



Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday,  
6 January 2015 at Friends Meeting House, 17 North Square, at 8 pm.

Present: Jonathan Seres - in the Chair, Douglas Blausten Tony Brand, Alan Brudney, Charles Gale, Tony Ghilchik, Colin Gregory, Jeremy Hershkorn, Brian Ingram, David B Lewis, Rosalind Josephs, David Littaur, Max Petersen, John Sells, Gary Shaw, Ann Spencer, Diane Walsh, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council).

Visitors: Joyce Littaur, Jennye Seres

**1. (a) Apologies for Absence**

Received from Terry Brooks, Jeremy Clynes, Stephanie Hurst, Paul Wenham.

**(b) Any other business not on Agenda to be mentioned here**

There was none.

**2. Questions from visiting residents**

There were none.

**3. Council minutes**

(a) Approval of Minutes of 4 November 2014: The Minutes were approved with the following amendment:

Item 2 (Conduct and Attendance at Meeting): Line one of the fourth paragraph should read:

‘While the Vice-Chairman and others felt that we must move on, the Chairman commented that many .....

(b) Matters arising, not on Agenda: There were none.

**4. Financial Report**

This was circulated on 28th December by the Treasurer and there were no questions.

**5. Potential Hon Treasurer for nomination by Council for AGM**

The Chairman reported that this position had not been advertised but he had approached four residents who were Chartered Accountants, not a requirement but helpful, and Louise Hillman of Temple Fortune Lane had kindly agreed for her name to be put forward, the others being in full-time employment and unable to commit. He had circulated her cv to the Council on 24 December, with EC support.

Council agreed to nominate Louise Hillman to stand as Hon Treasurer.

**6. February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015 meeting**

In accordance with agenda item 6, the Chairman proposed that there be an additional Council meeting, to enable nominations for AGM elections to be finalised at a meeting rather than by January emails. Jeremy Hershkorn suggested that a short meeting be held, for only one hour or so, which the Chairman agreed to and said that there would be no committee reports as most had recently circulated minutes and would be reporting this evening.

A vote was taken whether to hold a Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, and there were ten votes in favour and one vote against.

The Annual budget will also be an Agenda item at this Meeting, together with a strategic review of spending priorities (as requested last year by Douglas Blausten), aiming to end by 9/9.30pm.

## **7. Annual Report & Accounts**

### 7.1: Resolution to approve draft Annual Report for publication in Suburb News

In accordance with the decision at the September Council meeting, a draft Annual report in a new format for publication in Suburb News had been circulated by email on 24 December. Three half size sheets were also tabled at the meeting.

The Chairman proposed and Gary Shaw seconded a Motion:

‘That the Council approve the circulated draft Annual Report which will be inserted in the next edition of Suburb News’

This was passed unanimously.

The Council thanked Publications, Marketing and the designer for the new format of the annual report.

### 7.2: Resolution to approve publication of the annual accounts separately, on the website, on chairs at the AGM, and on request to those without internet who respond to the information in the Notice of AGM.

It had been originally hoped that Suburb News could be delayed to enable the annual accounts to be included with the Report, but this did not prove practical, partly for content reasons (there would have been discontinuity of “What’s on”), partly for distribution arrangements.

A council member, referring to the website proposal, considered that only RA members should have access to the accounts, and that many organisations do not publish financial information to non-members. Others thought it important that all residents are given the opportunity to look at the accounts, and this was the general view.

A Motion was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by the Hon Sec :

‘That the accounts be put on the web site, placed on chairs at the AGM and that it should be stated in the Notice of AGM that members without internet access can request a hard copy in advance of the meeting.’

This was carried with 10 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 3 abstentions.

## **8. Constitutional change proposed**

An agenda paper had been circulated on 31 December. It mentioned that, as agreed at the September Council, there will be a General Meeting ahead of the AGM, at 7.45pm on 30th March, to consider an amendment to the Constitution to provide for email delivery of Notices to members who have registered their email addresses with the RA.

The paper then referred to an EC proposal, set out in the EC minutes circulated to Council on 24 December, to include another prudent provision, as set out below. The effect would be that Council would have power by a two thirds majority of those present and voting to provide that an individual ceases to be a Council member. It would be a prudent insertion in general terms, on the lines of the Charity Commission standard draft (the RA is not a charity, but EC had found the words useful). The words include provision for due notice, before a possible expulsion is discussed, to the relevant member, and for the member or a representative to make representations at the meeting.

