

Members turn down charitable status for the RA

Some 120 members at the 88th AGM of the Residents Association took part in a lively discussion of the pros and cons of charitable status. In the end arguments that it could inhibit action such as fighting a future Henly's Corner threat and that the interests of residents could not be said to be charitable won out against the benefits, largely financial, to be gained by becoming a charity.

Earlier three new members were amongst those elected or re-elected to Council. They were Anne Crawley and David Littaur both of whom have been coopted members of the Events Committee and Dr Arnold Elliott.

When it came to nominations for officers, Chairman, Richard Wakefield said "We have no nominations yet for my job and I will act as chairman until we do find someone to take over later in the year. We have not been able to finalise a Treasurer

but are hopeful of doing so soon, and we do have a nomination in the form of Siddiek Meer who is prepared to give us the benefit of his legal training and wide experience of work with and in local government as Hon Secretary. David Rapson has agreed to continue as an able and affable vice chairman."

He thanked Graham Cunnold and Simon Abbott, who were standing down, for their tireless work and support.

David Rapson and Siddiek Meer were duly elected as vice chairman and Hon Secretary.

The RA Council had this year invited Spenser Hudson and Wilfred Court to accept Honorary Life Membership. In announcing these the Chairman said "Spenser Hudson has been for years a champion of

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Norma Blausten

The death of Norma Blausten in January marks the end of a vibrant career in dedicated community work marked by a flair, and a disregard for the negative. She was born in 1924 of Jewish refugee parents from Eastern Europe, her father having come to England alone at the age of nine. He died when she was eight and her 14-year-old brother had to take over and run the family furniture business of J. Cinnamon Cintique in the East End. At the age of 14 she too left school to work.

During the Second World War she was injured by a V2 bomb which exploded in Tottenham Court Road. Her then boyfriend, Cyril, later to be her husband, was badly injured in the same explosion and demonstrating her forthrightness and clear thinking, a hallmark of her life, she commandeered a taxi, then occupied by an army officer, pulled him out and rushed her husband to the hospital.

After the war she devoted her life to her husband and the bringing up of her four boys in the Suburb. As the last one finished his schooling she launched herself into the wider community again. She became a dynamic and vocal local Conservative Constituency worker in Hendon South, becoming the first woman chairman of the Hampstead Garden Suburb branch of the Conservative Association and Deputy and then Chairman in 1978 until 1981 of the Constituency Association.

She felt passionately about racial issues. She was one of the 12 founding members of the Barnet Community Relations Council (later the Barnet Committee for Racial Equality) on which she served for over 10 years helping in its essential work for refugees, primarily from Uganda. Norma played an important part in the introduction of the 'Teaching English as a Foreign Language' scheme to Barnet, in the form of the Barnet Home Tutor Scheme. She was also a founding member of the Barnet Police Community Liaison Committee.

From the 1970s through to the early 1990s she was a forceful member of the Residents Association and a member of its Executive. She fostered and led calls for a closer liaison with the Institute and together with the Lorry Route Action Committee led some members of a somewhat timid Residents Association Council into public demonstrations and direct action against the widening and reclassification of Faloden Way, which would have irreparably divided the Suburb into two. With her husband she became an Honorary Life Member of the Association.



During this time she was actively involved with the Jewish Welfare Board (Jewish Care) where she took over the Chairmanship of Wix House in Green Lanes and successfully relocated its residents (no mean feat) to the new Charles Clore House in Muswell Hill. She became a Trustee of the Egerton Bequest run by the Welfare Board to assist those who had fallen on hard times.

Again, not limiting her energy to any one group in need, she took an active role in working to help bring the Asian community into the forefront of mainline politics and was for many years a Vice Chairman of the National Executive of the Anglo-Asian Conservative Society.

Her enthusiasm extended to the world of education - which in her case was so sadly cut short. She was a Governor of three Local Authority JMI schools and a member of the Adult Education Committee of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute. For a girl who left school at 14 she took some considerable pride in her appointment as a member of the Council and Governor of Clifton College.

If none of this were enough she was a Founder Member and both Deputy and then Chairman of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Abbeyfield Society. She hated fundamentalism in religion and feared racial prejudice and intolerance as a cancer in society. To her last days she campaigned against the Eruv. She did not campaign for women's rights, she just assumed them without batting an eyelid - but always with a twinkle in her eye.

She always had an opinion and never deserted her principles.

At the end of the day she had her garden to tend to. She loved gardening in the true spirit of a Garden Suburb Resident - her house abounded with cuttings in every corner and ledge where natural light would penetrate - and when those spaces were filled they spilled out into her garden - which was her solace.

DOUGLAS BLAUSTEN

Fellowship Sundial

Fellowship is now the proud owner of one of Ivor Hall's 'Millennium Sundials' - kindly donated by one of our Treasurers, John Hewson. It makes a handsome addition to our front garden.

In the late autumn we were asked if we could assist in providing some ground for the children of Childs Way school in their imaginative project for a community tree nursery. This is being organised by a project officer from the Watling Chase Community Forest in association with the Friends of Bigwood.

We have allocated part of the allotment space at the south end of our croquet lawn so that children from the school can grow on and nurture seedlings for eventual planting out in Bigwood.

One of our recent memorable Tuesday afternoons was spent with the Chairman of the Hertfordshire Branch of the 'Hearing Dogs for the Deaf' Association. Although profoundly deaf herself, Liz Arendt gave a stimulating and fascinating talk, ably assisted by her own hearing dog 'Ruffles'. We had intended making our March Jumble Sale in aid of this charity, but decided instead to give the proceeds of this event to the Mozambique Relief Fund and have another sale later in the year for 'Hearing Dogs'.

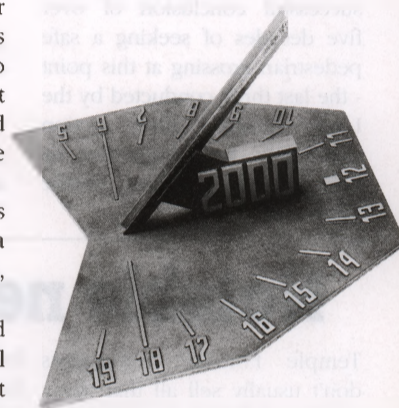
We were amazed that sales and donations brought in a grand total of £250 - thank you, everyone.

Our Bring and Buy and Jumble Sales are always well attended and, incidentally, a lot

of fun. If any resident has suitable items for our sales, please contact Jean Dyson or any member of the Committee, and we will happily arrange to collect them.

For very many years Fellowship House Committee has been providing various activities for the over-sixties. For all that time we have had enthusiastic voluntary helpers to organise and run things. Now most of the Committee and many helpers are over 80, and are finding it increasingly difficult - because of restricted mobility and other handicaps - to carry out the day-to-day activities and also special events such as Bring & Buy and Jumble Sales, our two New Year parties for members, and the annual summer visit from our friends at Toynbee Hall. We really are desperately in need of help from younger people, and this is a special plea for some of you to offer help of any kind. Please get in touch with Jean Dyson (020 8455 8193).

EILEEN WHELAN (020 8458 2889)



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