



Suburb Safer Neighbourhood Team keep an eye out for speeding Santas

Three Kings visit the Suburb over Christmas, see page 5



Basements – blight or benefit?

Basement building on the Suburb has become an increasingly emotive issue. Readers said they were horrified at the queues of large vehicles on Hampstead Way, shown in our last issue, waiting to take excavated soil away from that site.

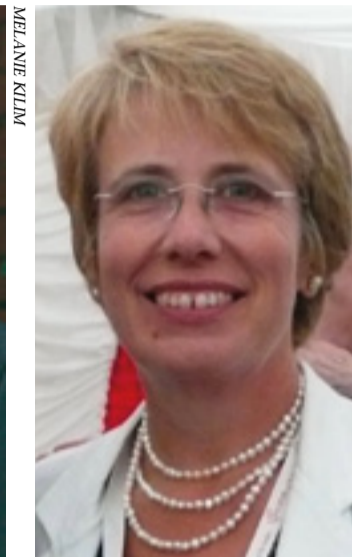
Nearly every resident in Brunner Close objected to an application for a basement at the end of the close principally on grounds of noise, nuisance, and visions of months of huge vehicles and machinery getting in and out of that tiny space. One very distraught resident

with a basement happening next door has said, "Basements are symbolic of the bunker mentality which has come near to destroying the faint shadow of what was left of the old Suburb values," and went on to plead with anyone thinking of applying for a basement to think of what they will be doing to their neighbours. Further afield the Belsize Residents Association chairman described the "rash of basements" there as "long term misery for neighbours".

The Trust and the RA's Consam committee have given

much thought to the conflict that arises between the legalities of planning law and the constitutional objective of both to preserve the character of the Suburb as well as the architecture. Once the months of disruption are over there is little to be seen of a basement conversion, the Trust controls what can be seen, but what will be the effect on the character of the Suburb when originally modest homes could be, with loft and basement conversions, doubled in size?

For Consam's policy on basements see p 2.



Suburb residents honoured

(Above left) David and Sally Lewis, both life-long Suburb residents, at the palace on the occasion of David's investiture with an MBE by Prince Charles. David's MBE in the birthday honours list is in recognition of his work for education as chairman of Whitefield School's governors. He is vice chairman of the Residents Association and represents the RA on the Trust PPC. (Above right) Susie Gregson, also a life-long resident, was awarded an MBE in the new year's honours list for services to the community. Susie founded, and for 19 years has been the driving force behind, the Proms at St Jude's. The popular Suburb music festival raises funds for Toynbee Hall and North London Hospice. Susie is also current Ladies Captain at Hampstead Golf Club, Chair of Henrietta Barnett School Association (alumnae) and sings in the St Jude's choir.

(Right) The Residents Association's 12th New Year's Eve party in St Jude's and firework display on the Square were once again said to be the best ever, as hundreds turned out to join their neighbours in welcoming the new year. See p 12.

Misconceptions and misrepresentations?

A meeting called by the Concerned Residents Group, who have been challenging the Trust charge to freeholders under the Scheme of Management for some time, in December attracted some 40 or so residents and resulted in the letter sent to Suburb News, see p 7, which accuses the Trust of escalating charges and a lack of transparency. It is answered by Jane Blackburn, Trust Manager, who says that their letter "is based on a series

of misconceptions and contains serious misrepresentations".

The same group collected sufficient signatures to challenge the 2008/9 management charge. A surveyor was appointed to investigate and the outcome of his deliberations is expected shortly.

CALL FOR A FAIRER BANDED CHARGE

During the meeting a plea was made by Annie Walker for a another attempt to change to a progressive management charge.

Calculations in 2006, which remain broadly the same, show that A - F council tax banded homes would pay far less, it would have no effect on 1235 houses in band G and 1092 H banded houses would pay about 20% more. The Trust has said it would not raise any objection to such a change. The Residents Association sent out thousands of forms with a Trust mailing and there was a coupon in Suburb News

September 2009, but another 1,000 votes for change are needed for an application to the LVT. The coupon on page 12 gives residents another opportunity to sign up for a fairer management charge.



Your Residents Association needs you

Already an RA member? The HGS Residents Association is pleased to have the support of so many residents who join and rejoin each year.

However, if the RA is to fully achieve the objectives of helping to preserve Henrietta Barnett's aims on behalf of the Suburb in the 21st century, the RA needs the active help of more members, specialists and generalists, with a

range of abilities and expertise to keep the wheels turning effectively.

What we can achieve depends on enough volunteers coming forward to undertake the work needed.

We very much value our current volunteers, but we also need new blood both to support those already involved and to undertake certain special responsibilities.

IS IT YOU WHO CAN HELP?

For 2011-12 we need in particular:

- A new Hon. Secretary – an elected post, to make sure our administration runs smoothly.
- A new Hon. Treasurer – with experience of such roles, but not necessarily an accountant.

Both of the above officers are elected posts and the post holders become members of the RA Council and the Executive Committee.

- A replacement for our long-standing Chair of Membership, to manage our contact with members, in association with the Membership Secretary.

- Ward Organisers and Ward Representatives to help with distribution of membership information.

- New members for our Roads & Traffic Committee who will involve themselves in the wide range of issues associated with this aspect of the RA's work.

Interested – please do come forward and discuss one or any of these opportunities to help your Residents Association work more effectively for you and all Suburb residents.

Thank you in advance for your support. Please contact Janet Elliott, Chairman, HGS Residents Association by email at rachairman@hgs.org.uk or by phone on 020 8455 2191.



New Offices, New Era

Our experience spans over 30 years and contrary to popular belief, we sell much of the middle to lower priced property within Hampstead Garden Suburb. There is no magic at work here. We are totally committed and are known to achieve handsome prices for two main reasons:

Firstly, because we deal with buyers trading up as well as down in price range, the latter of whom have more flexible budgets.

Secondly, we regularly deal with monied purchasers from outside the area who have grown used to even higher priced property in Central London and believe that the Suburb is not only leafy and desirable, but good value.

"We are passionate Suburbites and we eat and breathe the Suburb, it is in our blood and we treasure its heritage.

Most importantly we understand that your home is your sanctuary and is probably one of the largest assets in the family and therefore a sale/purchase/letting needs the tender care of dedicated and sensitive professionals who are skilled at this important task.

We have just refurbished our offices which are now bristling with all manner of state of the art technology and there is a private clients car park which you may find very useful.

If you have not used our services before, what a good excuse to pop in and have a chat over coffee, even if it is just about current trends. After all, we are at your service."



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Trust election results

The trustees retiring by rotation after three years in office, Angus Walker and Geoffrey Marriott, were both re-elected by members voting in the September ballot.

The full results of the HGS Trust ballot were Angus Walker 286, Geoffrey Marriott 262, William Asprey 195 and Anne Fenton 177.

Residents Association AGM

The 99th Annual General Meeting of the Association will take place on Monday March 28 2011 at 8pm in The Henrietta Barnett School Hall, Central Square, NW11.

Motions for the agenda must be received by 18 February 2011.

Nominations for the posts of officers and members of the Council are invited. They should be submitted in writing, signed by proposers and seconders and have the consent of nominees.

These must be received by 18 March 2011.

Please send notices of motions and nominations to:
**The Assistant Secretary, Rosemary Goldstein,
1a Church Mount, N2 0RW**