



RA chairman and committees look back on 2007



The splendid Centenary Year ended with a hugely impressive fireworks display on Central Square. The Celebrations, which many of you will have participated in or read about in the local and national press, were also a huge success. A big thank you is due to the volunteers who organised the many events over the Summer and into the Autumn and also those of you who donated nearly £50,000 to enable them to take place.

The Association works through a series of committees – see their end of year reports below. Suburb News reports what we are doing on your behalf throughout the year and our activities are also extensively covered by the Ham & High and other local newspapers and at our web site www.hgs.org.uk.

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association has a membership of almost 2,200 Suburb households. That is a very large number for a local amenity society and no one has challenged our claim that we are the largest such organisation in the UK. That is a tremendous achievement which all residents should be proud of.

Despite the incredible community spirit of many activists within the Association, we still need more residents to take part in our activities. We need people with skills and experience who are able to give us a few hours a week of their time. One way to recruit people is by recommendation and I urge anyone active in the Association to think about friends you have who could contribute to one of our committees or activities.

However we are not a clique and we welcome all new residents to join the Residents Association and to become involved in our activities. We canvass everyone but you can join straight away by credit card from our web site at www.hgs.org.uk. Our monthly council meetings are held in public, normally on the first Tuesday of the month except August and at 8.30pm there is Question Time when any resident can ask a question or make a comment.

I would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year and look forward to 2008 being as successful for the Suburb as 2007.

DAVID B LEWIS – chairman@hgs.org.uk

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

During 2007 the Roads & Traffic Committee was instrumental in persuading Transport for London to re-open the Fallosen Way bus stops after a lengthy period of closure. The Committee has also led the fight against TfL's administration of the Red Route in The Market Place where it is using CCTV technology to issue parking tickets for alleged contraventions of the loading bay that has already been judged by the Parking and Traffic Appeals Service to be inadequately signed.

The Committee has noted Barnet Council's decision to accept a petition from residents of Temple Grove to re-include their road in the Temple Fortune CPZ. During 2008 the Committee will be launching a campaign to encourage LBB to give equal weight to the views of those many residents who wish to have the threat and inconvenience of the CPZ removed from their own roads.

GARY SHAW, CHAIRMAN – traffic@hgs.org.uk

ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

This centenary year has seen a resurgence in the allotment community, with many new members including young families. Most sites are full, although we expect to have a few vacancies before long as existing plot holders retire.

We have recently started clearing an old overgrown allotment site with financial help from the Trust and the work of enthusiastic volunteers from the allotment community who have transformed a wilderness into a fertile plot of land.

In November we held a Harvest Festival Supper which was very well attended, awarding prizes to top allotment plots with the Phyllis Young Memorial trophy going to Pamela Hall.

The Allotments Committee was very happy to open two of the allotment sites for the Horticultural Society Open Gardens Day.

I take this opportunity to thank all site secretaries for their hard work in coordinating activities and supporting their ploholders.

PIA DURAN, CHAIRMAN – allotments@hgs.org.uk

CONSERVATION & AMENITIES (CONSAM)

Consam embarked at the beginning of 2007 on an initiative to rid the Suburb of some of its disfiguring signs, posts and road markings in time for the Centenary. Unfortunately a series of delays and obstacles placed in the path of the project by the London Borough of Barnet caused the Centenary year to be missed. Nevertheless, in August 2007 Barnet accepted an offer of a contribution from the Residents Association of £10,000 on the basis that it would provide matching funding. Since then, things continued to move on very slowly and it is only in January of this year that serious discussions have begun to scope the works and cost them. Hopefully, 2008 will see the proposals come to fruition with around 200 signs and/or posts removed, moved, lowered or repainted in Suburb 'sage green'.

In July 2006, Barnet agreed to the production of a Design Handbook aimed at preventing inappropriate works from being undertaken in future. After Barnet failed to progress this, Consam prepared a draft which was submitted to Barnet for comment in May 2007. It has taken until January 2008 for Barnet's feedback to be received. Patience and perseverance are essential virtues for members of Consam!

Consam continues to have a voice in local planning decisions through its representation on the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (a Barnet body) and the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust's Property and Plans Committee. We have given serious consideration to our policy on hardstandings and have lobbied Barnet, and to a lesser extent the Trust, to take a stronger stance to protect the gardens and hedges of the Garden Suburb against further encroachment by parked cars.

We continue our close liaison with the officers and members of the Trust and have met with the new Trust Chairman to discuss common interests. The agreement to publish lists of decisions on the Trust website was implemented with effect from June 2007.

