

# Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch publicity drive throughout the Golders Green and Finchley Police Divisional Area

## Posters and Car Stickers

No doubt you will have seen the Neighbourhood Watch posters in the tube stations, bus shelters and shops in the area, and the stickers on car rear windows. This is all part of a three month publicity drive within the boundaries of the Golders Green and Finchley police divisional area to spread Neighbourhood Watch more widely and to form many more watches. If you haven't already got a Neighbourhood Watch sticker on your car or if you know of a shop or other public place that would be prepared to put up a poster, will you help the Neighbourhood Watch movement by taking a sticker or poster? - obtainable from your Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

## The reasons for the campaign

In Hampstead Garden Suburb we are fortunate in having over 98% of Suburb houses and over 47% of Suburb flats covered by Neighbourhood Watch with the result that crime in the Suburb (with the exception of vehicle crime) is approximately half of what it is in non Neighbourhood Watch areas outside the Suburb.

## Neighbourhood Watch works

And so over the last six months we have been planning this campaign to extend Neighbourhood Watch throughout the police division. But recent events nationally have made it even more imperative that we succeed in doing so.

## The national crime situation

Over the last couple of months a number of horrific crimes have hit the national headlines, and more and more people have been becoming increasingly concerned about the growing levels of lawlessness throughout the country. Some 70% of all crimes are committed by a minority of young males between the ages of 11 and 25. And there have been some dreadful stories of the involvement in serious crime of boys aged 10, 8 or even less.

Sections of the press have been attempting to analyse the reasons for this canker in our society. Various commentators have given their ideas from outright denial of the problem by people such as Frances Cook of the Howard League who has



described the reports as "a knee-jerk reaction to emotive claptrap", to political scientists, liberal academics, professors of sociology and so on whose ideas range from there being (and I quote) "a new underclass or social stratum in which crime, amorality and unemployment are norms" to "disastrous effects on children of the absence of a father and the damaging effect caused by incestuous relationships between single mothers and their sons" to "in less than one generation the freedom to determine their own morality demanded by Hampstead intellectuals has become a right claimed by young joyriders and tearaways on the council estates"!

Whatever the complex causes may be - and the above are only small extracts from some of the many published articles, a consensus of national press reports would seem to indicate a growing body of opinion that concludes that criminals are getting younger, more prevalent and massively more

vicious, and some of the longer term solutions postulated range from the Home Secretary's borstal-style approved schools for hard-core young offenders and order action on truancy and other increased powers for the courts, to MPs calling for a return of corporal punishment and a re-introduction of some form of national service.

But whatever solutions are, or are not, introduced to deal with criminality in the longer term, the leaders of all political parties have rightly stressed the role of the general public in combating crime. There is a great deal that we, as ordinary citizens, can do now towards making a real and significant contribution to solving some of these problems.

## Action

Foremost among this action must be active support for Neighbourhood Watch. So, please play your part as an individual citizen who cares and support us now in our efforts to make all existing Neighbourhood Watches really effective and to form new, effective Neighbourhood Watches in other adjoining areas of Golders Green and Finchley. One way you can do this immediately is by displaying the car sticker (for three months only until the middle of July), and by helping us to get more posters displayed in shops, banks, building societies, supermarkets, libraries and other public places.

And, if you have further ideas or suggestions on what we could, or should, be doing locally to combat crime, do get in touch and let us have them. **PL**

## Northern Heights Probus Club

Since 1965 there has been a development of local clubs throughout the country for retired men and women known as **PROBUS CLUBS**.

The purpose of the clubs is to provide a regular meeting point for retired professional and business people, particularly for those who would appreciate and value in their retirement increased social contacts, the opportunity for meeting others in similar circumstances, and participating in activities of general interest.

The Northern Heights Probus Club caters for Hampstead, Highgate and Golders Green and was founded in 1986. Meetings are held once a month on the third Wednesday at 12.30 for lunch at 1 pm in the upstairs restaurant at 'The Old Crown', 90 Highgate Hill. There is usually a speaker and meetings finish at about 2.30 pm. As well as the monthly lunch meetings, other activities, such as theatre visits or visits to places of interest, are arranged from time to time.

A very modest annual subscription and a very reasonable payment for lunch is payable.

Further details are available from the membership secretary: Conrad Graham, 23 Rotherwick Road, NW11 7DG (Telephone: 455 5080).

## Fenton House

Hampstead's well kept secret, Fenton House, is 300 years old. To celebrate this tercentenary we are holding a series of exciting events during the week of 7 to 14 June.

Classical recitals, a period dance workshop, painting en plein air, a children's charity day, a sumptuous candle-lit banquet, a 17th century Pageant and more music.

For further information please send a s.a.e. to the Tercentenary Organiser, 34 Fortune Green Road, London NW6 1UJ.

## Clubs Encourage New RA Members

When residents received their membership renewals recently they were also given a leaflet about the clubs and societies open to members of the RA.

