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Residents Association rescues Suburb library

On 17 April the Market Place library re-opened, just 2 weeks after the Barnet closure. Co-chairmen Jeremy Clynes (RA Treasurer) and Jonathan Seres (RA vice chairman) said: "It was the RA ability to bring out the volunteers that gave us credibility with Barnet. After a slow start, Barnet is now extremely supportive – this isn't a cost thing so much as a helping hand when the unexpected arises."

Now badged 'Garden Suburb Community Library', it is open for the same 11 shifts per week as before, which means 22 volunteers plus reserves, and then more the second week as less than half the available 70 are weekly.

Barnet has bought software for the library to enable it to save the disproportionate cost

of the previous system. There will still be the ability to reserve books from Barnet branches.

Members of Barnet libraries can bring in their membership card which is instantly scanned to enable them, from home, to manage borrowings on line at www.gardensuburblibrary.org.uk. The website also has a link to Barnet's where the catalogue will shortly include HGS books again, under the Community Library. The facility to reserve books from Barnet branches will also restart very shortly.

The volunteer management team has 3 professional librarians, 2 administrators and 2 software specialists. Some of these, plus volunteers, make up 6 lead trainers who attended a full day's library software training session, and in turn trained over 25

volunteers in hourly slots on 16 April. The library re-opened on 17 April with Anthony Howick and Tia Kremer behind the counter, and Hetty Colchester and Jeremy in support. Anthony said, soon after the start, "It looks like a busy morning."

A celebrity 'opening' later in the summer is a possibility. The library team will be surveying users and others to see how best to meet local needs and more publicity is always a help. More volunteers will be useful, and interested residents are welcome to drop in at any time.

RA Chairman Janet Elliott said, "I congratulate Debbie Warland and Neville Silver who got the whole thing started with a petition, Jeremy and Jonathan, and not least the 70 or so volunteers who are going



Jeremy Clynes, Debbie Warland, Hetty Colchester and Jonathan Seres celebrate their library achievement.

to make it work. I urge everyone to support them and make the most of what is now our very own library."

Trust management charge upheld - again

The level of the management charge for 2009/10 has been endorsed by an independent expert as well as the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust's operation of the Scheme of Management for the Suburb.

The management charge covers freeholders' share of the Trust's costs in looking after and controlling change to the Suburb's landscape and architecture. The Trust Council has consistently stated that it expects to maintain the charge, subject to inflation, within the range of £100-£140 per annum in the foreseeable future; approximately £2 per week, per household.

The independent expert appointed by the President of the Royal Institution of Chartered

Surveyors to decide whether the annual charge for 2009/2010 was fair and reasonable concludes "I have not been able to agree on any of the substantive matters raised by 'Concerned Residents' and 'Objectors'. The Management Charge at £125.80 per household for the year 2009/2010 has been confirmed. (Full report available on the Trust website).

This is the third challenge to a Management Charge by groups led by Dr Raphael Papadopoulos of Asmunds Place. The Leasehold Valuation Tribunal rejected his previous challenge to the charge for 2005/2006 and another independent expert rejected his challenge to the charge for 2008/2009.

The latest expert's report agrees with previous decisions in upholding both the level of the charge and the way the Scheme is operated by the Suburb Trust. However the report has left all parties dissatisfied. The report was first wrongly issued for the year 2010/2011, withdrawn, and re-issued for 2009/2010. The expert commented that, "the figures within my Determination were principally there by way of illustration and the arguments in connection with the management charges remain precisely the same." The confusion has naturally increased the objectors' unhappiness and has reduced the Trust's satisfaction in the decision.

The objectors are calling for the Trust to demand the return of the expert's fee of £11,439. (This has to be paid up front without either party having sight of the report). The Trust Council will consider the matter when it meets in May. However the law in respect of an 'expert determination' of this kind limits the grounds for challenge to matters such as deceit, fraud and bias, which do not apply in this case. The Trust has been advised that the expert's report is valid; that he has fulfilled his contract; and that attempted litigation to

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RA chairman Janet Elliott makes a presentation to retiring vice chairman David Lewis MBE at the RA AGM in March. See p 4.

New Offices, New Era

Our experience spans over 30 years and contrary to popular belief, we sell much of the middle to lower priced property within Hampstead Garden Suburb. There is no magic at work here. We are totally committed and are known to achieve handsome prices for two main reasons:

Firstly, because we deal with buyers trading up as well as down in price range, the latter of whom have more flexible budgets.

Secondly, we regularly deal with monied purchasers from outside the area who have grown used to even higher priced property in Central London and believe that the Suburb is not only leafy and desirable, but good value.

"We are passionate Suburbites and we eat and breathe the Suburb, it is in our blood and we treasure its heritage.

Most importantly we understand that your home is your sanctuary and is probably one of the largest assets in the family and therefore a sale/purchase/letting needs the tender care of dedicated and sensitive professionals who are skilled at this important task.

We have just refurbished our offices which are now bristling with all manner of state of the art technology and there is a private clients car park which you may find very useful.

If you have not used our services before, what a good excuse to pop in and have a chat over coffee, even if it is just about current trends. After all, we are at your service."



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Residents Association Events

A MULTI-NATIONAL SUMMER SUBURB WEEKEND

Everyone is invited to enjoy, and take part in, a multi-national event to celebrate the year of the Olympics.

The weekend of July 14/15 sees the Free Church hosting a mix of Suburb residents of all nationalities who will be displaying aspects of their diverse cultures in whatever way they think appropriate. It will be entertaining and thought provoking to see so many different cultures represented here. If you aren't already involved and would like to take part, do get in touch with organisers Ian Tutton 8457 5898 itutton@aol.com or Maureen Schuricht 8455 9122.

PICNIC ON THE SQUARE

Fire works or summer picnics, the enthusiastic response to the

RA's events on Central Square prompts us to lay on another Picnic on Central Square on July 15. With music from Man Overboard with their swing classics and gypsy flavoured jazz, face painters and children's entertainers – it promises to be a fun informal get together with friends and neighbours.

Tables and chairs, if you need them, can be booked in advance, ring 8731 6755 or email dvdlttr@gmail.com.

Chairs £2 each, table and 10 chairs £20. Be there before 1.15pm for a free preprandial glass of fizz.

THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT LUTYENS

Jane Ridley, great grand daughter of the great man has had access to more than 5000 letters which resulted in her acclaimed biography, Edwin Lutyens: His Life, His Wife, His Work. She will talk at this year's

Michael Rowley memorial event supported by Rev Alan Walker and Dr Vesna Goldsworthy of the Centre for Suburban Studies at Kingston where Michael taught architecture.

Tea, cakes and conversation follow. Friends Meeting House, North Square, 2 - 5pm, May 12.