The Chairman mentioned that EC had included three departures from the standard wording:

- to require a two-thirds majority rather than 50%
- to include some text from the Heath and Hampstead Society's 2012 constitution
- to omit membership expulsion.

The proposed Resolution was:

That a new Clause 5(k) be inserted into the Constitution (re-lettering the existing (k) and (l) as (l) and (m) ), as follows:

“(k) An officer or an ordinary member of Council shall cease to be such if the Council so resolves by a two thirds' majority of those present and voting on the grounds that in their opinion the member has brought the Association into disrepute, or that in their opinion it is in the best interests of the Association that the office is vacated or membership of Council is terminated. Such a resolution may only be passed if:

- (i) the officer or member has been given at least twenty one days' notice in writing of the meeting of the Council at which the resolution will be proposed and the reason why it is to be proposed; and
- (ii) the officer or member or, at his or her option, a representative (who need not be a member of the Association) has been allowed to make representations, of reasonable length, to the meeting.

If such a resolution is passed, and the person affected is a member of the Executive Committee or any standing committee or working group of the Association, or a representative of the Association on another body, the person shall by virtue of the resolution cease to be on such committee or group or be such representative.

No person who ceases to be an officer or ordinary member of Council by virtue of such a resolution shall be eligible to be elected to any office of the Association or to Council, or to be appointed to fill a vacancy in either or co-opted to a standing committee, until one year has elapsed from the date of the resolution.”

Some council members said that they were surprised that there was already no such provision in the RA's constitution, others thought that the wording of the proposal was too vague; some thought a larger majority of three quarters (rather than the proposed two thirds) of the Council should be required before an expulsion is put into effect, and some thought 21 days' notice to be too short.

David Lewis considered the change to be unnecessary as the RA had managed without such a clause for 100 years. The Chairman commented that at the November Council meeting DBL had, in a particular context, pointed out that currently there is no means of expelling a Council member.

Jeremy Hershkorn had expected the Constitution already to have such a clause and gave examples where it would be needed.

Douglas Blausten said that it is a dark day for the RA. The RA is not a charity and it is an elected body and it would curtail freedom of speech. We should be able to deal with any issues as a community and we should not have these sanctions.

The Chairman suggested that before considering the amendments of detail, it would be helpful to take a sounding whether Council wished to proceed at all. Colin Gregory said this could be done by a motion that "the Resolution be not put", and the Chairman invited a proposer and seconder for that motion.

Douglas Blausten proposed a Motion which was seconded by Max Petersen:

'That the proposed Resolution be not put'

This was defeated with 5 votes in favour and 11 against. The four amendments of detail were then proposed as follows:

(1) Douglas Blausten proposed a Motion which was seconded by Ann Spencer:

'That the Resolution should provide for a majority vote by 75% of all Council members whether present or not before an expulsion under this clause may come into effect and that there should be a right of appeal to a judicial body or person'

This was defeated by 5 votes in favour, 9 against and 3 abstentions

(2) Tony Ghilchik proposed a Motion which was seconded by Max Petersen:

'That when looking at the proportion of Council members who would vote for an expulsion under clause 5 (k) it must include all those who are present and abstain'

This was defeated by 7 votes in favour, 8 against and 2 abstentions.

(3) Tony Ghilchik proposed a Motion which was seconded by Max Petersen:

'That when considering an expulsion under clause 5(k) there should be a majority vote of 75% rather than a 2/3 majority vote of Council members present and voting '

This was carried with 9 votes in favour and 7 against.

(4) John Sells proposed a motion which was seconded by Jeremy Hershkorn:

'That the notice period referred to in the proposed clause 5 (k) (i) should be at least 42 days rather than at least 21 days'

This was carried with 14 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

The Chairman proposed a Motion which was seconded by John Sells:

'That the proposed Resolution for a new clause in the Constitution, as previously circulated, should be put to the General Meeting ahead of the AGM on 30 March 2015 with the two amendments which have been agreed regarding the 75% majority vote of Council members who are present and voting and the extended notice period of 42 days, so that in the circulated text "two thirds" should be replaced by "three quarters' (75%)" and twenty one days" by "forty two days' (six weeks)"

This was passed with 10 votes in favour, 5 against and 2 abstentions.

