

RA Chairman and committees report back on an eventful 2008



The success of the Suburb's centenary year was always going to be hard to follow. Action has been the keynote this year. As you can see in the committee reports below, all our volunteers have had a busy year conserving our environment and helping to keep the Suburb a living community. Thanks are due to all of them for their unstinting efforts on our behalf.

During the year the Institute sold the Tea House, unfortunately without giving the community the chance of keeping it in use as a public building. The Henrietta Barnett School has obtained planning consent for new buildings which have won wide favour from the expert bodies consulted and within the Suburb, but, at the time of writing, some residents feel that the window designs are inappropriate for Central Square.

It has been difficult to progress traffic and street clutter issues with LBB Highways Department, but the situation is now improving. We are looking to our



local councillors for greater support on these matters at a time of considerable change in senior professional personnel at the LBB.

My personal circumstances have changed. As many of you know, my wife of 37 years died shortly after the centenary celebrations started in 2007. I now spend a good part of my time abroad. Despite modern technology, from over 2,000 miles away it is impossible to carry out the duties of a chairman effectively. I shall therefore be retiring at the Annual General Meeting.

In my four years as Chairman of the Association and previously as Chairman of the Conservation & Amenities Committee, I hope I have had some impact on trying to keep the Suburb, which is always under attack, true to the original vision of its founders.

So cheerio and good luck! And a big thank you to all the RA council members, committee members, membership representatives, Suburb News distributors and litter pickers, some hundreds of you who put in time and effort for the Residents Association in order to keep the Suburb what it is despite the pressures of modern life which can sometimes be a cause of differences amongst residents.

DAVID LEWIS – CHAIRMAN@HGS.ORG.UK

CONSERVATION & AMENITIES (CONSAM)



The long-running project to rid the Suburb of some of its disfiguring signs, posts and road markings finally began to materialise in 2008. After a much delayed response from London Borough of Barnet following a joint street audit in January, a schedule of works was finally agreed in November 2008. Around 60 signs and/or posts are being removed or relocated at a cost close to £10,000, of which half is being borne by the RA. A further £10,000 is available from the joint RA/Barnet budget for the rationalisation of the forest of posts and signs along Lyttelton Road and in its side streets.

In parallel, the RA has been working with London Borough Barnet on the preparation of Design Guidelines aimed at preventing inappropriate works from being undertaken in future. This was drafted by the RA in May 2007 and finally signed off by Barnet in September 2008. Some matters remain in contention such as Barnet's apparent wish to abandon the practice of placing parking control signs on short posts at the rear of pavements and start erecting them on tall posts on the kerb-line. These disputed issues have been recorded in an RA 'position paper'. The Design Guidelines and Position Paper are available on the RA website. We encourage residents to be the eyes of Consam by reporting to us (consam@hgs.org.uk) any infringements or general problems regarding the maintenance of the Suburb's public realm.

Consam has 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. A high profile development this year has been proposed extensions to The Henrietta Barnett School.

We have engaged in discussions with Barnet's planning department on a number of issues including its Sustainability strategy and the effect of the new central government General Development Order which takes a number of changes to domestic properties out of the scope of planning controls. This places even greater emphasis on the vital work of the Trust in maintaining the Suburb's unique character. As a result of pressure from Consam, the Trust now publishes lists of its planning decisions on its web site each month.

Mobile phone companies have been less active this year in seeking permission for mobile phone masts but the few applications that have been made for masts and boxes have been challenged, and so far defeated, with the support of the ward councillors.

DEREK EPSTEIN – CONSAM@HGS.ORG.UK

ROADS & TRAFFIC



Much of the Roads & Traffic Committee's efforts during 2008 went into persuading Transport for London to reimburse residents who had been unreasonably fined for parking in the poorly designated loading bays in The Market Place and Hill Rise. Many of these parking tickets had been issued by post using evidence from a TV camera at The Market Place/Northway junction. As a result of the RA's campaign the camera is no longer used for issuing parking tickets and the south side (post office) Market Place loading bay is to be converted to general parking usage.

