



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

Present: Jonathan Seres - in the Chair, Tony Brand, Terry Brooks, Alan Brudney, Charles Gale, Tony Ghilchik, Colin Gregory, Stephanie Hurst, David B Lewis, David Littaur, and John Sells, Gary Shaw, Ann Spencer, Diane Walsh, Paul Wenham, Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council).

Visitors: Joyce Littaur, Jennye Seres, Anita Harlow and Hella Schrader

1. (a) Apologies for Absence

Received from Douglas Blausten, Jeremy Clynes, Jeremy Hershkorn, Brian Ingram, Rosalind Josephs, Max Petersen, Amanda Reuben.

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

There was none.

2. Questions from visiting residents

Joyce Littaur said that the exterior of the H2 buses are very dirty and one of their drivers fails to stop when hailed and is unhelpful. GS will take this up with TfL but in the past he has found that this usually gets nowhere. Hella Shrader had written to TfL regarding concerns over the H2 bus and she will email a copy of her letter to GS. **GS**

3. Council Minutes

(a) Approval of Council Minutes of 4 November 2014

As circulated in the agenda, an insertion was proposed by the Chairman, for the reason given in the agenda, and summarised below:

In item 6 (Street Trees), the introduction to the EC Resolution should read as follows, the additional words being after 'October':

"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:"

The last 11 words are exactly as in the Agenda paper issued to Council ahead of the 4th November meeting and inadvertently omitted from the Minutes but are important as the Constitution specifically authorises the EC to take decisions in cases of great urgency so long as submitted to Council within 30 days, which it was on 4th November.

(b) Approval of Council Minutes of 6 January 2015

The Minutes were approved with the following amendments:

Item 9.6 (Marketing): replace 'global' with 'overarching'.

Item 9.8 (Publications): replace 'the RA's presentational aspect of the website' with 'concerned with the RA's pages on the Suburb website'.

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

4. Financial Papers

These had been circulated on 27th January by the Treasurer

(a) Year end Management Accounts.

The Agenda had given the main reasons for the year end surplus of £12,851, even after the £4,000 donation to the Fellowship appeal, the key being that the provision from previous years of £12,650 for street trees, not invoiced by Barnet who, by the agreement of October 2014, will only be invoicing for last year's £10,000, so the RA writes back into surplus £2,650 (as shown) and does not need the budgeted additional £3,550. Secondly, £3,600 was saved by Richard Wakefield's tendering Suburb News printing and it had £1,200 more advertising revenue than budgeted. Thirdly, £3,500 was saved on mailing and associated printing costs, following the discussions started by Brian Ingram.

Tony Ghilchik observed that the subscription income is down and the Chairman explained the loss of the Theatre Club membership of approx 60 associate members living outside the Suburb, and a further net loss of about 100 resident members.

It was agreed that although it may be necessary to review membership subscriptions at some stage, particularly as an AGM resolution of increase does not apply until the subsequent calendar year, it was not appropriate at this AGM following the large surplus. Diane Walsh said that when the subscription is increased, every Standing Order has to be amended and it would be preferable to ask residents to enter into direct debits. TG said that these are expensive to manage. Colin Gregory reminded the meeting that the subscriptions are a suggested minimum and we have to give residents an option not to increase if we change to a system of Direct Debits.

Ann Spencer queried the value to residents of the Open House September weekend for which the RA contributes £800 (less the Free Church's £200). The Chairman explained that the Suburb's iconic buildings are opened to the public for the week-end and the Trust organises guided walks. There are roughly 350 participants and while most were probably from outside the Suburb, residents benefit from the other open buildings shown in the booklets available in the library and participated in the guided walks. LB Barnet had withdrawn from funding this over 10 years ago, apart from a brief period. The organisers have allocated £1,600 to HGS and the Trust pay one half and this year, in line with the Spending Review's recommendation, have been asked to contribute more, albeit much of their grant allocation had already been committed in advance.

(b) Draft Budget for 2015. This was discussed, in order to inform the debate at 6 below, but to be finalised until after that debate. Minor additional information and footnotes were added, per the agenda.

DW queried the low rate of interest paid on the RA's reserves, and the Chairman mentioned a similar outcome in another body, after a broker had tested the market.