Brian Ingram said that no one had the opportunity to make reasonable representation on this. The Chairman referred him to the circulated papers.

## **9. Committees: issues arising on Minutes plus major issues indicated by Chairmen:**

### 9.1 Executive

There was nothing additional to report.

### 9.2 Allotments

AB said that this is a quiet time and there was nothing to report.

### 9.3 Consam

John Sells reported that Consam had made a formal objection to the proposal to place two antennae by the spire of St Jude's to enable utility meters to be remotely read. Consam's position had been agreed by Council members in an email exchange and had been forwarded to the proposers by the Chairman on the last day of the consultation, 30<sup>th</sup> December.

### 9.4 Events

#### Fireworks

David Littaur said that heavy publicity had drawn hundreds of people to a 'brilliant' fireworks display. There had been a bucket collection which had raised over £1,000 and although the budget allocated, net of the collection, was £4,000, only £3,200 net had been spent.

He thanked his committee and volunteers who had worked very hard, which the Chairman and the Council endorsed with congratulations to DLtr.

#### Hustings Meeting

This will be held in April before the election on 7 May and three possible dates have been reserved. It will be held in the Free Church, rather than the hall, to enable larger numbers, and the cost of hiring the Church will be the same at £100.

### 9.5 Gallery

It was reported that Paul Wenham is in discussion with Steve Morris regarding the website proposal, and is researching the artists' open house proposal based on the East Finchley model. **PW**

#### 9.6 Marketing

Diane Walsh reported that the committee are looking to prepare an over-arching marketing plan. There was no support in the committee for more new residents' parties except perhaps the late summer, and they were considering how to proceed with the names of the new residents they have collected, probably knocking on doors when the season is warmer and days longer. They have increased the number of notice boards on the north side of the Suburb and prepared the new format for the Annual Report.

#### 9.7 Membership:

As at 30 November there were 1,808 paid up members after losing 60 Theatre Club associates living outside the Suburb, following its separation from the RA.

Subject to appropriate IT support, emails will be sent out to request membership renewal during January, as well as the usual postal mailing with the Notice of AGM.

#### 9.8 Publications

David Lewis said that his remit on the committee is concerned with the RA's pages on the Suburb website. More members for this Committee would be welcome.

#### 9.9 Roads & Traffic

GS reported that the Minutes which will shortly be circulated will include the results of the first speed checks. **GS**

#### 9.10 Trees & Open Spaces

Tony Ghilchik said that there will be another Big Wood coppicing day this Saturday 10th January and he would like volunteers to attend.

#### Rose Garden

TG said that he had not received the completed grant application form from Brian Ingram with all the required information, although BI said that he had supplied all the information requested in various emails. He was asked to resubmit the form with the information included in the boxes specified.

#### Central Square

The T&OS Minutes had referred to the Central Square residents' committee's discussions with Barnet regarding a potential shared cost plan totalling £40,000 (plus fees and labour). In reply to a question from Ann Spencer, TG said that the £40,000 includes planting and preparing the beds but in addition there were some doubts as to whether the volunteers would be able to deal with the maintenance of the Square, and the paths may have to be relaid, at further cost, at a later stage.

#### 9.11 Feedback from Trust Estates Committee

There were three proposals being considered regarding the future of the Central Square Tennis Courts. The next meeting will be held on 26th January and RJ will attend and report back to Council. **RJ**

## **10 To note future programme of Council and Open meetings (& AGM):**

### 10.1 RA Council Meetings

Meetings will be held on 3rd February, 3rd March, 7 April, 5 May, and July 7. All are Tuesdays at 8pm. All provisionally booked at Fellowship House except 3<sup>rd</sup> February which will be held at Friends Meeting House.

### Open Meetings

Potentially June 2.

### **10.2 RA General Meeting and AGM**

Monday 30 March 2015, at Henrietta Barnett School Main Hall. General Meeting re constitution at 7.45pm, AGM immediately afterwards.

## **11. Any Other Urgent Business**

There was none.