

WHEELED BINS YOUR VERDICT PAVILION

After the physical survey by the RA wardens last autumn to identify the likely number of properties likely to suffer problems with the wheeled bins (reported in the Winter Suburb News), the RA and Trust decided to mount an opinion survey to establish the extent of opposition to the bins felt by the residents. This survey was undertaken because:

- Barnet continued with its refusal to carry out any kind of trial in the Suburb or to test the opinions of residents. The Borough gave the impression that the degree of satisfaction they found from their survey in the pilot area was likely to be typical in other areas in the Borough; the Trust and RA were convinced this was wrong in respect of our area.
- Virginia Bottomley, one of the Department of the Environment ministers, had advised our MP, John Marshall, that residents should pressure their councillors to ensure that the Council carries out its duties in a way the residents wish.
- Mrs Dot Benson, Vice Chairman of the Public Works Committee, which decided that the scheme should be brought in Borough-wide, doubted whether the audience of more than 300 people at the November public meeting were representative of opinion generally in the Suburb.

A questionnaire was designed and enclosed with the Winter issue of Suburb News. The aim was not to carry out a slanted survey like that of the Borough; our view of their survey had been confirmed by the management consultants engaged by RA and Trust to carry out a critique of Director of Technical Services Max Caller's report justifying the scheme to the Council. Therefore our questionnaire included both the Trust/RA case against the bins, and Barnet's case in favour, as described in their leaflet handed out at the November meeting.

There has been an amazing response to survey; over 1500 forms were returned, 40% of houses and maisonettes on the Suburb (flats are excluded from the total and very few responded anyhow). Only as many forms went out as there were households, so there can be no question of double voting or other means of the RA rigging the result. This can be confirmed by even the most casual inspection of the forms. This response rate compares with the more usual 8% in surveys where forms are enclosed with newspapers circulated throughout a neighbourhood.

The result was an overwhelming no to wheeled bins. A total of 1347 households (89%) disagreed with the bins; only 9% agreed with them; 2% expressed no view. Taking account of the response rate, people in only 4% of Suburb houses expressed themselves in agreement with bins in the Suburb, compared with 36% expressing satisfaction in the Borough's pilot area. Of those who did actually say yes, only 136 houses, nearly half (61) said they preferred the existing collect and return system. So in effect, only 2% of households expressed themselves unequivocally in favour of the Borough's proposals.

Assistance will be asked for by nearly 600 households (40%), compared with the 5% figure proposed by Barnet as the level below which assistance could be contained. It remains to be seen how much assistance Barnet will actually give, but one hardly feels confident that they are likely to be generous when acting as both judge and jury. The more assistance is given, the more the economic benefits of the scheme go out of the window (or into the bin).

Of those requiring assistance, 63% need it on grounds of age,

"Previously pleasant roads completely ruined by these hideous bins, especially little Victorian terraced houses."

"I expect the wheeled bin will disable us"



i.e. 10% of all Suburb houses already, not counting any who did not reply to the survey; 44% due to disability; 58% because of steps or a steep slope; and 16% on account of disability (these groups overlap).

Green bins are an option offered by the Council — if you pay £2 to £10, depending on size; these were preferred by 56% of households. Two small bins, not on offer by the Council even if you pay extra, were preferred by 54%. This question was asked to ascertain the possible position if the Council decided to try to make the system more palatable to the Suburb residents. However, it would drive a coach and horses through their economic calculations, which are in any case suspect, according to our management consultants.

Some people already use plastic bags, though these are not without disadvantages. But if normal dustbins are abolished, 54% of residents would prefer plastic bags to wheeled bins.

Another question to test the strength of view on abolition of the collect and return system, which is a major degradation of the service to ratepayers, asked if people would be prepared to pay a surcharge for the dustmen to collect and return the wheeled bins. More than 700 households, half the sample, said they would pay.

So, all in all, the residents have given an emphatic thumbs down to the wheeled bins, and if the Council is in any way trying to represent itself as responsive to those who pay the piper, they should take note. A substantial number of people wrote supplementary comments on their forms and a few wrote letters. Some explained existing arrangements, some denounced the scheme with varying degrees of vehemence. Examples of the comments:

"Tell Barnet what they can do with their bins."

Someone who has seen the effect of the system in North Finchley:

(question on assistance).

Colour of bins: "Blue for Tories." (beside question on surcharge; many similar comments).

"I wish to pay for a service not a desecration."

"We do not live in a £½ million property and expect to wheel a bin outside."

"Scheme will ruin rural aspect of hampstead garden suburb."

The final quote summarises the RA position:

"Bins would be completely unacceptable."

As a footnote, a number of people expressed concern because they do not know how wide the bins are. The widths given in Barnet's leaflet circulated in areas where the scheme is being implemented are: small bin (120 litre) 19"; standard bin (240 litre) 23"; large bin (330 litre) 26"; extra large bin (500 litre) 49". PRG-T

It's all fun and games at the Pavilion Children's Centre, based in the Pavilion at Lyttleton Playing Fields N2. The perfect opportunity for the children to let off steam whilst mums, dads, au pairs etc can sit, get to know and enjoy the company of others in similar situations.

