

## SAVE OUR SUBURB LIBRARY!

Barnet wants to close the Market Place library which has served the Suburb for more than 60 years. You can help save it by signing the petition at [www.hgs.org.uk](http://www.hgs.org.uk) or with one of our clipboard campaigners.

By the time you read this, the final decision as to the future of our Suburb library may have been made by Barnet Council, but the last minute revelation



## Why has the Bishop of London taken off his mitre? Find out on p5

that the lease for our library cannot be legally terminated until 2016 has hopefully led to new thinking on the matter by embattled Cllr Robert Rams and the Barnet Cabinet.

Of course I am biased, but I believe that much has been achieved during the permitted consultation period. Will it be enough to prevent the proposed closure of our 60 year old library this September?

If fairness and objectivity are to prevail, we must surely be

in with a good chance of a successful outcome.

In response to the appeal in the last issue of Suburb News, a team of supporters secured a total of 2,125 individual names/addresses in support of our petition against the closure, together with a further 422 names who registered on line making a grand total of 2547. We were delighted to be on the front page of the Ham & High who gave us their support, as did the Jewish Chronicle and the Hendon Times. We owe thanks to the many retailers in

(continued page 9)

## The Trust, its AGM and that management charge

The Annual General Meeting of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust is again on the horizon when we elect the resident members and have the chance to question its management. This year there is only one of the four elected seats being voted on, but there is always a discussion on matters important to the maintenance of our Suburb as well. With these in mind, if you care about the preservation of our rather special environment, I would urge you to join the Trust so that you can use your vote (by postal ballot if there is a contested election) and help ensure our Suburb remains both a fine example of its type in the world and also a very pleasant part of London in which to live. If you have been a resident for at least the last three years and are over 18, you can become a member. There are no other conditions and there is no fee!

Some of us have recently received a letter from the Concerned Residents entitled 'Who is responsible for the mess in HGS?' which contains a few

assertions and asks some questions. It is clear that the authors do not accept the explanation given for the extraordinary increase in the management charge for the year 2006/7, nor the now accepted way that the charge represents a freeholder's share of certain specified costs. There was a change in the allocation of management costs and freeholders no longer receive a subsidy from the rest of the Trust's resources. This was one of three reasons given for the increase; the other two being improvements in systems, staffing and accommodation, and the level of legal fees.

The near tripling of the charge in 2006/7 from what had been a relatively stable payment was certainly a shock, but it is worth remembering the cogent reasons for this already referred to and the oft-repeated statement by the Trust that it expects the charge now to vary within a range of £100 to £140 with adjustments for inflation. This has been so for the last three years.

Actual expenditure charged in 2009/10 was £125.80, in 2010/11 £120.90 and the charge for 2011/12 is estimated to be £125.30. If the only interest is in minimising the management charge, cutting staff and avoiding legal action in planning disputes, the consequences for the proper functioning of the Trust could well be damaging.

How the Trust sets its charge has now been tested twice since the increase in 2006/7; first in an application to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal and then through the appointment of an independent surveyor. The Trust has shown its administration of the charge to be justified both times, but is obliged to recharge all management charge payers with the costs, which were a little over £25,000 for the two. The Trust keeps no record of the staff time involved in all this but it must be considerable and carries both a financial and an opportunity cost.

It is important not to deny the Trust the resources to do its work properly and to avoid



The RA centenary weekend brought together residents who were there for the sunny day's picnic on Central Square with friends and families, and those who were seriously appreciative of the Creative Arts Festival housed by the Free Church. Something over 300 people picnicked, one family party of twenty enjoyed tables near the Thomas Gould jazz quintet, while further away children enjoyed the special entertainment laid on for them or queued patiently to have their faces artistically redesigned. See p 12

sending out encouraging signals to those who buy property here with the intention of developing it. Fortunately the trustees of a charity have a duty with regard to its aims and objectives and decisions are taken accordingly.

Become a member of the Trust now so you can play a part in the governance of the Suburb by attending the AGM and participating in the election of one the four elected trustees.

