

Suburb Library proposal submitted

Following the very successful campaign, led by Deborah Warland and Neville Silver – which resulted in a residents' petition which Barnet could not ignore, the Council asked if there was a volunteer proposal. The Action Group enlisted the help of the Residents Association and within a short time a core of 38 volunteers had been created with another 20 'observers' in the wings, co-chaired by RA Hon Treasurer Jeremy Clynes and Council member Jonathan Seres. Barnet promptly inserted in their Strategic Review provision for community initiatives to save HGS and Friern Barnet libraries, specifically mentioning the RA involvement.

Our volunteer-led library proposal was outlined to Barnet in September. However, their own procedures for assessing initiatives were not ready until almost December, so a formal proposal, including additional required information, could not be submitted until 8th January. Handover to successful bidders is due on 2nd April.

There is another proposal to Barnet, from The Friends of HGS Library led by Brian Ingram of Brookland Rise. Followers of the local email 'Lists' will know of Brian's view that the library needs to be run differently from at present – as a Community Library. Brian says, "We realise Andrew Carnegie didn't make his money running libraries and we will cut our cloth accordingly while meeting the needs of the local community." In contrast, the RA group wants the present service initially to continue unchanged, but with early expansion of the DVD stock, and a survey of other needs (eg extension of the toddlers' Read

& Rhyme which at present is, for staffing reasons, confined to school term time).

KEY FACTOR

The RA proposal will save Barnet its annual £70,000 staff cost. However, Barnet wanted to exclude the library from their central computer system. From the outset, the RA's volunteers were clear that a handover will only work if HGS remains on the system, just as Hackney's volunteer library is on the borough's system. This was raised in a helpful meeting with Cllr Rams (responsible for the Review) in September, and by December confirmation had been received that "nothing is ruled out".

While we have received continuous support from Cllr John Marshall and an assurance that senior councillors are keen for our bid to succeed, there has been no confirmation from Barnet that our proposal will not fail on this point.

Officials have mentioned that the central computer system may well be replaced in a couple of years' time. By then we will have had experience of running the library and would discuss whether to adhere to the new system, possibly at a cost to Barnet that may not be acceptable, or to adopt an alternative approach.

CONTINUED ACCESS TO BARNET BOOKS

Happily there is full support from Barnet for continued access to books from other branches. There is disagreement over the mechanism, but that would be overcome under our proposed continued computer link.

From the outset, Barnet had the strange notion of giving us a grant to buy the present

stock of books in the branch, and an annual grant for updating the stock. We responded that it made no sense to depart from Barnet's current purchasing, and saw no reason to change the ownership of the books. That remains our position.

ORGANISATION

A new company, not for profit, would be incorporated to contract with Barnet to provide the Market Place service, and to organise the volunteers. As Barnet pays rent under a lease that cannot be ended before September 2016, our proposal runs to that date.

The RA chatline produced sufficient volunteers from just two emails. However, if our proposal is accepted we intend to contact the four local primary schools and two secondary schools, for two categories of volunteer:

- Parents, particularly in the primary schools where their support for the Action Group was strong, and many may not yet have returned to work while their families are young.
- 6th form students seeking work experience. At the meeting addressed by LBB officials on 19 October, there were five from Christ's College, and recent contact has been made with Henrietta Barnett.

There are two advantages in building up a large group of volunteers. More cover will be available for illness or holidays. Secondly, we will broaden the experience of the group, and learn more about local needs.

Our volunteers have met three times. CRB checks and insurance have been high on the list, and are covered by our proposal to Barnet.

WILL BARNET ACCEPT OUR PROPOSAL?

We will know by 29th February, as the Barnet committee meets on 28th. They always intended an alternative library provision in the ward, although their drop-in idea at the Institute would have been totally unsuitable (and costly to the Institute) even if the Institute hadn't put its Arts building up for sale. We think that the campaign by the Action Group played a big part in convincing Councillors that some provision in the ward is essential. The key is whether they deliver by accepting our proposal. Their main overhead is staff and with 40 volunteers we can save a

high proportion of that overhead – the Council just needs the imagination to see that they can't slot our volunteers into a new model that no-one has tried – if we continue the present system, there will be time enough to look at new systems when we have a couple of years' experience under our belts.

