

Central Square

For decades there have been discussions and committees about what should be done in Central Square. In 2005 the HGS Trust sought the views of residents on various proposals of which nothing further has been heard.

In the past one gardener used to maintain the Square satisfactorily: the grass cut, the edges trimmed and the behaviour of dogs under control.

Now contractors cut the grass intermittently, leaving the cuttings and chopped up litter to lie; the paths and edges untended; the litter boxes spilling; the main central avenue unswept of fallen debris from the lime trees; the 'rose beds' a joke; the flower beds labour intensive and unimaginative whether planted or prematurely cleared; one rail missing for many years from the west side of North Square steps and the other rail unsightly; the costly Henrietta Barnett memorial lantern at length replaced but hung askew.

Everyone agrees that the first priority must be to deal with the drainage. Other suggestions have included a canal, a sunken garden and replacing the fine lime trees, although these could be pruned or pollarded, letting in more light and air and a better view of the churches. Yet last year money was spent

realigning the L-shaped beds with new turf and topsoil. Then in September 2010 six new notices on metal sticks now 'welcomed' us to Central Square with a contact number, adding to the intrusive plethora of notices disfiguring the environment. Protests soon led to their removal, but who authorised this superfluous expenditure? And without more regular attention no reinstatement will last for long.

The Square is a grandly elevated site with striking and original views, reminiscent of those from the ramparts of many a provincial continental town. Some will disagree with Simon Jenkin's dismissive verdict that our hilltop settlement is a 'dead, architectural mausoleum'. It should and can offer peace and serenity, a place for games and celebrations and safe picnicking on clean grass. Should we continue to

attribute the failure to maintain our unique square to shortage of money, or accept that endless talking shops are getting us nowhere? The H.B. School is currently engaged in a major and controversial development of the wings to the main building. This is an opportunity to face up to the neglect of the rest of the Square. The Trust and the RA should work to persuade Barnet to spend the money they already spend in more practical ways in time for the centenary; or better still let the Trust take over its management. Then the Square need not be put to shame by many attractive and well kept gardens throughout the country, including the neighbouring example set by the City of London in the maintenance of the Heath Extension.

D. WOODFIELD



Led by John Marshall another party set off on their annual fund raising walk round the Heath Extension. Saddened by the loss of their chairman Stuart Goring who has died, the Hospice's North West Support Group continue to find ways of making money for the Hospice. £120,000 was handed to the Hospice's new fund raising director Conal Presho at the group's AGM in Fellowship House. Chris Page, centre, has taken over as chairman of the group.

Your safer neighbourhood team

As of October Sergeant Mark Kelly has taken over responsibility for Hampstead Garden Suburb Safer Neighbourhood Team. Over the past few months the team have been out on the ward tackling issues raised by residents. The priorities identified at the moment are motor vehicle crimes, burglary and anti-social behaviour by

motorists, mainly by speeding. Garden Suburb have been carrying out plain clothes patrols in areas affected by Vehicle Crime and Burglary and officers have held crime prevention stalls at M&S and Waitrose.

Currently the team consists of six officers in total, four Police Community Support Officers, one

Police Constable and one Sergeant. Responding to the complaints from residents the team have been carrying out traffic operations at various locations throughout the Suburb as identified by the local community.

With the use of speed guns the officers have had cause to stop numerous drivers and issue



warnings and safety advice. These operations have taken place in the past few weeks on Willifield Way, Addison Way and Winnington Road/Holne Chase. The facts are that the vast majority of the drivers stopped are residents of the ward with a few exceptions of those using it as a cut through. On a few occasions where speeds were excessive fixed penalties have been issued.

Many other traffic offences have been detected by the team and vehicles have been taken off the road and seized by police for no insurance offences as part of the Met's Operation Reclaim which aims to target uninsured drivers on the road.

Sgt Kelly said, "I am very keen for my team to be proactive in this area and respond to complaints we receive from the local residents to tackle road traffic offences of speeding, uninsured and untaxed vehicles."

"I urge local residents to email or call us and we will endeavour to set up future operations in areas identified to us."

E-WATCH - Garden Suburb Safer Neighbourhood team is in the process of setting up a new initiative known as E-Watch. The intention of this initiative is to gather email addresses of residents and businesses on the suburb and build a mailing list. We will then use those email addresses to distribute messages from our team regarding crime prevention advice and also relevant information regarding crime in the local area.

If you would like to be placed on our emailing list please send the team an email. Garden Suburb Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) 0207 161 9016 or 07920 233 737. Email: Gardensuburb.snt@met.police.uk.

The team is not a 24 hour response team. In the case of an emergency always dial 999. The police non-emergency number is 0300 123 1212.



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Happy in the rain on Central Square. PCSO Meluchova; PS Mark Kelly; PCSO Toby Whitewood; Front row, PC Carl Mercer; PCSO Dee Dee Ciftci; PCSO Andronil.