TREES AND OPEN SPACES

After 20 years of active membership, Sally Lewis left the Committee during the year, as did Deborah Calland and Peter Falk. They will be much missed but all are continuing their involvement with Bigwood and its Action Days. Lynda Cook joined the Committee early in the year, subsequently taking on the role of Secretary and we are actively seeking more members.

As in previous years, we continued to monitor the Suburb to identify problems to do with trees, grass verges, hedges and benches, with individual members of the committee covering the various areas. Our aim is to visit all roads paying particular attention to gaps in the original planting of street trees. For Barnet's spring 2015 planting, the Residents Association funded the planting of an extra 59 trees to fill old gaps in the Suburb roads. For the spring 2016 planting we will be matching Barnet's spend on replacing missing trees and are in the process of working with Barnet to finalise the list of trees to be planted; however the combined amount is, once more, not quite enough to fill all the gaps.

Our work with the Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust in their project to survey and create a database of significant trees, other than street trees, in the Suburb is drawing to a close with the surveying completed. The most important function of the survey has been to highlight those trees which make a significant contribution to their surroundings and recommend the most important of them to be covered by a TPO (Tree Protection Order). This highlighting will play an important role in our being able to fend off insurance company requests for their removal, as demonstrated by Barnet's refusal to permit the magnificent ancient oak behind 12 Asmuns Hill to be felled where the Chairman of the RA and the Trust Manager spoke in person against the application.

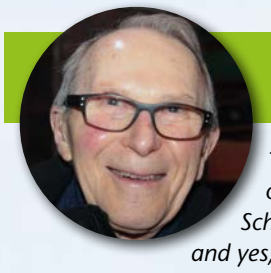
We continue to play an active part in the management both of Hampstead Heath, with a representative on the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, and of Kenwood, as a member of English Heritage's Kenwood Landscape Forum.

The Bigwood Action Days also continued during the year with three Saturday morning sessions in the spring completing the work planned by Barnet's Tree Officer for the 2014/15 season, and three in the autumn making a good start on the 2015/16 season's work. Grants from the Forestry Commission to Barnet have funded new interpretation boards and surveys of birds, bats, fungi and flora. Of these the Bird Survey identified 28 species of birds making a population of 149 to 175 pairs breeding in the wood – a high density of breeding birds for an urban site. Two of the breeding species, Common Cuckoo and Song Thrush are listed as globally threatened species whose UK breeding populations have halved, or worse, over the past 25 years, and another four (Stock Dove, Eurasian Green Woodpecker, Mistle Thrush and Dunnock) are listed as species declining less severely. Our Action Days aim to improve the woodland structure by coppicing hazel and removing some of the ground ivy and bramble to create a number of small glades amongst the mature trees, whilst maintaining enough variety for the birds, bats, fungi and other plants to thrive. Come and join us (email peter.falk@dsl.pipex.com for details), we are planning to extend the work into Little Wood with its amazing amount of wild flowers which would benefit from clearing much of the ground ivy and bramble.

As a small group, the Committee likes to act as an enabler to help and encourage specific action groups to undertake various projects in the Suburb along the lines of the Bigwood Working Group, and has helped a small group of individuals take responsibility for the planting of 4 rose beds in Meadway Gate.

During the year the RA has helped to fund the Northway Gardens Organisation which has replanted and is now maintaining the flower beds in Northway Gardens with a grant of £2,394, and has paid £8,750 (with up to a further £1,250 promised) to the HGS Trust to part finance the Central Square Residents Association's plans for replanting and managing the flower beds in Central Square.With contributions from Barnet Council and the HGS Trust, the total spend in Central Square will be up to £40,000.

TONY GHILCHIK, Chairman (ratrees@hgs.org.uk)



EVENTS

The big crowds who flocked to Central Square to celebrate the New Year 2015 by watching the firework display once again testified to its popularity. "I do accept that fireworks are not everybody's cup of tea," writes Hella Schrader, an active member of the Events Committee; and she goes on to say that they "come with New Years and yes, they are loud."

Some pet owners, fearful for the wellbeing of their dogs and cats, would like to ban fireworks altogether. Whilst sympathising with their concerns, we feel that they should not find it too difficult to provide adequate shelter for their animals in the safety and relative quiet of their homes for a very few minutes after midnight. The vast majority of resident attendees just love to watch the magical New Year display and their clear message to the RA is to maintain this tradition.

