

## Much discussion at RA parking and traffic open meeting

On 6 December 2011 RA Council member, Richard Wiseman welcomed residents and Neil Richardson, Highways Manager for Traffic and Development at LB Barnet to the second of the RA's new series of Open Meetings. Ward Councillors had been invited to attend but they all had other meetings.

The meeting began with a brief overview by Gary Shaw of the RA Roads and Traffic Committee, about the new restrictions and parking regulations that had recently been introduced. He gave three examples of overregulation and inept enforcement by LBB regarding parking tickets unfairly or incorrectly issued where he had been able to help the residents and had their tickets cancelled. The recent increase in parking charges together with the introduction of a policy of providing only cashless meters was, Gary said, "creating a decline in business in Temple Fortune". Traders used the Finchley and Golders Green Forum (provided by LBB) to present a petition to LBB. To alleviate the problem LBB were introducing £1 and £2 scratch cards which can be purchased in some local shops. It was pointed out that similar cards issued in the neighbouring borough required 13 pieces of information every time they are used.

He told the meeting that the Councillors are given parking permits which entitle them to park at any time in the Borough without payment (when they are on Council business). They operate outside the regulations that they impose on all residents.

With regard to speed limits being reduced on the Suburb, a compromise between safety and convenience was necessary. The accident rate on the Suburb is low although the perception may be different. Gary did not consider that reducing speed would make a difference to safety. A resident who had been

an ambulance driver said that while speed humps slow down the traffic they create problems for emergency services.

A resident of Willifield Way pointed out that speed tables had been removed and a petition he had presented to LBB had been ignored. Speeding buses were also an issue in Willifield Way and elsewhere.

Richard Wiseman asked if the scheme by which roads controlled by LB Islington now have 20pmh speed limits would be looked at by LBB; Mr Richardson said that there were no plans to do so.

It was also pointed out that much of the Suburb is subject to a 20 mph speed limit which was not enforced; Neil Richardson said he would look into this.

He said that it was Council policy is to take out road humps when roads are resurfaced and he was not in a position to comment on policy. He also reminded the meeting that financial resources are directed to areas where there are accidents. He expressed some reservations about the long term effectiveness of vehicle activated signs.

CPZs were discussed at length. The issues complained about were that they simply displaced parking from controlled areas to non-controlled areas, and that the charges kept climbing. Mr Richardson acknowledged that parking revenue was used for other highway purposes and thus indirectly reduced Council Tax and business rates. It was suggested the CPZ be suspended for a week and that the effects be monitored by independent observers. Mr Richardson said that this would not happen.

Neil Richardson said that LBB has no plan to extend the CPZ in the area. However, LBB listens to residents' concerns. A petition had been presented by residents about parking restrictions in Hampstead Way. Displacement parking is an inevitable consequence of a CPZ.

A review had recently been conducted into the CPZ, and Temple Fortune residents had not stated that they do not want the CPZ in their area.

There was a problem with people going on holiday for up to three weeks and leaving their cars on unrestricted roads and also with a car repair company leaving cars in some locations. Neil Richardson said that there is nothing that LBB can do about legally parked cars.

It was suggested that LBB should allow 30 minutes free parking. This would help residents and shop keepers. If shops are empty the Council loses business rates. Neil Richardson said that a pay and display scheme tailored for the shopping area was introduced successfully in Edgware and that LBB could look at options to encourage a rapid turnover of parking in Temple Fortune with appropriate enforcement. The CPZ must be self financing. Residents who live in a non-CPZ area would probably not want to financially support residents who do.

A resident said that physical changes were made after a report in 1971 regarding rat runs on the Suburb and asked what alternatives to speed humps are there for traffic calming. Neil Richardson said that everyone 'rat runs' to a certain extent. The answer is that traffic be encouraged to flow efficiently on the main roads.

A one way system was suggested for Asmunds Hill/ Temple Fortune Hill. Neil Richardson said that this would encourage speeding, carried other safety risks and would be expensive to introduce.

The obstruction caused by basement development was discussed. There is a major development at the corner of Hampstead Way/Meadway. The building contractors had been allowed to take up space on the public highway, part of which is being used as an office. Mr Richardson would look into this case.

It was pointed out that consent had just been given by LBB to a basement in Erskine Hill. Developers should pay for a licence and enforcement officials should check that conditions were being complied with and the traffic management issues addressed. A resident asked if LBB could develop a policy to restrict basement development where there was no room for the skip.

Richard Wiseman said that the RA is happy to help residents with traffic/parking issues and if anyone would like to volunteer their services to assist the R&T Committee, they would be very welcome.