Elsewhere, the Committee remains disappointed at the London Borough of Barnet's refusal to respond to requests and petitions for removal of parts of the Temple Fortune CPZ. It remains the Committee's view that LBB will try to expand the CPZ and make it more restrictive after the next local elections. If so, the eventual results are likely to be loss of trade in Temple Fortune and much higher permit costs for residents once the borough-wide CPZ programme is complete after which there will no longer be the need to keep prices low to encourage local people to join the schemes.

GARY SHAW – TRAFFIC@HGS.ORG.UK

EVENTS COMMITTEE



In consideration of the focus on the Centenary, the Events Committee had gone into hibernation in 2006. It resumed meetings in March 2008. A major function of the Events Committee is to organise and resource events for and on behalf of the Association. One of its members' first tasks was to order and dispense the wine at the Association's AGM in The Henrietta Barnett School Hall. We celebrated New Year's Eve with our annual reception in St Jude's Church and fireworks on Central Square. We should like to thank all those who volunteered to make this event such a success. We offer our sincere thanks to St Jude's for the use of the church and to The Henrietta Barnett School for permitting the use of their tennis court as a base for igniting the fireworks.

The Committee is responsible for maintaining the RA notice boards around the Suburb and for supervising the display of posters. The RA has recently acquired three large notice boards from the Institute and the use of one from the London Borough of Barnet at a

premier site in Temple Fortune. The Committee was also responsible for organising a highly successful volunteers party in November 2008 as a thank you to those who spend their time supporting the RA on its committees, as membership representatives and as litter pickers.

The Committee continues to compile and submit listings of Suburb and nearby events for the What's On page in Suburb News and on the Suburb web site.

DAVID LITTAUR – EVENTS@HGS.ORG

LITTER REPORT



There are now 125 litter pickers and it was good to see and finally meet those of you on the list whom I have not met before plus those I do know, at the RA party for volunteers on 15th November. It was to thank those of you who have helped to keep the Suburb clear and free of litter making it the wonderful place that it is.

It has been pleasing to note that Barnet Council has been around more regularly keeping gutters clean, clearing litter and more particularly, the leaves. However, there is often litter left behind after recycling bins have been emptied and we have to deal with this.

It is possible that some of the litter pickers are no longer able to pick up litter or perhaps a householder has been contacted and moved into a house where a previous litter picker lived. It would be helpful to know this in order to update the list.

Cars have been parking on the grass verges causing damage and these accumulate litter. More often than not it is the vans belonging to gardeners and builders and a quiet word would help to prevent this. Vehicles which are guilty of doing this are now receiving parking fines.

Year on year the Suburb is looking better and cleaner due, in no small measure, to those conscientious people who keep an eye out for any litter left lying on our streets.

ROSALIND JOSEPHS – LITTER@HGS.ORG.UK

ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



This year has been another exciting and productive year. We have started to tackle a backlog of maintenance, funded by rents paid to the Trust by allotment holders and a grant from the Trust. We have replaced four gates, and we are in the process of providing a water supply to another site.

Each site has a site secretary, who is a plot holder and who collects and pays in rent, and looks after the day-to-day running of the site. In case of unresolved conflict, secretaries discuss problems with myself and/or the Committee, which is made up of site secretaries and an RA representative.

Each year the Committee inspects all sites and allotments to adjudicate prizes for the best-kept and most interesting plot. This year the Phyllis Young trophy was won by Pauline Murphy and her friend Rosemary Biehler (Orchard North); second Gill Read (Orchard South); and third Evelyn Thomas (Willifield). My grateful thanks go to Marjorie Harris, who helped judge, and to the site secretaries for their hard work during the year.

PIA DURAN – ALLOTMENTS@HGS.ORG.UK

TREES AND OPEN SPACES



During 2007-2008, the Trees and Open Spaces Committee has met on a regular basis under the chairmanship of Léonie Stephen.

