

# TRUST TO GO FOR CHARITABLE STATUS

The HGS Trust is considering a change to charitable status. This was one piece of news that generated a number of questions to John Freeborn, Chairman of the HGS Charitable Trust, during its AGM held before the Trust AGM on September 15.

"If this goes ahead the Charitable Trust would probably become a subcommittee of the main Trust charity and administer a regular budget for charitable giving" he said.

## HGS Trust AGM

Eddie Caplin chaired the following Trust AGM and gave reasons for the proposed change. "Historically, this Trust and the Suburb's Charitable Trust were set up simultaneously and were very closely linked, although this link has weakened over the past decade. Nevertheless this Trust has continued to provide administrative support and regular donations to the Charitable Trust. This Trust also provides donations directly to other worthwhile causes on the Suburb.

Quite apart from the Charitable Trust's activities, we have realised that the aims and activities of this Trust fall within the scope of charitable purposes and that we would have the opportunity to enhance these activities, should it be appropriate. In the meantime, we would be absolved from payment of Corporation Tax (which this year amounted to about £8,500).

The current constitution and articles of the Trust would remain unchanged.

The Trust is, of course, not a commercial operation, but has a long term duty to conserve the Suburb and to provide amenities for its residents.

## Working with the RA

Referring to the Trust's relationship with the RA he said "We have sought to work closely with the Residents Association including activities such as the recent Suburb Weekend and the formation of a joint traffic management committee. You can see a very tangible result of this co-operation at the Suburb Gallery in Hampstead Way. We are pleased to have provided both encouragement and finance for this extra amenity and we

wish the RA every success in running it.

We have also set up a working party with the RA to re-open the possibility of creating some kind of community centre or other amenity in the Central Square area. This potential Millennium project could tie in well with the centenary of the founding of the Suburb and maybe a chance to re-house the Suburb Archives."

## North Square site

Eddie Caplin went on to give a detailed resumé of a situation that has been the cause of much concern, particularly amongst residents of North Square. "5 years ago, there was much discussion between the many bodies within the Suburb - including the Trust, the RA, the churches and a great number of others - on the idea of creating a community centre. Then, as now, a major element of these discussions covered how this could be financed.

In this context, and with a view to opening up as many options as possible whereby the Trust could fulfill its duty to provide all of us with useful amenities, the Trust applied for planning permission to develop the site at the corner of Northway, next to the Tea House. This site was included with the freeholds we purchased from Ashdale in 1989.

Amongst the options that were being explored at the time, were the ideas of either building such a centre next to the Tea House or building the centre elsewhere but selling the site next to the Tea House to raise funds.

In a conservation area such as ours, one cannot apply for simple outline planning permission from the local authority, so specific plans for a house were drawn up. The Trust applied to Barnet for planning permission to confirm the potential of the site. This consent has recently been renewed.

Although I was not a member of this Council five years ago, I was a member of CONSAM within the RA and recall much discussion at the time. Although the RA pressed for the option of a community building on the site, this particular proposal was backed on the understanding that the Trust was not to undertake

any purely speculative development.

To ease the fears of any of you who believe that we are moving in with bulldozers tomorrow, I would like to confirm publicly that it is the unanimous view of this Trust Council that no building will take place on this sensitive site unless:

1. there is a widespread consensus within the community that developing the site would be right way to provide or fund specific communal amenities.
2. there is very comprehensive and widespread advance discussion as to what to build on the site.

It is very difficult to envisage answers as to how or when, or indeed whether, this site would be built upon. The current problems at the Institute (who own the Tea House next door) compound these uncertainties.

As viable options for enhancing Central Square unfold over the next few years, we intend to ensure that ever wider discussion and consultation does take place."

A discussion followed with North Square residents pressing the Trust on a number of points relating to their worries over the possible development of the site. See letters.

## Another surplus

Financial report and accounts showing an increase in reserves were adopted but not before questions were asked on a number of points. David Bogush asked who was responsible for the investment policy that had resulted in a loss of £14,000 in a period when the FT Index had risen by 2% and asked whether the Directors could be sued by the Company. The Chairman explained that investments currently stood at £182,000. This figure is £30,000 more than at the end of 1995, shown in the accounts. He went on to tell members that professional brokers had been engaged to handle the Trust's investment portfolio.

Kit Ikin said that all charities seem to have lost on their investments in recent years.

Richard Wakefield

## Poor Reception for Cable TV on the Suburb

Although the completion of cable TV to cover the whole Suburb has been promised for some time, the latest indications are that there will be no further new cabling works for a least another year.