## From HGS Archives – The Suburb Parliament

In October 1912 a mock parliament was summoned on the Suburb. Sixty men turned up, women being excluded. Rules and standing orders were adopted which followed those of the Westminster Parliament. The first Speaker was aptly named Maurice Thunder. The Deputy Speaker was Mr Banford and the Clerk of the House was Mr Norris. Very soon, Thunder had to go abroad and the Reverend J H Rushbrooke, minister of the Free Church was elected Speaker and proved to be very impartial and popular. The Parliament met in the Club House on Friday evenings, twice a month.

The Liberals were in the majority and formed a Government. Mr N Carryer, was Prime Minister and outlined the usual points of the Liberal programme, giving special importance to the taxation of land values. Mr Lickfold, Leader of the Opposition, in a 'brilliant and witty speech' attacked the Government policy. Mr Temple, leader of the Socialists, criticized the Government for having no policy for improving social conditions.

The first bill introduced was for Adult Male Suffrage (at this time there was still a property qualification for voting). An amendment was moved to extend the vote to women and after a lively debate the franchise was given to women by a vote of 35 to 23, so women were allowed to join the Parliament.

In November 1912 there was a debate on Free Trade, and Mr Lickfold, Conservative Leader of the Opposition, spoke against the Government policy for Free Trade and in favour of Tariff Reform. Mr A D Webb 'exposed many fallacies'; he was one of the most eminent statisticians in the country, being the author of a monumental Dictionary of Statistics, the standard work of reference. Margaret Bondfield, whose statement of the Labour point of view was 'a fine example of how much can be put into a short speech' was given general and continuous applause.

Margaret Bondfield was 40 years old and was an experienced campaigner for women's rights and for the trade union movement. One political commentator described her as:

'Small in stature with dark hair, wide brows, and bright dark eyes, she reminded her hearers of a courageous robin as, in her clear, resonant, musical voice she told them that the unions must get together for political action if they were to achieve their larger aims'.

In 1923 Margaret Bondfield was to become one of the first

women to enter the House of Commons when she was elected as Labour MP for Northampton. When Ramsay MacDonald became Prime Minister in 1924 he appointed her as parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Labour, and in 1929 he made her Minister of Labour, the first woman Cabinet Minister. Perhaps the Suburb Parliament was a valuable experience for her.

In December there was an overwhelming majority in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, the most controversial issue of the day. In February 1913 a Private Members bill for the Nationalisation of Mines was introduced by Mr H Schloesser. He had drafted this bill for the Westminster Parliament, so evidently he was a parliamentary draftsman, a rare breed of lawyer. The Government opposed the Bill, because it gave no compensation for royalties, but it was passed by a majority of nine, presumably because there was good attendance by Socialists and Independents, and Liberal backbenchers disobeyed their party whip. There were cries of "Resign!" however the Government refused to resign until there was a vote of no confidence and the whips spent a busy fortnight summoning support. The government whip sent out a note saying, 'Meet me on Willifield Green when the clock strikes eight – Mary'. This caused some amazement in domestic circles and some ministers were shadowed to the trysting place by their wives! The vote of no confidence was lost, but as the Government would not proceed with the nationalization of mines they felt bound to resign.

In March 1913 the Socialist Government took power. They seemed very unprepared as they had no bills ready to propose, and were soon defeated. When the new session opened in



October the membership had grown to 120 and they moved to the Institute hall which was more spacious. The Tories formed a Government with Lickfold as Prime Minister. There was a debate on the reform of the House of Lords, and then in a debate on Trade Disputes the Government was defeated by 2 votes, and resigned.

The Liberals came back into power with Alfred Baker as Prime Minister and in January 1914 there was a debate on education and the desirability of having a state school within reach of every child in the country. However attendance had declined and so had the standard of debate. There was an improvement in February with a good debate on the Liberal proposal for a minimum wage, introduced by H A Welch (architect of Wordsworth and Coleridge Walks). In March there was a debate on housing and acquisition of land by local authorities, the main points of the Liberal programme being identical with the Lloyd George proposals. Then they introduced a bill to nationalize the railways, which was passed, and so ended the session.

The Suburb Parliament did not meet during the War, but was recalled in 1920 with a Labour Government in power. There was a visit from members of the Hampstead Parliament who took part in a debate on trade unions; the visitors wanted to amend the law to make trade unions financially liable for their actions, and compel them to ballot their members before calling a strike. At the time the miners were on strike and there was a threatened railway strike.

This account of the Suburb Parliament is taken from the reports in the Record and the Town Crier. Unfortunately these publications ceased and so we have no further information about the Parliament. It was a very lively society, with many lawyers as 'ministers', and some of the most able people in the Suburb as members.

MICKY WATKINS



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