TERRY BROOKS, EDITOR



Maureen Schuricht, Lorna Page, Christine Barrow and Anne Lowe juggled 38 artistic temperaments during the two day Creative Arts Festival

## More RA meetings for residents

The Residents Association, now celebrating its centenary year, continues to do a huge amount of work for the benefit of all who live on the Suburb. It is felt, however, that many do not realise the contribution made by the RA and particularly its Committees.

The list of RA actions in the past are legion, from the reform of the Trust to Suburb weekends. Recently negotiations with Barnet on the height and siting of the new street lamps have led to great improvements over the original proposals even if Consam did not always manage to persuade Barnet of the superiority of the RA's views. The Trees and Open Spaces Committee is constantly on guard to protect the environment we sometimes take for granted and continues to pay for new street trees all over the Suburb. Hundreds enjoyed the Creative Arts Festival and Picnic on Central Square.

However no successful organisation stands still and the RA Council earlier this year set up a working group under my chairmanship to recommend how the strategy of the RA might better meet the needs of members and residents generally. Our two interim reports are available on the RA website: [hgs.org.uk](http://hgs.org.uk).

The RA Council has met on the first Tuesday of every month except August for as long as anyone can remember. A Question Time was introduced in 1995; residents have used it sparingly and the format has not always proved satisfactory.

It was agreed at the June meeting that we should try to implement the working group's recommendations in relation to meetings of the RA Council as soon as possible.

(1) In order to meet the needs of members and residents, every other month we will be holding open meetings on particular subjects where members will be welcome to express their views and influence policy without the constraints necessarily imposed by question time in a council meeting. Thereby we will not have to wait until the AGM to hold such a discussion.

While we have ideas for appropriate matters to be dealt with in this way, resident's suggestions would be welcome. The first open meeting will be on October 4 at Fellowship House. The subject for debate will be announced nearer the time.

2) Generally speaking the Council will now meet to discuss ordinary business every two months, but still on the first Tuesday of the month in question at 8pm. So the next meeting will take place on September 6 (which is when it would have been since the Council does not meet in August). The next meeting after that will be in November.

3) Question time will be given greater prominence at Council meetings and the agenda running order will try to ensure that there is enough time to discuss those matters in relation to the questions being asked. As we hope to listen to questions

at or near the beginning of the meeting, we would ask those with questions to arrive at 8pm.

However, the time can be most efficiently used if those intending to ask questions raised them informally with the Chairman of the relevant Committee as soon as the issue arises. There is an appropriate Committee to deal with almost anything and they are all listed in your Suburb Directory and on the web.

More new ideas are in the pipeline. Others are welcome. Please email them to me at: [richardmwiseman@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:richardmwiseman@yahoo.co.uk) or write to me at 2 Hill Close, London NW11 7JP.

RICHARD WISEMAN

## 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.

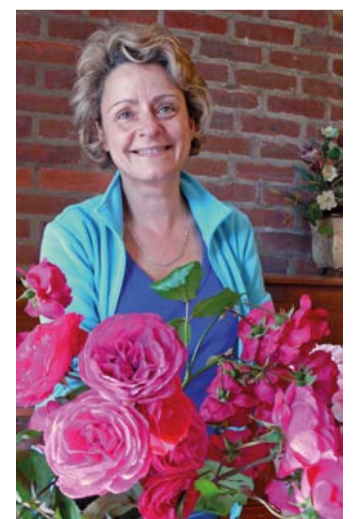
Most importantly we understand that your home is your sanctuary and is probably one of the largest assets in the family and therefore a sale/purchase/letting needs the tender care of dedicated and sensitive professionals who are skilled at this important task.

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."



020 8458 7311  
[www.glentree.co.uk](http://www.glentree.co.uk)



The Horticultural Society has kept us all occupied and marvelling at how many and how skilled are the green fingers of the Suburb. Caroline Broome, seen here, and Ruta Teteris organised a special rose show in June. More on p 11