In addition to the Committee's general remit to keep a watchful eye on all the open spaces in the Suburb, some members have continued to take particular responsibility for reporting on Northway Gardens and Big Wood and Little Wood, while others represent the RA on the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and the Kenwood Landscape Forum. Where matters of concern have arisen, the Committee has informed the relevant body and has tried to obtain remedial action. The Committee recognizes that all the main bodies with which it has to negotiate – the HGS Trust, Barnet Council, the City and English Heritage – operate under severe financial constraints, and it has to accept that the representations made cannot always be successful. But it remains clear that the Committee's input to these bodies has some effect some of the time. For instance, a comprehensive Management Plan for Big Wood and Little Wood has now been produced by Barnet, but it has unfortunately not yet been followed by any action. Here, as in so many aspects of what we are trying to achieve, we can only continue to write, to phone, to lobby and to hope.

Where street trees are concerned, it is possible to report on tangible successes. As always, Georgina Malcolm has compiled planting lists for street trees according to the Committee's approved list for each road, and Barnet has planted them. There has been some confusion over funding, with concern being expressed that the RA is now providing too big a proportion of the cost as compared to Barnet. But the renovation and rationalization of the street tree scene over the

past few years is satisfying evidence of the Committee's work. The Committee has also conducted a Press and letter-writing campaign against the felling of trees in Denman Drive and Reynolds Close, which has met with success so far, although we may face a further challenge regarding Denman Drive.

At present, the Committee is introducing a fresh structure of further responsibilities for its members. It is allocating three or so Suburb wards to each member, who will monitor these wards for any problems regarding street trees or open spaces in advance of every meeting. These will be reported to the Committee, which will then decide on appropriate action.

The committee will be appointing a new chairman after the AGM as I have decided to step down from the RA council after almost thirty enjoyable years. All of them on Trees and Open Spaces and three of them as chairman of the association.

LÉONIE STEPHEN – TREES@HGS.ORG.UK

MEMBERSHIP



Income from subscriptions has increased to nearly £33,000 in 2008 although the number of members has fallen slightly to just over 2100 or 40% of households on the Suburb. A big thank you must go to our members for donating a record sum of over £12,000 to Fellowship.

This year we have been promoting payment by bank standing order to help reduce collection costs and we now have a quarter of our membership paying by standing order. One unexpected issue from this has been the number of errors that banks make in setting up standing orders and credit goes to Janet Elliott, our membership secretary, who has spent a huge amount of time sorting these out.

Over 800 of our members have also provided e-mail addresses and this opens new possibilities to communicate with members in the future.

Finally, thanks must go to our team of volunteers who distribute the Yellow Directories and membership renewals for all their work in 2008.

STEVE MORRIS – MEMBERSHIP@HGS.ORG.UK

PUBLICATIONS



In the Yellow Directory we plan to extend the opportunity for organisations in the Suburb and those who represent the Suburb on various bodies to give a brief explanation of their activities. Aside from this the Directory next year will only contain a number of small changes.

Suburb News continues to provide residents with a quality local newspaper three times a year. We owe thanks to the efforts of Richard Wakefield who continues to find the advertisers needed to ensure that the two publications are not a drain on the RA's purse.

In November we helped to organise a small thank you party for RA volunteers. The event was well-attended by residents who volunteer to pick up litter, act as RA membership representatives or deliver the Suburb News and gave them an opportunity to get together over a drink and a bite to eat. We would like to thank Dave Brown from the Events Committee for his help in organizing the evening.

TERRY BROOKS – PUBLICATIONS@HGS.ORG.UK

GARDEN SUBURB GALLERY

Our first complete year since the Gallery was warmly welcomed to its new home in Fellowship House has proved that the move was a good idea. Several exhibitions that would have been difficult to stage in Hampstead Way have meant that sales for the year were steady at over £1,000 a month and we ended the year with a small surplus. A substantial proportion of sales were made as a result of the Gallery going out to other events and particularly in our joint venture with Arts and Crafts Online and the exhibition of furniture and paintings which attracted large numbers from the Suburb and further afield. Watch out for another spectacular in the summer. There are still some centenary items for sale, almost no mugs but plenty of the DVDs showing a centenary film as well as the superb 1975 film narrated by Donald Sinden and Tim Neal. We need volunteers to sit in a warm sunny Gallery for a morning or afternoon. Hopefully making friends and helping them shop. Thanks are due to Gerlinde Crossley, Dave Brown and all our gallant Gallery volunteers.

RICHARD WAKEFIELD