At present the Centre operates two groups; one for 'Mothers and Babies' the other for 'Mothers and Toddlers'.

The 'Mother and Baby Group' started in recent weeks, meets every Wednesday afternoon from 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm for those with babies up to one year old. Toys, rattles etc are provided for babies amusement and nappy changing facilities for mums convenience and peace of mind. Admission is 50p per child.

The 'Mother and Toddler Group' is held from Monday to Friday with two sessions each morning: 9.30 to 10.45 am and 11.00 am to 12.15 pm. A play leader is on hand to supervise activities such as sing-alongs, painting, glueing and play dough, protective aprons are provided. For those children who prefer to amuse themselves there's plenty of stimulating toys and books as well as Wendy Houses, a climbing frame and slide.

Admission is 70p. All newcomers welcome. Any enquiries to 455 1573 or 883 4690.

BLACK SACKS

Last Autumn we mentioned the appalling situation that had developed in some parts of the Suburb of residents putting their garden refuse in black sacks and then depositing it on the grass verges and pavements outside their homes expecting the Council to remove it. Since then, we are delighted that this practice has almost ceased.

We are aware, however, that some less reputable builders dump sacks of waste material on Suburb verges, and there are still a small number of anti-social people who turn a blind eye to their contract gardeners depositing their garden refuse on the Suburb. Regrettably we even know of some people who have put their household waste in black sacks and then left the sacks on the Suburb at some distance from their own homes.

It is really so simple to take household and garden rubbish to one of the two recycling centres at Tilling Road near Brent Cross and at Summers Lane and, with the gardening season fast approaching, we appeal to all residents to make a special effort this season to ensure that there are no black sacks deposited on the Suburb anywhere at all. PL

INSTITUTE SOCIETY

Most Suburb residents are familiar with the Institute but are not so clear about the Institute Society whose membership comprises those who have the welfare of the Institute at heart — those who are friends of the Institute and anxious to strengthen its service to the community. The Society's aims are to promote learning, the arts and music in the Hampstead Garden Suburb and to encourage communal activities — all this is done through the Institute.

The Society, through its Council, manages the affairs of the Institute. The Council comprises persons nominated by the Local Education Authority (5), the Governing Body of the Extra Mural Department of the University of London (1), the Hampstead Garden Suburb Fellowship (1), the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association (2), three co-opted members and up to three members of the Society elected by the Society. Thus the Society is directly involved in the management of the Institute.

Suburb residents over the age of 18 are eligible for membership; the minimum annual subscription is £1 but as the Society is a registered charity covenants for £5 or higher sums are welcomed. Further, it is a company limited by guarantee but, in the event of winding up, the liability of members shall not exceed £1.05. Members receive the Institute News three times a year together with circulars giving details of Institute activities.

The Council delegates the social side of the Institute's activities to a smaller Institute Society Committee which organises occasional evening functions, the reception before the Society's Annual General Meeting, provides stewards for Institute Open Week and until recently served refreshments during Open Week — a service welcomed by many. Unfortunately the annual Dorothy Copey art competition must be housed in the Tea House which makes impossible the serving of refreshments. The Committee also, jointly with The New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust, organises the biennial Dame Henrietta Barnett Memorial Lecture.

One cannot say that membership carries any personal advantage — but it brings to members a sense of responsibility to the community as a whole. Let us remember that Dame Henrietta Barnett, our founder, regarded the Institute as the focal point of her achievement — the "Temple of Learning" as she called it — physically the centre piece of her Suburb, flanked by the spiritual temples. Her aim to provide education for all from "four to fourscore" is pursued today by

the School and the Institute.

By joining the Society and taking part in its activities residents have the opportunity to help, albeit in a small way, to uphold the Dame's ideals.

EHTH

Environment Week

For some time the Institute has been supporting the Environment Week programme by providing the Tea House free of charge to the Residents' Association. This year, however, it is making an additional contribution. Several of the Institute's Art and Craft tutors will be on hand to demonstrate their skills, and to exhibit their own work as well as that of their students.

The tutors participating will include June Standing (Stained Glass) on Saturday 22nd April; Barbara Jackson (Enjoy your Art and Prefoundation/Portfolio Art Course) on 23rd April; on Saturday 29th April it will be the turn of Helena Giras (Pottery) and on 1st May, John Nash (Calligraphy). At the time of writing the demonstration and exhibition for Sunday 30th April is still to be arranged.

Why not pay them a visit between 2.30 and 5.00 pm in the Tea House? RB

IT'S SO EASY

Do you know that household and garden rubbish can be quickly disposed of at Barnet's Brent Terrace Civic Amenity Site just off and en route to Brent Cross shopping centre. Going westwards, the Site entrance runs parallel with and adjacent to the North Circular road. Taking Meadway Gate as your starting point, during weekdays, you can drive to the site and return in approximately 14 to 16 minutes easily. Weekends are so much more congested; the time taken greater. The site area is kept clean and tidy and you will find the Council staff courteous and helpful. Next time that you shop at Brent Cross why not take a bag of rubbish with you and dispose of it en route at the Council's Civic Amenity Site? It's so easy! EH

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