5. Nominations by Council for AGM.

Per the agenda, JS had informed Council that he is not re-standing as chair having done two years as vice-chair and one as chair, and EC had recommended to Council David Lewis for nomination, who was happy for that to be proposed.

David Littaur proposed and Tony Brand seconded a **Motion:**

'That David Lewis be the Council's nominee for Chairman at the 2015 AGM'

This was passed unanimously (save for David Lewis who abstained).

Per the agenda, Max Petersen and Gary Shaw were happy to re-stand as vice-chair and hon sec, and EC had recommended to Council their nomination.

John Sells proposed and Diane Walsh seconded a **Motion**:

‘That Max Petersen be the Council’s nominee for Vice Chairman, and Gary Shaw for Honorary Secretary’

This was passed unanimously (save for Gary Shaw who abstained).

Louise Hillman had been agreed by Council on 6 January to be nominated as Hon Treasurer.

The Chairman was willing to be nominated for Council, and this was done by David Littaur and seconded by Tony Brand.

Discussions had taken place with a number of potential new Council members, which are continuing, and if there were potential nominations, details would be circulated to Council for consideration by email ahead of printing the Notice of AGM but, as last year, this would not prevent later nominations.

Rosalind Josephs is moving out of the Suburb and has to retire from Council. Peter Beesley and Paul Wenham are choosing to retire at the end of the AGM, although Peter Beesley may agree to assist on a particular project and is still active on the Trees & Open Spaces Committee, and Paul will assist in the transition of Gallery matters to whomever Council appoint to take it forward.

As notified to Council by prior email, Tony Brand, Charles Gale, Colin Gregory and Tony Ghilchik retire at the AGM by rotation and have confirmed that they offer themselves for re-election. Nomination forms were signed for each of them.

Gary Shaw mentioned Max Petersen's intention, prevented by his absence, to propose, and therefore GS proposed, and David Littaur seconded a **Motion**:

‘That the RA Council nominates Lynda Cook to stand for Council’

This was passed unanimously.

6. Spending priorities and finalisation of budget

(a) Strategic review of spending priorities, per Minute 6 of 6th January 2015.

There was no appetite for a 3-5 year budget plan of spending priorities at this stage. Instead, some Council members suggested seeking residents’ views, either by Suburb News or to members by email using Survey Monkey.

There was a discussion on the breadth of potential spending, using examples from the 2010/12 Strategy reports. There was no consensus on broadening the customary remit without support from a members’ questionnaire. It was noted that the RA currently focuses on:

- information for residents

- looking at the environment, buildings, roads, trees and open spaces
 - creating communal events;
- and that residents refer to Events, parking tickets and Bigwood but do not realise that Suburb News is prepared by the RA and that we might consider highlighting the RA's name in the Suburb News logo.

The meeting specifically supported the importance to community of putting on Events.

The issue arose of how our income is allocated – whether by specific sums or percentages. It was suggested by John Sells that the RA should have a stated set of objectives and each be given a percentage of the budget. Hella Schrader, visitor, was invited to speak and made the case for this approach.

After a discussion, no decision was taken but, noting that very little money had yet been spent this year, HS was asked, and agreed, to look at the fixed costs and variable expenditure in the last three years and calculate the percentages in order to inform a discussion on the principle. She will present her suggestions and calculations on 3rd March. She suggested that Council adopt the circulated budget for this year on a provisional basis, see what the percentages are, including recent years, and review it on 3rd March – this was agreed.

(b) Finalising budget for 2015, per the discussion at 4(b) above and the debate regarding priorities at 6(a).

Council provisionally adopted the Budget for 2015 with the presentational amendments, subject to review of the percentages model on 3rd March in line with the outcome of (a) above.

7. To note future programme of meetings

7.1 RA Council meetings

Meetings will be held on, 3rd March, 7 April, 5 May, July 7, September 1, and November 3. All are Tuesdays at 8pm. All are booked at Fellowship House which reopens on 2 March.

7.2 Open meetings

Potentially June 2, October 13 (not 6th), December 1.

7.3 RA AGM

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

8. Any other urgent business.

(a) Diane Walsh suggested that Louise Hillman be invited to the 3rd March meeting. DBL and others had no objection.

(b) Suburb News: TB brought copies of the latest edition of Suburb News and was applauded for stepping in after Richard Wakefield died and for all the work preparing this.