

An unusual Trust Annual General Meeting

The 50th Annual General Meeting of the Hampstead Garden Trust was a very different affair from previous years. It was the first AGM for the new Chairman of the Trust, Raymond Taylor, who found himself speaking to camera using the now ubiquitous Zoom platform instead of to the usual real life audience in the hall of the Henrietta Barnett School.

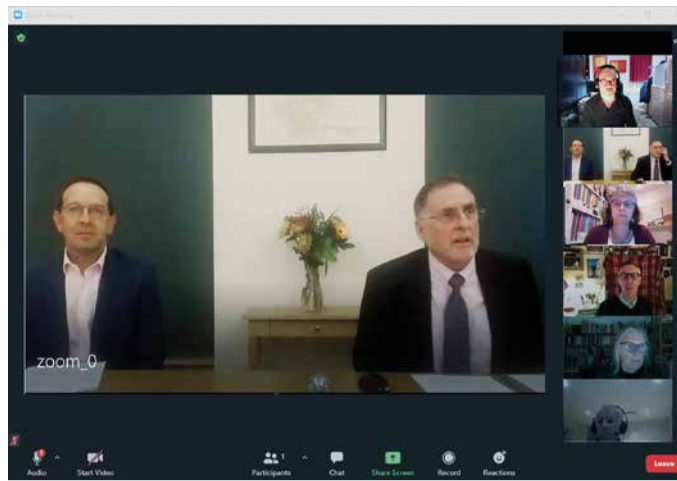
Trust members had to forgo their convivial half an hour of chat and drinks, and this might explain the relatively low attendance of around 60 members compared to the at least double that number who attend the usual meetings.

Raymond started the meeting by saying it had been an eventful year – at his first meeting with the Trust manager, Nick Packard, Nick announced he would be resigning! Then of course the arrival of coronavirus meant a complete overhaul of how the Trust ran its day-to-day operations. Like many organisations, the Trust has had to adapt to remote working but this should bring long term benefits by reducing costs and increasing efficiency.

Raymond felt another benefit of lockdown was the opportunity to be better able to appreciate our Suburb, and how lucky we are to live in it. He reflected on the shared objective of the Trust and residents to preserve it. He went on to thank his fellow trustees and committee volunteers for their work and the time they give. He also thanked the Trust staff for their work in maintaining the smooth operation of the Trust in lockdown.

Before the meeting approved the report and accounts, Ira Gaberman asked about the proportions of spending on overheads, including staff, and projects and improvements. We were given a breakdown of the costs and it was explained how the nature of the Trust's work affected this.

The meeting then moved on to the election of trustees. This year there was only one candidate for the position being vacated by David White, who was thanked for his contribution after completing his two three year terms. The candidate, Trevor Price, was therefore elected unopposed and he introduced



himself with a short statement. He told us he had been living in the Suburb for 30 years.

As in previous years, questions were then welcomed from members under AOB, which began with Peter McCluskie asking about any concerns regarding the recent government white paper on planning reform. Alison Blom-Cooper, the trustee appointed by the Royal Town Planning Institute, remarked that it is more of a green paper and that, as always, the devil is in the detail, and in this case there is no detail.

The proposals talk of streamlining, growth, renewal and protection. The expectation in Proposal 11 is for design guidance and codes to be prepared with community involvement, which is welcome. Proposal 17 concerns conserving and enhancing historic buildings and areas. Energy efficiency is dealt with in Proposal 18, which looks for ambitious improvements and means the Trust will be looking at sustainability guidelines.

Martin Fleishman then asked about damaged and missing hedges and felt that there

should be a more reactive and productive strategy in place. Simon Henderson, the new CEO of the Trust, said the Trust recognises the problem and has guidance in place, which is interpreted and explained on a case-by-case basis. The Trust welcomes information on hedges from residents but does not enforce cases of historic lost hedges or disputes between neighbours.

Emma Howard put a question about the impact of electric cars and their charging. Some residents apply for consent for chargers and others do not, but the Trust would like everyone to speak to them first. There are problems for residents with no driveway and Barnet has no rules or guidance; the Trust is looking at the issue. There have been no applications for solar charging installations, but, as roofs are protected, there is a general presumption against roof panels.

Ira Gaberman apologised for asking multiple questions but wanted to know more about the Trust's scope for action on issues concerning crime, roads and the environment. Simon Henderson said these were

interesting questions about areas where the Trust's remit is limited by its Articles of Association and the Scheme of Management. On crime the Trust has worked with the police on guidance on roads, hedges, alarms and boundaries. All matters concerning roads are the responsibility of Barnet council. Changes for environmental reasons such as solar roof panels are subject to the usual controls.

The final question concerning allotments came from Emma Howard who, given the lack of available plots, wanted to know if plots are being fully used and communal work is being done. Many plot holders are shielding or self-isolating at the moment and site secretaries usually know where this is the case and should be contacted with any queries.

The Chairman then closed the meeting, hoping it had been a worthwhile experience for all of us, and that, hopefully in time, we would be able to meet in person. It will be very welcome if we are able to revert to an AGM in real life next time. Only time will tell.

TERRY BROOKS

Central Film School photo-shoot at the Orchard



After carrying out robust basic and Covid-19 related risk assessments The Central Film School were granted permission to use the Orchard Housing

Society's gardens as a location for their film *Goodbye Grandma*. A heart-warming story about a man who has just lost his elderly mother and misses her

so much that he brings home an elderly lady from a care home and presents her to his family as the 'new grandmother'. The story is about grief, loneliness and the love we all need to share. Tenants were offered a chance to be extras in the film. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

BEATRICE BOUSSARD

Free Church Harvest Festival foodbank collection

The Free Church has been supporting the Trussell Trust backed Foodbank operating out of Colindale for nearly 10 years with weekly collections. But for one week in the year – Harvest

Thanksgiving – we collect for Homeless Action in Barnet.

This year, thanks to generous donations from church members and the wider community we had the largest ever collection

of foodstuffs, toiletries and other useful items. Thanks everyone, but remember, food poverty is always with us, so please continue to support your local foodbanks.

IAN TUTTON



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A shout out for... Dennis, HGS's Town Keeper
Dennis has been keeping Market Place spick and span for almost a year now since Emma Howard, RA Chair, persuaded Barnet Council to provide someone to look after the area. I spotted him recently in his yellow high vis jacket outside Sherrards whilst he was taking a quick tea break and persuaded him to pose for a photo for Suburb News. Thank you Dennis for all your hard work!

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