



Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday
1st September 2015 at Fellowship House Will field Way at 8.00pm

Present: David B Lewis - in the Chair, Tony Brand, Lynda Cook, Tony Ghilchik, Charles Gale, Colin Gregory, Jeremy Hershkorn, Louise Hillman, Brian Ingram, David Littaur, Max Petersen, Frances Prentice, Simon Sackman, Hella Shrader, Gary Shaw, Ann Spencer, Ian Tutton, Diane Walsh.
Rosemary Goldstein (Secretary to the Council).

Visitors: Joyce Littaur. Stephen Crisp and Richard Townley for their presentation regarding Central Square only.

The Chairman informed Council that due to pressure of work Amanda Reuben had resigned from Council, the EC and Events Committees. *Post Meeting informational: The Chairman forgot to mention that John Sells had also resigned from Council and Consam also due to work commitments.*

1. Apologies for Absence

These were received from Douglas Blausten, Alan Brudney, Stephanie Hurst, Terry Brooks, Jonathan Seres..

2. Question Time

There were none

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

Matters Arising

'Elliott' should be substituted for 'Ellio' in line 4

Rose Garden

'Frances Prentice' should be substituted for 'Francis Prentis' in paragraph 8

Committee Reports

Membership

'Elliott' should be substituted for 'Elliot' in line 1

4. Matters arising from the Minutes not on the Agenda

Rose Garden

The Chairman said that despite a request and an understanding that there would be no further adverse criticism of the RA after the grant to the Northway Gardens organisation was made, this had not been the case. The Chairman reiterated that Council members are not expected to criticise the RA outside Council.

Marketing Committee

FP pointed out that the Minutes of this committee had still not been circulated and the Chairman will try to progress this. **Action: Chairman**

Virtual Gallery

FP said that she had been unsuccessful in becoming more involved with this project. BI explained there is a possibility that the Gallery could be reinstated in the Eileen Whelan room and that this is being considered by Fellowship. He will keep Council informed. **Action BI**

Finance

Council was concerned about the membership software package which had been installed on Janet Elliott's computer and can only be accessed from there. Council agreed that DBL should enquire about broadening the number of people that can access this but only for the membership committee.

The question was raised as to whether the software is a standard package or one which was customised for the RA and whether its full potential is being realised. TG said that the RA's special requirements were fed into a standard package. AS suggested that the company which supports the software could give a demonstration on how to use it properly but this was not thought to be necessary. **Action: Chairman** To discuss these points with the membership committee.

5. Receipt of EC Minutes of 21st July 2015

These were received and noted by Council

6. Approval of SGM Minutes

Council Expulsion Clause

3.2 First paragraph

Insert '(a barrister or legal practitioner)' between 'Counsel' and 'and' in line 2

3.2 Final paragraph

Delete 'itself' from line 3

(There are two items 3.2 and the items should be renumbered)

7. Finance

LH said that the forecast for the year is a little better than budgeted, which was largely due to the success of the summer picnic.

She had written back accruals from the Gallery accounts which had resulted in a profit for the Gallery. In response to a request from BI, LH said that there is a need to keep the Gallery accounts separate because of the trading element.

LH informed Council that the RA will have approximately £68,000 in reserves by the end of the year and she recommended that the RA have a Reserves Policy. She asked what would happen if the RA's income ceased and their advertising dried up. The RA could need to commence legal action and they also hold money collected on behalf of Fellowship. She suggested that a reserve fund of £50,000 would be appropriate.

The EC was tasked with discussing this and recommending a figure at its September meeting. **Action: Chairman**

8. Grant Application by Central Square Residents Association

Central Square Flower Beds

Richard Townley on behalf of the applicant told Council that Central Square was designed by Parker and Unwin with the later input of Lutyens. He said it has been

neglected for over 35 years. An informal group of residents comprising about 10 households mainly in North Square and calling themselves the Central Square Residents Association has proposed a scheme to replace and rejuvenate Central Square starting with the flower beds. The group suggests that the whole Square, including the paths, trees and grass is in need of attention - path restoration alone could cost £45,000 for taking up and relaying the York stone slabs. At the present time the group is seeking funding only for the flower beds which is the project that they thought would have the most impact.

Stephen Crisp, professional garden designer, was asked by the Central Square Residents Association to submit a plan for these flower beds in keeping with the original designs.

Mr Townley distributed copies of the plans to Council and Mr Crisp presented the scheme which he said was inspired by photographic evidence of the 1915 planting schemes and would compliment the architecture. He considered the Square a civic space and he has designed raised flower beds which he says will resolve the drainage problems. 98% of the planting would be permanent as bedding plants are too costly and perennial plants are easier to look after. The primary display would be in the summer although there would be visual interest for nine months of the year. The plant palette would be colourful and provide a habitat during the winter with less maintenance responsibility. He would like to start work in October 2015.

In response to questions, from Mr Crisp said that the churches had been consulted and the scheme was suitable to withstand the effects of children playing on the Square.

