



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 4th November 2014
At Friends Meeting House at 8.00pm**

Present: Jonathan Seres - in the Chair, Tony Brand, Terry Brooks, Alan Brudney, Tony Ghilchik, Colin Gregory, Jeremy Hershkorn, Stephanie Hurst, Brian Ingram, David B Lewis, Rosalind Josephs, David Littaur, Max Petersen, Amanda Reuben John Sells, Gary Shaw, Ann Spencer, Paul Wenham, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council).

Visitors: Joyce Littaur, Michael Franklin and Peter Falk.

1. (a) Apologies for Absence

Received from Douglas Blausten, Jeremy Clynes, Charles Gale and Diane Walsh.

(b) To note the passing of Richard Wakefield

With great regret Council noted the death of Richard Wakefield. They remembered all he had done for the Suburb in general and for the RA in particular, over many years. Suburb News carried an initial appreciation, and would report fully in the next issue.

(c) Any Other Business not on Agenda

There was none.

2 Conduct and Attendance at Meeting

Regarding Brian Ingram's email to [HGS] Lists alleging 'serious financial irregularities' of which 'most RA Council members have only seen some', the report to Council of 3rd October had been followed by his confirmation that he had not been alleging a hand in the till, and that he would never allege illegality. He had not stated what he had been alleging. He had, the weekend preceding the meeting, issued an apology to Council and a personal apology to Jeremy Clynes.

Three Council members had circulated their view that there had been a sustained and unsubstantiated campaign, and that the form of apology was inadequate, and that a retraction of the allegations, with apology, was needed on Lists, and in the meeting it was suggested by another Council member that if none was forthcoming BI should be excluded from Council. They spoke briefly but BI was not prepared to do as requested. Responding to them, David Lewis said that if the apology did not meet the requirements, currently there is no means of expelling a Council member under the Constitution.

It was noted that the Treasurer had stated that he will not be standing again at the AGM and will not attend a meeting if BI is present unless he apologises and withdraws his allegations, and a member expressed the view that it is most important that the Treasurer is vindicated.

While the Vice-Chairman and others felt that we must move on, the Chairman commented that many Council members are unhappy and to simply draw a line ignores the opinion of those who are offended.

Colin Gregory proposed and Terry Brooks seconded the following Motion:

‘That the RA Council has complete confidence in the Treasurer, Jeremy Clynes, has seen no evidence of ‘serious financial irregularities’ and calls on Brian Ingram to withdraw his allegations and apologise publicly on the HGS List’

This was passed with 15 votes in favour, 2 abstentions and 1 vote against.

Members expressed the hope that the situation would be resolved by the next Council Meeting on 6th January.

3. Questions from visiting residents

Peter Falk, who is a co-opted member of the Trees Committee, asked what the relationship is between the RA and the Trees & Open Spaces Committee (T&OS). He had presumed that the Committee spoke for the RA.

He saw the work done by Brian Ingram in putting in another bid for the Rose Garden as undermining all the work carried out by T&OS and he felt that the RA ‘should back us or sack us’

The Chairman said that the committees are delegated to carry out work within their remit and, as supported by the independent Harris report, when there is a major issue this must be brought before Council as soon as possible, because, as the report put it, the Council carries the can for the work done by a committee.

Working Orders provide that the first letter on a new project to an outside body should be written by the Chairman of the RA.

Regarding the second point made by Peter, the work done by the committee is highly valued, and fully supported by the Council. It was Barnet and not the RA Council that had decided the Rose Garden matter.

Peter Falk pointed out that a member of Council was part of BI’s group; the member declared that he was a supporter but not a committee member, and that he became a supporter after Barnet had decided in favour of BI’s group.

There was a reference to the group’s application to the RA for a grant. The Chairman noted that this would be discussed further under item 7.

4. Council minutes

(a) Approval of Council Minutes of 2 September 2014

They were approved subject to the following amendment:

Re item 7.10 Trees and Open Spaces, The first paragraph should be headed ‘Northway Rose Garden’ and the second paragraph ‘Central Square’.

(b) Matters Arising not on the Agenda

There were none.

5. Financial Report

The Treasurer had circulated the latest financial report and there were no questions from Council.

6. Street Trees

The agenda papers had included an extract from the draft October EC Minutes regarding Street Trees, including the Resolution set out below. Council’s agenda had included the accounting background, clarified by the Chairman, that the effect of the agreement with Barnet and the £10,000 payment by the RA, would be (a) to plant 40

street trees in addition to Barnet's 20 trees, (b) the £2,650 balance of the creditor item would be credited to the RA's income & expenditure account leading to an increase in this year's surplus, and there would be no additional accrual for trees in this year's expenditure account. Barnet's Trees & Woodlands Manager had confirmed by email that there would be no retrospective request for any more funding for previous years.