Videotron, the contractors for cable TV in Barnet, had previously advised the Trust that the remainder of the Suburb would be cabled by the end of this year so that every home would be able to receive cable TV, and satellite dishes would no longer be necessary. However, it now seems clear that the Suburb works have been delayed for the time being, and there are no current plans to extend the network.

On a more positive note, Videotron have just overlaid the existing cabling so that they can now provide telephone services in competition with BT, and this will shortly be promoted to residents who are already linked up to the existing TV cabling. The RA will continue to press Videotron and report on the position.

David Bogush



Photo: Jackie Norman

## IT'S A VET'S LIFE

One of our local vet's first tasks as an intern was to anaesthetise a lion with a dart; it had a slipped disc. Its head alone was so heavy that he couldn't lift it unaided.

That was in Cape Town, however. He has a different range of animals here on the Suburb, of which 95 per cent are cats and dogs. The RSPCA has announced that 1995 is the first year that cat ownership has exceeded that of dogs.

This is probably because people live in smaller properties now, and fewer people stay at home all day. Cats are more independent and therefore less trouble; which suits the modern human lifestyle.

This trend means that animals are increasingly left alone all day, which gives rise to dogs' and cats' most common behavioural problem: separation anxiety. This leads to destructiveness rather than aggression. It can be cured either by owners changing their pattern, or by reference to an animal behaviourist. There is even an anti-depressant for dogs about to be released in the near future, but to be used only as an extreme last resort.

Responsible ownership is something that all vets encourage. There are recent worries about dogs and cats left alone to fend for themselves when owners are on holiday. Even on the Suburb there was a five-month-old puppy left alone for days this summer, with only food, water and shelter. It is still being left, this autumn, as we go to press. These cases have traumatic results for pets, owners and neighbours.

There have been two known cases of dog and cat theft locally, when pedigree breeds were targeted. A West Highland Terrier and a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel were stolen from cars in the Lyttelton Road area.

Summer actually poses more of a threat to pets than winter, with its familiar slogan of "A dog is for life, not just for Christmas." The vet in the Market Place had to help two dogs with serious heatstroke, caused by being left in cars.

In summer the ponds on Hampstead Heath can have algal

blooms, which may be toxic. Although there was none this year, it is best to avoid the ponds in very hot weather.

There was a severe kennel cough epidemic this summer, too. A dog can be highly contagious even six weeks after treatment. Their coughing spreads the disease. Foxes can carry it also. The vet discovered that the vast majority of dogs with kennel cough were walked either on the Heath Extension, or in Kenwood. The organisms causing kennel cough are becoming more resistant to antibiotics, so that newer antibiotics and stronger doses are needed, with a greater chance of side effects. Penicillin is not effective, but there is a kennel cough vaccine.

Cats have suffered from enteritis this summer. When they return home injured, their owners often think they have been attacked by foxes. Foxes, however, usually watch and tolerate cats. Wounds are much more likely to be caused by a fight with another cat.

Local vets frequently treat dogs and cats with cut paws. Drink cans and broken glass bottles in the nearby streams are to blame.

The veterinary practice can deal with minor injuries; it has a small short operating table, which is just the right size for pets; it came from the children's ward in Edgware General Hospital. The practice can do basic surgery, such as neutering, treating abscesses, dental care, and stitch-

ups. Veterinary surgeons nowadays refer more major problems to a specialist centre, where ultrasound is available for more precise diagnosis, and treatment is on offer for spinal problems, cardiology, urology, etc. As in human medicine, techniques and drugs are being improved rapidly.

Fortunately, there are not many animals involved in Road Traffic Accidents (RTAs) in this area. This is more because careful owners keep their pets under control, rather than being due to careful driving.

Wildlife is not so fortunate. Residents take mostly foxes and kestrels to vets. The last kestrel was a typical case: it had a fractured wing from being hit by a car when it was feeding on the road. In the last six months, two foxes have been run over, and brought into the surgery. These are usually difficult to deal with, but are very tough. They arrive with concussion, in severe shock. They are treated with a drip, cortisone, and painkillers, and two hours later are ready to go. Any intractable cases, including hedgehogs, are taken to St Tiggywinkle's in Aylesbury: a wildlife hospital, which also has a visitors' centre.

Suburb pet owners provide a lot of time and effort, and the best care possible for their animals, even to the point of offering therapy. As well as the breeds with more social cachet, there is a high proportion of rescued dogs and cats. Suburb pets are lucky.

Jackie Norman

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