Immediately before the fireworks, St Jude's Church played host at a convivial party organised by the Events Committee. Both the party and the fireworks mark important landmarks in bringing together the Suburb community. We send our thanks to St Jude's for their generosity.

The RA AGM took place on 30 March in The Henrietta Barnett School Hall, where we estimate the attendance to have been in the region of 120/130. The Events Committee organises this occasion, including the serving of refreshments, on an annual basis. Our appreciation goes to the school for permitting the use of the school hall for this event.

A fortnight before the general election, a lively and informative hustings, masterfully chaired by the Reverend Alan Walker, packed the Free Church on 21 April. All five prospective parliamentary candidates discoursed on a wide range of topics, ranging from Mediterranean boat people to the No 13 bus.

The annual Michael Rowley Memorial, at the Meeting House, featured Alan Walker himself as the speaker, giving a comprehensive and enjoyable talk about Walter Starmer's life and work, in particular the murals in St Jude's Church.

The big summer event on Central Square was the Fun Day Picnic on 28 June. Described as "an afternoon of fun and cakes and donkeys", the occasion suffered from an unwelcome initial downpour. Fortunately, a partly sunny day ensued, allowing the crowds of adults and children to picnic on the grass or at the reserved tables.

Face painters, donkey rides, Punch & Judy and Fizzie Lizzie, the children's entertainer, vied with each other in popularity. A magician from France, Fun Fair rides, cookery demonstrations and live music provided by 'Sounds of the Suburb' ensured that there was something for everyone.

On 20 September, about 40 of the Suburb's little people enjoyed their special RA Toddler Party at Fellowship House. The fun included dancing and singing with Eddie of Eeny Meeny Music, face painting, colouring pictures and listening to stories in the "Stories Corner". As for those scrumptious, mouth-watering cakes…

Fellowship House was also the venue for a New Residents Party, held on 15 November. David B Lewis, RA Chairman, in welcoming the 36 attendees, invited the new residents to join the Association and participate in its activities. RA Council representatives were on hand to answer questions about the Suburb and the RA's role.

DAVID LITTAUR, Chairman (raevents@hgs.org.uk)

Hampstead Gard
Reside

2015 COMMIT

CHAIRMAN'S

Following a public meeting in May 2015,
Suburb, in particular noise caused by petro
was formed and has devised a scheme of re
noise (anonymously if they wish). There follov
Daily Mail, The Times, Sunday Times, BBC Radio 4
web sites. Our next step is to draft a code of practice and persuade t
yellow card, RA members should contact ranoise@hgs.org.uk

Recent traffic proposals from Barnet include a one way system aroun
the aim of improved road safety but seemed likely to speed up traffic
found out about by chance. We held a public meeting in December
120 residents affected by the scheme. The meeting was highly critica
no one voting against. You can read more in the Roads & Traffic Con

Our third public meeting this year was on the subject of Crime Preve
has increased recently and it was suggested that the Suburb Neighbo
up a Watch in their own area, please contact me.

The Conservation & Amenities Committee has launched a revived ca
Unfortunately we have insufficient support from the HGS Trust on thi

An important achievement this year is a plan for re-creating the gard
by local residents, the Association has made a significant grant to this
& Open Spaces Committee report.

Thanks are also due to members of our other committees: the Events
the Summer Picnic and the New Year's Eve Fireworks party both oper
unglamorous remit; the Publications Committee which produces Sub
representatives on other organisations and those who update our we
notice boards.

All these volunteers do an immense amount of work for the Associati
volunteer please contact me with your interest at rachair@hgs.org.uk

CONSERVATION A

*Consam continues to keep up the pressure on al
problem of reduction of vegetation as a result of
of direct contact with the HGS Trust and the Londo
Trust and the Conservation Area Advisory Committee (wh
passed through several hands over the past year, before I took over the rol
Spyer and David B. Lewis, together with all others who have served on Con*

• Several planning applications objected to • HGS Trust alerted to infr
standing survey carried out plus ongoing liaison with HGS Trust • A n
taken up with LBB • Smart meter antennae on St Jude's Church succe
successfully resisted• Regular liaison meetings with the HGS Trust re-es

Come and discuss Suburb issues with your n
Monday 21 March 2016, 8pm – Henriet
All residents welco