ian Tutton and Gary Shaw to look into the issue and see what might be done.

Ian Tutton confirmed his agreement to become involved and reported similar problems in the past on Central Square and in the Free Church Car Park. Douglas Blausten said that perhaps the Churches and Synagogues could be involved.

CG, IT and GS were thanked for their initiative on this issue. However it was agreed that the Group needed for terms of reference for its work. Charles Gale undertook to set out his thoughts on this and send them to the Chairman in the coming days. EC was asked to agree a draft for presentation to and agreement by the Council as soon as practicable. **JE & CG**

7.4 Events

David Littaur asked for £900 to be made available for the Michael Rowley Memorial lecture by Gavin Stamp on 21 May. This would cover refreshments, posters, lecture costs and sound engineers. David Littaur said that the sound engineers were an extra cost this year as meeting would be held in a bigger venue, the Free Church Hall. Ian Tutton pointed out that the Free Church has its own sound system which could have been used at no extra cost to the RA, but David Littaur said that the sound engineers had already been authorised and it was too late to cancel them at this late stage.

Douglas Blausten suggested that there should be an entry fee for such events as was charged by other Suburb organisations. Last year 46 people came and £900 is a large amount for the RA to spend on so few residents. It was confirmed that this year publicity would be more extensive. The event was announced in the forthcoming issue of Suburb News to be published on 13 May and posters were in preparation.

Jonathan Seres said that it should also be advertised on the HGS discussion list.

It was agreed that there should be a suggested voluntary contribution of £5 for those attending this lecture and that in future the RA should consider introducing a fee for events of this kind which would be advertised in advance.

The Council also agreed that it is not committed to an annual Memorial Lecture indefinitely.

7.5 Publications

Richard Wakefield said that the latest Suburb News had a large amount of advertising and should be at least self-financing from this source. The Directory and Membership cards are in progress.

8. Any Other Urgent Business

Carol Boulter said that she had been asked to prepare a paper in July, in particular detailing her proposals for a Residents Forum, but she did not wish to put a great deal of work into this if it would not be read. She would like sufficient time for a discussion at Council so that it could be implemented. Unless it could be an Agenda item with time for a full discussion, she thought that there is little point in doing this. She confirmed that there would be no cost involved with her proposal.

Jonathan Seres suggested that we agreed to allocate 25 minutes for a discussion and a vote could then be taken at the end. Carol Boulter will circulate the paper ten days before the Council meeting. Council agreed with this. CB

9. To confirm, the date of the next meeting on Tuesday 7 June at 8pm at Fellowship House - Confirmed.