Terry Brooks asked whether it would be possible to stagger the tree planting as if the weather is bad the trees may die but TG pointed out that this was a one off opportunity which will be lost if we do not accept it.

CG suggested that we reconsider introducing an 'adopt a tree' scheme

Ann Spencer, member of T&OS, said that the cost of the trees included maintenance by Barnet for one year. She and Peter Falk will discuss this and check with LB Barnet that a watering tube will be inserted in each tree.

AS told the Council that LB Barnet have only 51 trees at present and an adjustment may have to be made to the cost.

Council noted the following EC Resolution of 14 October, minuted by EC as a matter of urgency in light of Barnet's tree-ordering window:

'That the EC endorses the proposal that the RA pay £10,000 to LB Barnet for an additional 40 or more trees, (to bring the total up to 60 or more) to be planted by 31 March 2015 in locations and species listed to them by the RA, (or pay proportionately if some trees are not available), on the basis of the LB Barnet's confirmation that once they have received this payment the RA's liability to Barnet in respect of tree planting as at 31 March 2015 would be nil. The purpose is to be clear that, once this planting is done, there is no liability from earlier years.'

7. Application for Grant by Brian Ingram's Northway Gardens Organisation for £4500 or £2500

The agenda papers had included an email request from Brian Ingram on behalf of his Northway Gardens Organisation for a grant of £4500 or £2500, and the RA's standard application form had subsequently been sent to him for completion. There were still three outstanding questions: the names involved in the Northway Gardens Organisation, a breakdown of costs and how the stated figures were reached and the source of the £1200 already collected.

The Northway Gardens Organisation will also be approaching the HGS Trust for funding.

BI said that if the Council would like something more in line with the Crisp proposal more money would be required than in their original plan as:-

- i) The soil is in poor condition and undernourished and a large quantity of manure is required for planting
- ii) A new improved more elaborate water supply will be needed
- iii) The Trees at the back of the Rose Gardens will need thinning by 25% or more.

David Lewis said that normally the application would be sent to the Trees & Open Spaces committee who would look at it and make a recommendation to the EC and then to Council. BI said that his organisation would need to know the RA's decision soon as they intend to start planting in early November.

The Chairman noted that there was important information still awaited from BI's organisation, and that it was therefore impossible for the Council to consider this tonight and the HGS Trust would ordinarily be considering their grants in the New Year. The application will go to the Trees and Open Spaces committee who will

make recommendations to Council. This will be discussed at the January Council meeting. Tony Ghilchik, for the committee, said that the application would need to be completed and submitted to the committee by the end of November, in time for its scheduled December meeting.

Colin Gregory agreed to send details to BI of how the project backed by the RA had in mind to deal with the state and preparation of the soil. **CG**

8. Annual Accounts – form of presentation of Publications’ cost

Publications expenditure in 2013 was £28,875 but, net of advertising income £24,174, the cost was £4,701.

Council discussed whether, in the 2014 accounts, to show this year’s net figure or the two larger figures. If the latter, the 2013 column would be restated to show the two larger figures for comparison.

John Sells proposed and Max Petersen seconded a **Motion**:

‘That in the 2014 accounts the Publications expenditure should be shown as a gross amount and that the related advertising income should be shown as a separate item’

This was passed with 13 votes in favour and 4 votes against. The Chairman abstained

9. Spending Review Report

The Council noted Item 5 of the September Minutes setting out the decisions on items 3.1 – 3.7 of the June Spending Review report, and discussed the remainder of the recommendations

Competitive Tendering

This was approved, including the notes and exceptions, for expenditure above £500 (this threshold to be indexed annually to any increase in the RPI or as rounded or decided).

Projects authorised in stages

The provision for a cost presentation at each stage was approved. It does not apply if the total cost is authorised at the outset.

Open House (the London-wide annual weekend in September)

As recommended, Councillors had been asked if LB Barnet would pay for the Barnet entry in the brochure, like all but two other boroughs. The Councillors have said that there are spending cuts imposed on boroughs, and it is unlikely that LB Barnet will contemplate this payment. However, they are supportive in principle and will come back to the RA by the end of the year with the outcome.

AGM Sound system

There was a potential saving if the Henrietta Barnett School’s own sound system could be used by changing the set up of the Hall, subject to the quality of sound. David Littaur and Max Petersen had gone to the School, by appointment, to test it but the loop system and roving mics were not available, so a further test will take place. As many Council members as possible are welcome to participate in this test. The hire cost of the school’s roving mics is awaited.

