

SUBURB NEWS

THE HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSPAPER ■ SUMMER 05 - ISSUE 88

RA to fight Barnet Council elections with residents candidates

At the RA Council meeting on 5 July, a motion in favour of the Residents Association fielding candidates to contest the three Garden Suburb ward seats at the local election next May was carried with no votes against and three abstentions.

Proposing the motion, RA Roads & Traffic Committee chairman Gary Shaw said: "The first duty of a local councillor should be to represent the interests of the area and its residents. Yet over the past three years, the Suburb's councillors have voted time and again for proposals that are inimical to those interests."

Mr. Shaw cited in particular the pavement parking scheme in Temple Fortune which, although almost unanimously opposed by residents, was supported by ward councillors.

"A manifesto which will address the full range of issues affecting the Suburb will be drawn up. But the catalyst which

has caused the RA to take this unprecedented action is Barnet Council's proposal to create a controlled parking zone in Temple Fortune. The zone will be introduced in spite of the fact that residents who replied to Barnet's consultation exercise have expressed opposition to the scheme by 54% to 46%."

Making the case for the electoral challenge, members of RA Roads and Traffic Committee pointed out that the proposed CPZ would have very serious implications for the Suburb.

"In particular the scheme would risk jeopardising the commercial health of Temple Fortune once shoppers found that they could no longer park conveniently in the area. They will then defect to Brent Cross with its ample unrestricted parking."

"This could cause an irreversible decline in Temple Fortune which would not only deprive the community of a valued amenity but which could

have social consequences that may lead to a fall in house prices in the Suburb."

"While the RA supports parking restrictions to assist residents of Asmunds Place and other cul-de-sacs off Finchley Road, there is a widespread belief that Barnet's proposals to introduce controls in other Suburb streets are motivated primarily by considerations of revenue. Profit estimates of £50,000 a year have been cited by Council officers on the original plan.

"It is almost certain that the CPZ as proposed would be rapidly expanded once newly displaced parking creates problems for residents who currently have no need or desire to live inside a controlled parking zone. This would be particularly unfair to the majority of consultation respondents who have already said 'no' to a CPZ."

At a meeting in May between a delegation from the RA Roads

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Cllr Andreas Tambourides has made four official visits to the Suburb in his first few weeks as mayor of the borough. He told Suburb News, "I had not known the Suburb before but each time we come I am aware of a strong community feeling." On this occasion as an ex-thespian and playwright himself he enjoyed an excerpt from the HGS Theatre's latest production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Little Wood. Matthew Ali, Christopher Radnedge, Camilla Collins and Sarah Hajibagiare gave a spirited performance.



£40,000 for Toynbee Hall and the North London Hospice was the tangible result of the most successful yet Proms at St Jude's. "It's all down to a fantastic team of volunteers and generous sponsors and Friends" said Susie Gregson, who started it all. Seen here some of the young volunteers relaxing during the Last Night.



A town crier caused a stir in Temple Fortune as he announced the Institute's Summer Festival and Open Day. "It was our best ever," said principal Fay Naylor. "Whatever other problems we may have there is no doubt that enrolments are up and our courses are more popular than ever."

Ombudsman upholds residents' complaints against Barnet

Complaints against the London Borough of Barnet made by the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association (RA) have been upheld by The Local Government Ombudsman and has recommended that LBB pays the Association £1,050 in costs.

The Ombudsman said that Barnet claimed in its consultation letter to residents that parking provision would be increased and indicated that parking would increase by 15%. "But the proposed layout plan showed a reduction of 13%"

"The consultation letter did not mention that the number of crossing points would be reduced or that pavements would be used for parking."

At the Barnet Cabinet meeting which gave the scheme the go ahead on 5 January 2004, "the Head of Highways gave inaccurate information that the number of crossing points would be reduced to 10 not 7," the Ombudsman said in her letter.

The Head of Highways "...also said that pedestrian accidents were clustered at the traffic islands," but no evidence was supplied to substantiate this claim and the Ombudsman thought that "irrelevant emotional factors have been taken into account (by Barnet Councillors) and inaccurate information was provided. This might have been significant as the vote was carried by the Chair's casting vote."

Suburb Cllr John Marshall voted in favour of the scheme despite the opposition of his constituents. Suburb Cllr Jasmin Naghar also voted in favour of the scheme at an earlier meeting in September 2003 of another committee which considered the proposals.

The Ombudsman said: "I think it is difficult to say that the 10 day consultation was sufficient for the Residents Association to consult its 2,300 households and to respond."

David Lewis, Chairman of the RA, said: "We are delighted with the Ombudsman's ruling which has upheld our complaint that Barnet pressed ahead with a potentially dangerous traffic scheme without properly consulting residents or traders."

Passionate Suburbites

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Barnet may force Pavilion closure

The Pavilion Children's Centre, caters for children aged 0 - three and their mothers or carers every day of the week and is the only such facility in the area. Started, with some funding from the Residents Association, in 1983 it now has 120 families as members and another 50 families use it on an occasional basis. For the last eight years the charity has paid a rent to Barnet of £4,500 and has a non-repairing licence to use

part of the pavilion in Lyttelton Playing Fields. The rent was unchanged following the last rent review because according to a Barnet officer, "it is a small charity doing a worthwhile job." Now Barnet are demanding a rent of £7,550 a year, a full repairing and insuring lease, £3,000 legal fees and an unknown sum for surveyors fees.

"We are not a commercial concern but a small non-profit

charity," says Marian Lowe who with Jacqueline Johnson runs the Centre. "If they don't relent we will have to close at the end of the year."

Garden Suburb Ward Councillor John Marshall told *Suburb News*, "Barnet is strapped for cash and officers feel they should be making more from park buildings but I will take this up and see if we can't arrive at a compromise."

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

North Square site saved again

The Trust's consultation with residents via an advertisement in *Suburb News* resulted in a resounding 'no' to the idea of raising funds for the Trust by developing the site on the corner of Northway and North Square. North Square residents also had delivered a leaflet urging a vote against the plan. By 1 June a total of 942 votes had been received from 769 households. 311 were coupons from the paper of which 79% were against any development at all on the site and 91% of 627 replies from the residents' leaflet said no to any development

Announcing the result Trust chairman Mervyn Mandell, in a

letter to all who had voted, said that the Trust had "decided that, for the foreseeable future, the proposal to develop the site will not be pursued." The letter continued "The comments received have given the Trust Council great encouragement because they show a deep and widespread concern for the future of the Suburb. However the responses also reveal a lack of knowledge of the Trust Council's objectives."

Because of this the Trust is considering a series of informal discussions with residents on the future of the Suburb and the Trust. Anyone who wishes to take part is invited to write to the Trust.

The HGS Trust AGM will take place on September 14 at 8pm in the Free Church Hall Northway.

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

In March 2003, the Residents Association made a number of detailed recommendations to the Trust to improve its procedures to enable it to properly fulfill its obligations. To date none of the proposals appear to have been implemented although the new Trust Manager, who has only been in the job for a few months, has promised we will see action soon. The report can be found on the Suburb website at www.hgs.org.uk/ra/consam/ and is called *Trust Planning Procedures*.