

current local news and details of upcoming events, filling the gap between editions of our quarterly Suburb News. Edition 100 included details of Barnet Council's Controlled Parking Zone Survey; booking information for Hampstead Garden Opera's performances of Figaro and Garden Suburb Theatre's production of Powell and Pressburger's 1946 film *A Matter of Life and Death*, which all took place in November. Details of new building works at Bute Mews; updates from local organisations; and other local news articles were also featured.

Suburb eNews is sent to all RA members for whom we have email addresses. If you are a member and don't receive it, that is likely to be because we don't have your email address which is the case for some of our long-standing members who pay by standing order just email membershipsec@hgsra.uk with your address details and ask to be added. If you are not a member, it's another good reason to join: please go to hgsra.uk/join to sign up.



New EnComm chair, Jonathan Waxman (Photo: Samantha Leek)

4. New Environment

Committee for the Suburb:

I wrote in the previous edition about my wish to set up a new Environment Committee of the RA and am delighted at the response received and the high level and variety of expertise we have in our community. The inaugural meeting took place on 3 November and I will provide an update in the March 2022 edition of Suburb News.

5. Allotments: our treasurer, Steve Morris, filled in for Philip Harlow who was unable to attend the Council meeting. Things are going well and there is now a very small leadership group working with the HGS Trust on the bigger challenges, with site secretaries devoting their time to the more day to day aspects of running the sites including seed swaps, grass cutting and other matters.

6. Memorial benches in parks and open spaces: LB Barnet now have a new procedure for ordering benches and a price list. This can be found on the RA website <https://hgsra.uk/info/index.html>.

Pavements

PHILIP OKRENT, PAVEMENTS

I am constantly receiving emails from residents regarding pavement problems which I then inspect and, if they are sufficiently dangerous based on the guidelines of Barnet BC, I upload photos and descriptions to our Councillors John Marshall and Rohit Grover and I must say that the response from them is excellent. They of course then pass details on to Barnet and usually receive a communication with a reference number stating that repairs will be carried out normally within seven/eight working days. This does not, I am afraid to say, always happen and there are still locations where repair works have not been carried out.

There is also of course the problem where Barnet's contractors are taking short cuts and replacing damaged paving stones with tarmac or rubber crumb which is possibly acceptable where tree roots are in situ but not as has happened in Denman Drive North and on Norrice Lea opposite the junction with Linden Lea which is frankly just laziness, and I am following these situations up.

I understand that where house owners carry out works which cause pavement and curbs outside their properties to be damaged, the Council is entitled to request compensation for the cost of remedial repair works. I wish this was followed up more often.

There are also ongoing problems in many streets throughout the Suburb of blocked and overflowing manholes causing flooding particularly at road junctions. There is one incident in Ingram Avenue outside No.36 where water has been pouring out of a manhole for weeks and NO ONE whether it be Barnet, Thames Water, Affinity Water or Capita seem to be admitting liability or taking steps to rectify the matter which could develop into a dangerous scenario in the winter months when it ices up. Thames Water closed off the drive to No.36 Ingram which meant they had no vehicular access to their own property for a substantial amount of time but absolutely no works were carried out...

I hope that we will see more improvement in the Suburb's pavements in the future and will continue to work towards that goal. Please send photos and precise location details where there is a pavement issue which you are concerned about. You can contact me at pavements@hgsra.uk.



Photo: Emma Howard

Allotments

PHILIP HARLOW, ALLOTMENTS

This year, due to the ongoing COVID situation, the usual harvest supper was replaced with an informal social event on Sunday 12th September at the very hidden Wordsworth/Willfield allotment site, giving the opportunity to have a glass of wine and to chat with fellow allotment holders about the trials and tribulations of the year.

About 40 plot holders attended; the weather was kind and it was generally agreed that it was interesting to visit another allotment site. It is likely that similar events will be held in 2022 on other allotment sites following the positive feedback. Thank you to the plot holders on the site for allowing us to use their site!

It was doubly appropriate to hold the social here as there were two overall winners on this site.

Evelyn Thomas won the Phyllis Young trophy for the best plot and Stuart Hill won best newcomer. Both were worthy winners and judges based their decision on crop variety, use of space and neatness of plot.

Next March we will be holding the bi-annual seed swap so we are encouraging plot holders to save seeds from now on to give everyone a head start for next year.

Street trees in the Suburb

PETER FALK, TREES

It has been a disturbing summer as Barnet carried out their three-yearly survey of street trees and as a result decided to fell 81 plus more on the park areas and cut back the crown of over 200 other street trees. This massacre repeated in other wards and in other Boroughs in London will cause untold damage to the environment and air quality leading to more deaths and illness from respiratory diseases.

However, Barnet has little choice because of Health and Safety regulations. If they find a tree has a disease, even though it will probably survive for another 25-50 years, it will be recorded on their data base and if subsequently a branch/tree should fall on a car/pram, any enquiry will severely condemn the Borough, fine them and the tree officer responsible for retaining the tree will be reprimanded/dismissed. Many of the tree reductions have been made because of potential subsidence claims where the law is heavily in favour of insurance companies. In my view we need a completely new mindset whereby trees are valued as important assets. For example, if a mature oak was valued at £100,000, insurance companies would balk at suggesting these mature trees should be felled.

The good news is that, after negotiation, Barnet has agreed to plant 86 new trees in the Suburb this winter of which 19 will be financed by the RA (see later). I have worked together with Barnet and agreed the total list instead of

just giving them our preferences for the 19 trees because I wanted the trees to be planted in the best positions, considering trees in front gardens etc and also because the Vacant Tree Pit list on the Council's system is very inaccurate. Where there have been disagreements, there have been joint visits to resolve the problem. We have also agreed to 12 residents' requests with the proviso that the resident will monitor the health of the new tree. Most new trees should be in situ by the end of December. Of course, it will be many years before the foliage of the new trees will be anything like the foliage of the felled or reduced crowns, but it is better than nothing.

The RA is again making a major contribution which should

be trumpeted. We are financing 15 trees at a total cost of £6,000 and have also started a 'Sponsor a Street Tree' scheme. This year four residents are contributing £250 each and the RA is paying £150 a tree to make up the total cost of £400 charged by Barnet for a suitable new tree.

There seems little logic for the Government to say how important it is to plant new trees but do nothing to stop existing trees being felled. Of course, new trees are important, but it is much more important to retain our existing tree stock with mature foliage and the wildlife habitat they provide.

To support our work or if you would like to help fund a street tree near you, please email me at trees@hgsra.uk

Due to her moving out of the Suburb, Dr Ann Spencer will be relinquishing her various RA and Trust roles. We thank Ann for her contribution to the RA's work over many years and, in particular, for managing the tree survey and leading the work on paving/hardstanding which led to the Trust producing guidance on the issue with much RA input. We offer her our warmest best wishes for the future.

The 109th RA AGM

Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association

will take place on Monday 28 March 2022 at 8pm in the Bigwood Hall, Bigwood Road

Nominations for posts of officers and members of the Council must be received by 14 March 2022.

The nomination should be submitted in writing, signed by the nominee, a proposer and a seconder and sent to:

The Membership Secretary, PO Box 67700, London, NW11 1NS

(The AGM agenda will be available from 21 March on the RA website, www.hgsra.uk)