10. Gallery

Paul Wenham had circulated a paper setting out the various options, as Fellowship did not wish to set aside a dedicated Gallery room in the rebuilt Fellowship House. These options are as follows:

A Pop up Gallery in vacant shops in Market Place

It would be difficult to negotiate temporary leases and dilapidations and this was the least viable option

Café Art

A possibility in the various Suburb cafes, not as yet considered and possibly with problems of insurance, recognition of the RA and negotiation of commission levels.

RA Website

This option requires relevant IT skills and regular management.
The cost of building and maintaining a website function was not known.

Temporary Exhibitions

There would be logistical problem for organisers - how and where to collect and store works prior/post exhibition, but there is more flexibility in this route.
Fellowship would be installing track lighting in the former Gallery Room, now being enlarged as the Eileen Whelan room.

Open House (different from Minute 9 above)

This concept has worked successfully in East Finchley but there would be security issues.

It was agreed that PW will pursue a virtual Gallery on the RA website as a practical first step and will talk to Steve Morris.

He will also look into Open House and Temporary Exhibitions. Proceeding with one option does not exclude others. **PW**

He would also try to find a small group of volunteers to help progress this. **PW**

11. Committees: issues arising on Minutes plus any major matters indicated by Chairmen

11.1 Executive

The September EC minutes were noted and the October EC Minutes had only recently been circulated to EC for preliminary comment. However, the key street trees extract had been an agenda paper for this evening, issued to Council the previous week.

11.2 Allotments

There was nothing to report.

11.3 Consam

John Sells has been in communication with Richard Wiseman regarding the erected swimming pool building which did not conform with plans or permissions. The Trust seems to be looking for a compromise rather than insisting that it is removed which sends the wrong message to residents. The Trust may join with the enforcement action to be taken by LB Barnet.

Concern was also expressed regarding the apparent spread of hard standings.

The Chairman said that these matters could be raised at the next RA/Trust liaison meeting, due in December, at which Consam would be represented.

The Council were pleased to note that last year the Trust had successfully enforced reinstatement of a hedge and lawn in place of a new hard standing in Meadway.

11.4 Events

New Year's Eve Party/Fireworks

DLt said that a fifth meeting will be held the following day to look at estimates, following a competitive tender, and to make decisions. There will be the same sponsors as last year - Glentree and Melissa Conway.

Posters will be similar to last year and DLt will continue to liaise with publications.

There will be a bucket collection with more collectors.

Individual portfolios will be given to committee members.

11.5 Gallery – see 10 above

11.6 Marketing

Jonathan Seres had retired from the committee and Diane Walsh was the new elected chair.

11.7 Membership

There are 1,780 paid up members after losing 60 associate members following the Theatre Club's separation at the beginning of the year, these being people living outside the Suburb, often well into town. As in previous years, a third Membership renewal circulation had been printed and mailed out at an approximate cost of £350 and had already brought in approximately three times that sum.

11.8 Publications

The Council congratulated Terry Brooks on finalising the issue of the latest Suburb News in difficult circumstances. He hoped to allocate to committee members various jobs that Richard Wakefield had done, to enable Suburb News to continue, and he himself would ensure that the January issue went out as scheduled.

TB would like photos or contributions suitable for a tribute to Richard Wakefield in the next issue.

11.9 Roads & Traffic

Speed Assessment 'Gun'

Gary Shaw had notified the police of the intended use of the device and was awaiting their comments.

11.10 Trees & Open Spaces

Heath muggings

Colin Gregory reported that there have been two attacks on Hampstead Heath recently, and patrols by the Heath constabulary, with whom he has liaised, have been increased (& in turn they have liaised with the Met police).

Bigwood

There will be a coppicing day in Bigwood this Saturday 8th November and more volunteers are needed

11.11 Feedback from Trust Estates Committee

Central Square Tennis Courts: RJ reported that these two courts will be refurbished.

Turner Close has been resurfaced and Linnell Close will be their next project.

12. To note future programme of Council and Open meetings:

12.1 RA Council meetings

Meetings will be held on 6th January [*now to be at Quakers- post-meeting note*], and then provisionally at the rebuilt Fellowship House, 3rd March, 7 April, 5 May, and July 7. All are Tuesdays at 8pm.

Open meetings

October 7 with Councillors from Suburb and East Finchley wards which was attended by approx. 70 residents.

Potentially February 3, June 2.

12.2 RA AGM

Monday 30 March 2015, at Henrietta Barnett School Main Hall.

There will be a General Meeting re Constitution at 7.45pm, AGM at 8pm,

The Council discussed whether refreshments should be provided before or after the meeting or both.

A show of hands indicated that Council preferred refreshments to be available after the Meeting.

13. Any other urgent business.

There was none