

LETTERS

North Square, NW11 7AA

Sir
At the next AGM of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust one Trustee will resign by rotation.

Last time there was an election for a Trust position, the successful candidate was supported by the 'Concerned Residents'. From what I have seen and heard, the 'Concerned Residents' primary strategy is to reduce the management charge and I have heard no information from them as to whether they would wish to continue the functions of the Trust or how they would do so with lower levels of funding.

In the main the Trust has done a reasonably good job in conserving the character of the Suburb and the values which most of us who live here wish to preserve. That is not to say they do everything right but I think that the vast majority of people living in the Suburb are generally happy with the work the Trust undertakes.

I believe that it is very important that the Trust continues its work to ensure that the Suburb in which we live does not lose its very individual and special character. The Trust needs to have people working for it in order to execute its functions. The Trust accounts are available for anybody to see and show that, in the main, the organisation is financially run in a competent way. It needs the monies collected from the management charge to continue to run and protect the environment in which we live.

As a result of active canvassing, Saul Zadka, supported by the 'Concerned Residents', was elected as a Trustee. It is important to ensure that at the next election, which is likely to take place in August and September of this year, Trust Members do not elect another hostile Trustee and I would strongly urge everyone

who lives in the Suburb to join the Trust by obtaining a membership application form from the HGS Trust website to ensure that they are able to vote at the election.

Yours
Richard Townley

The Townleys have lived on the Suburb since 1977, they have three grown up children. Richard is a chartered surveyor and is chairman of the Central Square Residents Association.

Asmunds Place, NW11 7XG

Sir
Mr John Whiting's 'investigative reporting', (Letters, Spring 2012), on the dispute between the Concerned Residents Group and the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust over increases in the management charge, is incomplete if not selective. It discovered that the dispute started in 2007 but failed to discover the charge increased from £47 per annum in the year 2004/5 to £127 in the year 2009/10.

This represents an average, exponential rate of 26.5% (almost 10 times higher than the average inflation rate over the period).

Given that the Trust provides services to residents (free- and lease-holders alike) on a monopoly basis, it defies logic, let alone fairness and justice, to suggest that a Court of Law has given the Trust Company authority to impose such increases (it has to be recalled that annual charge increased in pace with inflation between 1983 and 2003). Hence, we can only hope that next time Mr Whiting's investigative reporting will be more comprehensive.

Yours,
for the Concerned Residents Group,
Raphael Papadopoulos

It has been pointed out to Dr Papadopoulos in the past that the 2005 figure of £47 was a heavily subsidised charge. The actual cost for that year was £81. This was at a time when the Trust had a £100,000 mortgage on its offices and the continuing subsidy of freeholders was endangering the charity. Ed.

Midholm, NW11 6LN

Sir,
Imagine the following scenario. You return an item to a shop and request a refund and once this is offered, you take the refund whilst retaining the purchased item. When questioned, you say that you have publicised your continued ownership of the item (on your own personal website) and are therefore unwilling to hand it over.

Unreasonable and preposterous? Possibly, but some might see analogies with a decision by a large proportion of Trust Council members in respect of the filing of an amended report by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors appointed expert. As many readers will recall, the expert from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) was asked to adjudicate on the appropriateness of the management charge for 2009/10 but instead produced a report for completely the wrong year – 2010/11. In order to rectify his error, the expert then issued a new determination for 2009/10, saying that the wrong figures in his earlier determination were illustrative only and the arguments in connection with the management charges remain the same.

According to the rules of the RICS, a report once issued cannot

subsequently be amended, except for typing errors, and I consider this rule rendered the amended second version of the expert's determination invalid. This RICS rule was a significant justification for seeking a refund of the expert's fee by the Trust and objectors and, consequently, the expert's agreement to return the fee was tantamount to acknowledging the invalidity of the amended determination.

The Trust's argument in now asserting the continued validity of the expert's judgement, despite requesting the return of the fee, is that it had already published the determination and placed it on its website and was consequently 'not prepared to set it aside'. Does this imply that making a preemptive announcement that runs counter to an existing rule, renders the rule invalid? The logical consequences are mind-boggling.

I wonder what your readers make of this? And what confidence to place in an expert judgement that is rooted in figures that are purely illustrative when in fact the proportionate increase in management charge on previous years in 2009/10 was very different from that in 2010/11?

Yours
Gloria Moss

The Archer on target

It was fantastic news for the School campaign group 'Local Schools for Local Children' when the Department for Education confirmed that their proposed Free School, The Archer Academy, has been given the go-ahead, with a scheduled opening date of September 2013.

The news comes at the end of an eighteen month-long campaign, during which the group sought to find a solution

to the lack of mixed, non-selective, non-denominational education in N2, N3 and NW11. Having discovered that Barnet Council's ability to address the problem was limited to expanding existing schools, they decided to apply for funding to open a brand new school under the government's Free Schools initiative.

