

SUBURB NEWS

THE HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSPAPER ■ SPRING 04 - ISSUE 83

Row over ombudsman letter at RA AGM

RA chairman Georgina Malcolm, taking her second annual general meeting, little expected the arguments that were to follow her traditional introduction and welcome to invited guests.

A capacity audience in the newly refurbished Henrietta Barnett school hall on 29 March heard her comment on the report which had been circulated throughout the Suburb when she said that 2003 had been an unusually busy year with "excited visitors to nearly every RA council meeting" urging action or protesting at the Institute's building plans, Barnet's plans for Temple Fortune, turquoise street signs and parking in Asmunds Place.

Report and accounts were approved and when questions were invited, former RA traffic committee chairman Ken Murrell attacked the Association at length. He accused officers of dragging their feet over a promised letter to the Local Authorities Ombudsman about Barnet's mishandling of the alterations to the road layout in

Temple Fortune. He then proposed a resolution, without the statutory six weeks notice, instructing the RA council to make a complaint to the ombudsman over Barnet Council's handling of the new traffic scheme in Temple Fortune within a fortnight.

David Lewis, Consam chairman, who had taken temporary responsibility for the RA Roads and Traffic Committee, said that there had been no stipulation on the timing of such a letter in the February RA Council resolution. The resolution said that the letter should be sent "when appropriate." He added that there was an argument for waiting until the work was finished and the time for objecting to the various traffic orders relating to it had expired. Three letters from individuals had already been sent to the ombudsman who had replied to say the case would be taken up.

Elections

Georgina Malcolm said she was sorry to have to announce the retirement of Camilla Raab who

had been a valued member of the council since 1987 but was pleased to be welcoming two new members to council, Richard Kemp and Steve Morris, and was delighted to announce the return as Hon Treasurer of John Boulter.

The officers for the year nominated by council were Georgina Malcolm, chairman; Jean Barraclough, vice chairman; Siddiek Meer, Hon sec and John Boulter, Hon treasurer. They were elected as were the new council members and others retiring by rotation.

Paul Hartley was thanked for his work for agreeing once more to be appointed as Hon Auditor.

Life Member

John Davis, who last year retired as Litter Picker in Chief, had been nominated a Life Member of the association. "John has been a tireless worker for the Suburb and not just running the litter team," said Georgina, "and we are pleased he has accepted, under some protest, his well deserved Life membership."

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Temple Fortune makes the news

Barnet's 'improvements' to the Temple Fortune shopping centre continue apace as does the argument over the changes made to the 1997 scheme which had been the result of 8 months consultation, had a proven reduction in accidents and made shopping a pleasure.

Articles in the national newspapers The Times, Guardian and Mail were followed by an extensive piece on the BBC's 6 o'clock and 10 o'clock news featuring RA chairman Georgina Malcolm and Cllr Coleman. All the news items quoted from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents report commissioned by the Residents Association which said that, "It is considered that the proposed scheme will

result in a major safety disbenefit to the Temple Fortune area. It is therefore recommended that the scheme be totally reconsidered by the London Borough of Barnet in association with Transport for London and the entire local community. The current scheme appears to be out of step with the worthwhile improvements to Road Safety and to community facilities that are being achieved in other locations in London that are dominated by traffic."

Transport for London appear to have withheld funding amounting to £370,000 which Barnet is relying on to pay for their 'improvements'. Ken Livingstone has joined in with strong criticism of Cllr Coleman's

pro-car policies which include dismantling traffic calming measures put in by the previous Lib/Lab administration all over the borough. The RA's argument with Barnet has been clouded to some extent by Cllr Coleman's anti-road hump campaign. There never were any humps in Temple Fortune just calming measures that reduced pedestrian accidents and made reaching shops on the other side of the road easier and safer.

Letter to the ombudsman

The Residents Association submission to the Local Authority Ombudsman concludes, 'On behalf of the residents of Hampstead Garden Suburb the Residents Association asks that

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David Lewis makes new friends at the 60s disco he organised in aid of the North London Hospice. Period dress and beehive hair dos were the order of the night as the veteran disco goes twisted the night away. Some £2000 was raised and another disco is promised.



At the RA AGM chairman Georgina Malcolm presents a case of 'Wakefield shiraz' from the RAs publications committee to Richard Wakefield to mark 20 years of editorship of Suburb News.

Institute gets go ahead

The plans for development of the Neuro hospital site at East Finchley were given the go ahead by Barnet last month. Octagon's scheme for two blocks of flats and a building for the Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute has overcome the objections of some local residents who said the scheme was out of scale and too near houses in Edmunds Walk and Deansway. This view had been echoed by the Trust and the RA who nevertheless both stressed that they hoped the Institute would be able to build on the site.

The Institute has been in prolonged discussions with Henrietta Barnett school about an extension of the use of classrooms and offices after the end of the rent free agreement that formed part of the 2000 deal

when the Institute sold its site for £9 million to avoid a compulsory purchase. Although some classes will have to move, it is now hoped that the Institute's offices will remain in the Central Square building for the time being.

Park House - a partial move to East Finchley

Meanwhile a lease has been taken on Park House, opposite East Finchley tube station, to house the successful Education for Life Skills department, Computing courses and some other Institute activities until the new permanent headquarters building is ready in about two years time. Institute Principal Fay Naylor said, "Park House will be a good compromise for the time being We will still have a presence on the Suburb. Most of our classes; the English

Centre in the Teahouse, the rooms we rent around Central Square, Thomas More and Muswell Hill will be unaffected. I believe the sculpture and pottery studios and some art classes will stay where they are in the school grounds. We have also made arrangements to run some evening classes locally in the event that we are unable to use school classrooms.

"I want to stress that it is very much business as usual despite our accommodation problems. We have over 500 courses in our new prospectus and are planning an exceptional Open Day, an annual event that has been a feature of life on the Suburb for as long as anyone can remember. This year Open Day will be on June 26, I hope to see all our many friends and supporters on that occasion."

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Turquoise street signs to go

The Residents Association's protests at the unsuitability of new street signs in Barnet's corporate colour have paid off. With the financial support of English Heritage and the HGS Trust they will be replaced by traditional street signs in cast iron with the street name in one

line in black and the postcode smaller in red.

Barnet Council has agreed that the signs can now be replaced but will not fund the cost of replacements. They will however fund the cost of new signs when they are needed in the ordinary course of repair and replacement.

David Lewis, chairman of Consam said, "I am delighted, this means that all the inappropriate modern street name signs will disappear from the Suburb." Cllr Brian Coleman has warned that this will not set a precedent for other conservation areas in the borough.