Mr Crisp said that the maintenance cost would be £5,700 pa, for the flowerbeds alone, and, at the present time, LB Barnet is obliged to continue maintenance of the Square. He stated that his proposal when put into effect will require only half the present maintenance. LB Barnet had agreed to carry out work for some time but also would like some input from residents. It was hoped that the Trust will take on some of the work although the details have not yet been worked out.

TG had understood that the Group had agreed to put in some voluntary work, however Mr Townley said that the flower beds would need to be professionally maintained and could not be dependent on volunteer labour. The Head of Henrietta Barnet School had indicated the School's willingness to have students participate in maintaining the flower beds but this has not been put in writing, nor is there a specific plan.

There is a possibility that the Trust may be interested in buying back Central Square but discussions are at an early stage.

Mr Townley said that the scheme is estimated to cost £40,000. Barnet has promised £20,000 if this sum can be matched. The Trust has promised £7,500 and will increase this sum to £10,000 if necessary. The group is seeking £10,000 from the RA.

DW pointed out that the group is an informal group of neighbours who may or may not be members of the RA. They have no status or formality.

JH asked whether local residents had been approached for funding and Mr Townley said that £2,500 had been offered by residents around the Square and he thought that this amount could be doubled if he approached other residents.

IT would be concerned if residents living around the Square contributed as it could leave them with an element of control and they may consider it as an extension of their gardens. He would prefer the money to come from the RA.

The Chairman said that he was aware of some groups who set up a charitable organisation to specifically manage projects and the RA could consider undertaking this. The process is much easier than it used to be.

IT said that we need to be sure that nothing is done to compromise any action which may be taken by another body eg the Trust but Stephen Crisp said that he had liaised with the Trust.

IT (who is the Minister at the free Church as well as a member of RA Council) made another point that he would like to see wheelchair access on the North side of the Square which would avoid going through the garden of the Free Church. He pointed out that students at HB School use the square heavily during the day time and he would like to see somewhere to sit and possibly a picnic table. He also pointed out that youths regularly visit the square with cars and they drink and leave litter and this could lead to vandalism

The Trust will be managing the ordering of the plants and the invoicing aspects of the scheme, and Barnet will pay their £20,000 to the Trust as soon as the matching funds have been committed.

Richard Townley and Stephen Crisp were thanked and then left the meeting to enable the Council to discuss the proposal.

Trees & Open Spaces Committee proposed that the RA should match the amount offered by the Trust, i.e. £7,500 plus £2,500 if needed. DBL proposed that the RA make a grant of £7,500. He said that no details had been provided and if more money is required the group can come back to the RA.

SS thought that we should have a fully worked out proposal including ongoing maintenance. JH agreed that the RA should receive detailed information before making a grant and that the RA should have something in writing from the Trust and LB Barnet, although CG (a member of Trees & Open Spaces) said that he would like to match the Trust's offer.

DW thought it 'scandalous' that the RA might proceed without detailed costings bearing in mind the detailed information that was required for the RA's grant to Northway Gardens which was a far smaller sum.

After discussion and amendments to the wording Colin Gregory proposed and Max Petersen seconded a Motion that:

In principle the RA will contribute the same amount as contributed by the HGS Trust ie £7500 up to a maximum of £10,000 but first wished to see a detailed breakdown of the £40,000 estimated cost of the project and how the annual maintenance costs will be funded

This was passed by 16 votes in favour with 1 vote against and 1 abstention

Suburb Mailing

The Chairman sought authorisation from Council for a mailing to Suburb residents who are not members or have not renewed this year. This initiative is being handled by the Membership Committee. He said that as we no longer have Membership Reps the mailing will have to be by post and the cheapest quote obtained is £2,278. There has been a decline in membership and there are now 1609 members excluding life members and associate members.

BI was unhappy with the wording of the letter and he thought that this money could be spent in a better way. MP agreed and he and HS suggested a cheaper way for mailing residents using volunteers to deliver the letters. The results of previous mailings this year were unknown. The Membership Committee have not met this year but an update of activities has been circulated. It was agreed that the EC will discuss this further at their September meeting and HS was invited to attend. Authorisation for expenditure in excess of the budgeted amount was not given.

Action: Chairman

9. Trust Basement Guidance

Supplementary Basement Guidance had been circulated by the HGS Trust to residents although the RA had not been consulted earlier on the content. IT would like the Trust to provide a detailed explanation of the decision taken regarding the retrospective planning permission for the double basement on the house in Norrice Lea, built without Trust consent. There was concern that this could create a precedent and that the wrong message was being sent out.

Action: Chairman will write to the Trust and request an urgent meeting with them to discuss this and also the draft Supplementary Basement Guidance.

10. Other items

As the Council Meeting had overrun it was agreed to adjourn and to postpone discussion of the following items. Urgent items which require decision will be considered at the next Executive Committee meeting.

Litchfield Way/Meadway Roundabout; Barnet roads and pavements spending plans; Open Meeting 13th October will be on Crime Prevention in the Suburb; Committee reports.

The next RA Council meeting is Tuesday 3rd November 2015 at Fellowship House. Future RA Council meetings will be held on 1st December 2015 and 2nd February 2016

Open Meeting: 8th December 2015