To find out more, show your support or offer to help, visit www.thearcheracademy.org.uk.

An occasion not to be missed, by Suburb gardeners, is the annual chance to marvel at the Wordsworth Walk garden created by Chris and Lorna Page. Dr Page has been a leading light in campaigns to raise money for the North London Hospice since it was just an unrealised idea and the Hospice plant and produce sale in his garden is one of the most enjoyable ways of keeping the funds flowing. A combination of sunshine in one of the best Suburb gardens, a glass of wine and the feeling of contributing to something so worthwhile is an irresistible combination.



In a pickle or preserving the Suburb?

On Thursday 20 September (7.30pm at Fellowship House) the Horticultural Society invites you to a chutney/pickle/preserving extravaganza. We will be sharing our knowledge of pickling and chutneys, as well as jam and other preserves, and will also be sharing tips to encourage you to enter in the Summer and Autumn shows. We will have time to exchange favourite recipes, from

pickled cucumbers to strawberry jam, and there will be people on hand to answer any questions you may have to start you pickling and preserving!

We will break for a glass of wine and pickle-tasting with some excellent cheese and biscuits, while reminiscing about the wonderful preserves our grandmothers used to make. There will also be some blind tasting of home-grown

goodies versus shop-bought. Can you taste the difference?

Please come and join us, beginner pickler and experienced preserver alike.

We will be selling home-made local pickles, chutneys and jams, the proceeds of which will go to the North London Hospice. Please bring your taste buds (excuse the puns).

ROBERT WALLIS

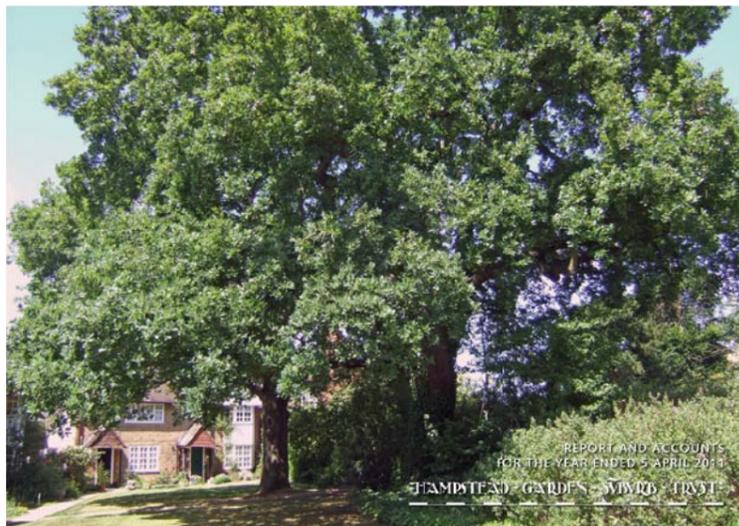
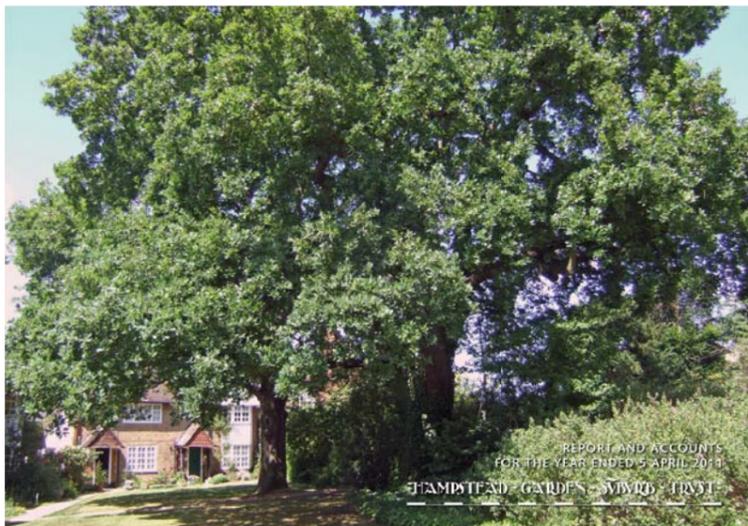
Trust (trust) n. reliance on and confidence in the truth. Custody, charge or care. (Sp in **Hampstead Garden Suburb** – members elect four Trustees to the **Trust Council** in whom is vested legal powers to preserve the character and amenities of the **Suburb**.)

The Trust requests the pleasure of your company as a member

The Trust Council would like to see more Suburb residents represented as members. The sole requirement for membership is to have lived continuously on the Suburb for three years.

Many residents come to live here because it is a unique environment and support the aims of the Trust in trying to preserve the Suburb's character and amenities.

All residents who believe that the job we are trying to do is worthwhile should be members of the Trust. New residents are now welcome to join as associate members.



HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST

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