Barnet has a great library tradition, and their strategic review served to emphasised the importance of maintaining it – with suitable adaptation to the modern world. We are in a ward where the library has always been well used. A high proportion of these users are the old, the very young and the disabled. We also have a lot of foreign students in the rented flats around the Market Place, using the library computers for distance learning. All these are important social groupings, and the Review recognised the need to mitigate the loss of the staffed service, so we are optimistic.



Jeremy Clynes, Deborah Warland and Jonathan Seres at the library

So much to talk about

As the year comes to a close I'd just like to say what an amazing community Hampstead Garden Residents make. In terms of the Suburb being a good place to live, for many residents the strong community spirit, as evidenced by the emails, must be at least as important as the beautiful environment. As a non-resident (I've been receiving the emails

because my late father was a resident and lived in the house where I grew up until he died in July) I watch in admiration. Prior to a much needed email cull, I've been looking back through the 2011 HGS list emails. Approaching 5,000 were sent. Most were friendly, helpful, and supportive, with just an occasional difference of opinion. The main

topics, listed below, give some sort of snap shot of things that have concerned the community during 2011. Apologies if I've missed anyone's favourite topic. I doubt many communities across the UK regularly exchange views on so many topics. Long may it continue. Thanks Steve Morris for making it possible.

DEBORAH YOUNG

HGS CHATLINE TOPICS 2011

- » Susi Gregson's MBE – an excellent start to the year
- » WCs
- » Eileen Whelan – funeral
- » Lots of things being given away
- » Loads of requests for recommended tradesmen and suppliers – and the start of the Master Tradesmen List
- » Free concerts in the Free Church
- » Car break ins – and at last acknowledgement that it isn't just careless car owners failing to lock their cars
- » Fellowship House talks
- » Occasional reports about burglaries – and advice on prevention
- » Campaigns to save Church Farmhouse Museum, and libraries
- » Proms at St Jude's
- » Requests to borrow, and offers to lend, various things
- » Items offered for sale, or in exchange for charity donations
- » Planning Applications
- » Health insurance
- » Home insurance
- » Horticultural Society events
- » Bird sightings
- » Restaurant recommendations
- » Power cuts
- » Henrietta Barnett School buildings
- » Fletchers Gardens
- » Henlys Corner works
- » Parking charges
- » Oak trees in various locations
- » Spare concert tickets
- » HBS Choral Society
- » BT Infinity Cable Broadband
- » Garden Suburb Theatre
- » Fellowship Film Club
- » Squatters
- » Paediatric First Aid training
- » People offering and looking for accommodation
- » GPs
- » Garden Suburb Safer Neighbourhood Team
- » Miss Galloway
- » Estate agent notice boards
- » Open Air Theatre
- » Scam phone calls
- » Scam emails
- » Suburb News
- » Garden Centre closure
- » French market
- » Skills/ goods/ services exchange
- » Water meter
- » Attempted mugging
- » Tom O'Brien
- » Residents Association 100th Year
- » Shops closing
- » Requests for teachers
- » Yellow Book Gardens on the Suburb
- » North London Hospice summer fête
- » Firework party on Central Square
- » Arthur Ambrose
- » Wasps, ants
- » Basements
- » Luton airport
- » Hedgehogs
- » Zumba
- » Bridget Cox
- » Trust elections
- » Daphne Holton
- » Free Fireworks
- » Protecting bulbs from squirrels
- » Buildings insurance
- » Road accidents in the Suburb
- » Cashless parking
- » PCN – penalty charge notice (parking ticket)
- » Water – no water
- » Power dip
- » Lowering front hedges
- » Snow shovels and snow shovelling volunteers
- » Pledgebank gritting
- » Mushrooms
- » Christmas tree in Meadway
- » Recycling video cassettes
- » Scam emails asking for money

Birth and Death: The Need for Community Support

We have reached a point in time where we recognise that we need a gentle start to motherhood and newborn life and above all, we need to love and nurture our babies. At the same time we have moved away from close knit families or communities where aunts, cousins, mothers and grandmothers would have supported a mother through pregnancy, birth, early days and motherhood. Mothers need more support.