So far, over 100 members have returned the reply slip expressing interest in joining one or more of the clubs - the Chess and Scrabble Club, The Gourmet Society, The Theatre Club and the proposed new International Society.

Additionally an encouraging number of RA members have volunteered to become Member-

ship Representatives.

The Residents Association wishes to recruit more members from amongst those living on the Suburb and the clubs and societies are proving an increasingly popular incentive for new members to join and for existing members to take part in local activities.

Further copies of the RA's new leaflet about clubs and societies may be obtained from: Peter Phillips, 455 3660 or Anne Lawson, 458 3827. **PO**

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**EVENINGS OR WEEKENDS**

# APPLICATIONS FOR TRUST CONSENT

Some residents are unclear why Planning Applications have to be seen by two separate Authorities: the London Borough of Barnet and the Trust. The answer is that the Suburb was developed as a Leasehold Estate, and the Trust and its predecessors have from the beginning had strict control over all designs, materials, use of buildings and provision of amenities. Even though many properties are now Freehold, the Trust's rights of control have been maintained (by the High Court) to safeguard the standard of alterations to properties.

## Conservation Area

In addition, because the Suburb is so important in the history of British domestic architecture and town planning, it was designated in 1968 a Conservation Area - comparatively recently in its history - so that, for the time being at any rate, there is additional protection under planning legislation. But this has already been shown to be affected by the political climate, whereas the Trust works entirely free of any political or profit-making motive, serving only the interests of the residents and the national bodies who are represented on the Council.

## A broader view

It was considered that since the Suburb is so important in the history of both British domestic architecture and Town planning a separate organisation was needed for its conservation and

preservation. Other conservation areas are also protected by local organisations, such as the College Estates in Dulwich. By having two separate and independent authorities look at all plans, the Suburb benefits from a higher standard of overall design control. The Trust can take a much broader view and evaluate factors which are outside the remit of the local authority. In most cases the London Borough of Barnet and the Trust will come to similar conclusions on applications, but there are instances when the two authorities diverge. For example in looking at plans, Barnet cannot take purely aesthetic considerations into account.

## Not a museum

The objectives of the Trust are not to stop residents from changing their houses but to ensure that changes are done in a harmonious way and in keeping with the spirit of the original design. The Trust recognises that the Suburb is not a museum, but a living community and in modernising their homes residents want larger kitchens, family rooms, more bathrooms,

and utility rooms and would often like to utilise attic space for additional accommodation. In most cases these alterations can be designed within the guidelines laid down by the Trust, and without spoiling the character of either the individual house or the neighbourhood. The Trust is here to serve the community and ideally it would like to approve all applications.

## Procedures

The number of refusals can be kept to a minimum if certain simple procedures are followed.

a. Even before employing the services of an architect it is a good idea for the home-owner to have an informal chat with the Trust architect, Mr Wilfred Court. He will outline in general terms the Trust's policies towards the particular kind of alteration required - extensions, loft conversions, garages etc. At the same time he will tell the owner which sort of designs might be suitable in terms of size, materials, detailing etc.

b. If the house-owner decides to go ahead with the alterations, his architect should keep in touch with the Trust while he is

drawing up the plans. Mr Court is willing to attend site meetings with architects to discuss points of detail and help with the choice of materials etc. Through the close involvement of the Trust the chances of a successful application are greatly improved.

## Neighbours

When an application has been received an indemnity form is sent out and neighbours are notified. They have two weeks to write back with their objections. Once the relevant fee has been paid the application is considered by the Property and Plans Committee of the Trust which meets in the middle of each month. All decisions have to be ratified by the full Trust Council which also meets monthly.

In evaluating applications the Property and Plans Committee takes into account a number of factors. These include the report of the Trust Architect, the views of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the London Borough of Barnet, and letters and neighbours. The whole process from submitting the application to the final

decision of the Trust Council takes around two months. When an application is refused reasons are given and from these the applicant can often deduce the kind of changes that are required to make the plans acceptable.

## Too harsh?

The Trust has been criticised for being too harsh and unreasonable and for being completely unrealistic in its conservation policies. To those critics we answer that under the Scheme of Management, the Trust has a legal obligation to uphold certain standards and that if it became too lax it would be accused of not doing its job properly. Obviously the Trust has to strike a delicate balance between these opposing views and while accepting alterations insist on the highest standards.

## Design asset

We hope in future that the Trust will move closer to the community and be seen as a definite asset to the Suburb by fostering good designs and workmanship. It is assumed that most people come to live in the Suburb because of the delightful houses, which have remained relatively unspoilt and most residents would be horrified if we allowed indiscriminate 'improvements' to take place. By working closely with the Trust we are confident that the whole community will benefit so that in 100 years there will still be a Suburb of which our grandchildren can be proud.

**-HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST-**

The New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust Limited

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