The re-lighting of some streets within the Suburb is planned for this year and next and a meeting is to take place shortly with Barnet, the Trust and the PFI contractor to discuss the proposals. We continue to oppose the placing of mobile phone transmitters in the Conservation Area and all applications to date have been refused. New initiatives are in hand to remove the most unsightly satellite dishes.

DEREK EPSTEIN, CHAIRMAN – consam@hgs.org.uk

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Since our last report the centenary has run its course. The Suburb Centenary Programme proved a success both as a souvenir of a well-celebrated event and as means of providing funds. Richard Wakefield worked hard to find the advertisers and it was thanks to his efforts and those of Susan Lewis that all the material was collated and edited.

The new Yellow Directory will contain a report on the RA's activities and will provide our clubs and societies with some space for a synopsis of their activities. This year will also see the separation of the RA's Annual Report from the Suburb News where it normally appears. Suburb News won a commendation at the Walter Bor Media Awards organised by the London Forum of Amenity & Civic Societies.

A reminder to residents of the Suburb website at www.hgs.org.uk, created and run by Steve Morris, which in conjunction with the Directory and Suburb News will provide you with a great deal of useful day to day Suburb information.

TERENCE BROOKS, CHAIRMAN – publications@hgs.org.uk

TREES & OPEN SPACES

Lyttelton Playing Fields – At the beginning of the year the old avenue of purple plum trees at the Kingsley Way entrance was replaced. A local family bought 10 new white flowering cherries which were planted in memory of their parents.

Big Wood & Little Wood – The Big Wood Management Group has been working on a new Management Plan for the woods. Some large trees alongside the main paths have been felled for safety reasons and the trunks have been left in situ because this is best for wildlife. Unfortunately a large Wild Service tree near the Memorial Gate came down last year. The Group is considering options for ensuring that the woods are healthy.

Hampstead Heath – Colin Gregory and Tony Ghilchik regularly represent the Committee in the Hampstead Heath Management Committee, and the Consultative Committee. Eva Jacobs and Prue Unger also attended a number of meetings over the past year or so. After lengthy consultation and many committee meetings a new Management Plan has been adopted for the Heath.

Street Trees – Barnet has felled a large number of trees across the Suburb this year. The RA Council has again voted a substantial grant for replacing the trees. Tree related subsidence is an important issue in the Suburb, and the Committee has worked closely with local residents and the Trust to save our trees.

Suburb Hedges – Committee members have been undertaking a survey of the Suburb's hedges as part of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. The original hedge planting can be seen in many of the Suburb's roads; for example Oakwood Road originally had Cotoneaster hedges, Sutcliffe Close had Hawthorn and Edmunds Walk

had *Lonicera nitida*. The plan is to ensure as far as possible that new residents who do not understand the Suburb do not plant inappropriate hedging such as Laurel in a road with nothing but Privet.

Veteran Trees – Sadly what was thought to be the oldest tree in the Suburb came down at the end of last year. This ancient oak which grew on the boundary between Hendon and Finchley in Denman Drive was much loved by generations of Suburb children. The Committee is considering undertaking a survey of Veteran trees across the Suburb.

LÉONIE STEPHEN, CHAIRMAN – trees@hgs.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

In our Centenary Year the Suburb continued to support us with 2,172 households, joining or rejoining.

2007 was also the year when we implemented the decision made by RA members at the 2005 AGM, that the recommended minimum membership fee be increased to £15. It had stayed at a recommended minimum £6 for around a decade.

The response to the increase has been very encouraging with a significant majority of members paying the recommended £15 or more. As a result we received a record income of over £32,000 and put the RA into a sounder financial position. In addition, the RA raised around £11,500 for Fellowship, also up on recent years. Members continued to benefit from the discounts on offer from a range of local stores to those who can produce a valid RA membership card.

As always, we owe a great debt to our team of Suburb residents, who, as Ward Organisers or Ward Representatives, helped to make the whole effort so successful, and thank them for all their efforts. We would be very pleased to hear from any residents in a position to help us with this valuable work. Please contact our Membership Secretary on 020 8455 2191.

In 2007 we continued to develop and stream-line our computer system. Other innovations from autumn 2007, have included the introduction of standing orders and web-based credit card payment service. As these services will be on offer to all members joining or rejoining the RA in 2008, we hope that there will be a big increase in members taking advantage of them. Payment by cheque or cash will, of course, continue to be welcome.

JANET ELLIOTT – membershipsec@hgs.org.uk

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