At the other end of the lifespan more needs to be done as well. Facing our end of life or the end of life of a loved one is a very difficult thing to do. It is a very emotional journey and often a sad one. A few things can make the journey easier to travel: having 'our house in order' (plans for our care, wills, etc); having open conversations with our loved ones and sharing our plans and wishes for end of life care; and having the support we need.

The Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church has set up a part time Community Support role to address these issues and support both the Free Church congregation and the wider community.

This role will cover End of Life Care with preparation and support in planning and help and assistance for families dealing with death, dying and bereavement. At the same time, the role will cover care and support of parents and families

before, during and after the arrival of a new born.

Mireille Hayden of Asmunds Hill has taken on this role. She is a chartered health psychologist, has trained with the active birth centre in antenatal preparation and works locally as a doula. She is also a former NHS manager in End of Life care and currently delivers training programmes for volunteers in End of Life Care.

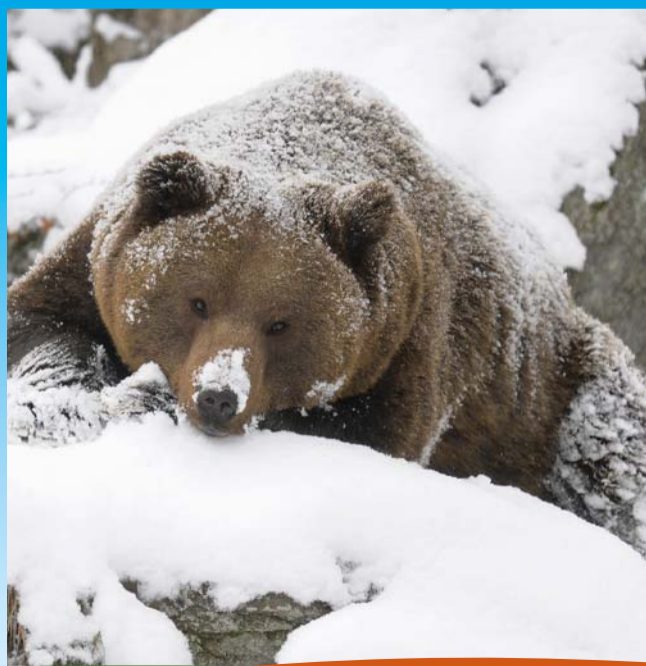
Mireille says, "Most people are quite surprised that I work at such opposite ends of the spectrum of life but to me the qualities needed are the same: compassion, care and a quiet supportive presence – it's a personal passion."

Mireille is planning to set up for Spring 2012 a postnatal care and breastfeeding support group which will be part of the Wednesday morning playgroup in the Free Church rooms. New mums will be able to get some support and encouragement with care and breastfeeding and a chance to meet other mums. She also plans to deliver talks for the community on end of life care and planning and why it is important and support families facing death, dying and bereavement.

For information email Mireille at info@softdawn.co.uk or info@gentledusk.org.uk or call 07801 543 712 or contact Reverend Ian Tutton on itutton@aol.com.

Read more about Mireille in our interview with her on page 7.

A life enhancing alternative to hibernation



Now that winter has finally set in, it's so easy to dive under the duvet and wait for spring to arrive. But now is a great opportunity to get ahead of the game – with a course at The Institute.

This January The Institute has more than 50 new courses starting in all subject areas, so now is your chance to make up for it and do the course you've been promising yourself.

If cookery is your thing, there are 20 new courses starting this month, covering all tastes and all cuisines. And, if you'll forgive the pun, that's just for starters. If your New Year's resolution was to improve your computer skills or your maths, then you'll find our teachers are here to help with the ideal course. Plus our Fashion and Textiles department and our Art department are really buzzing this month with a range of exciting new courses starting in January.

If you don't have a particular idea in mind, visit our website or take a look at our prospectus – the variety of our January start courses takes many people by surprise.

So, even in the depths of winter, there is a course at The Institute which will keep you going through until spring.

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