

BRACKENBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting 1 July 2008 at the Grove Neighbourhood Centre

Attendees – Committee: Chris Allen (Chairman), Alice McMillan (Treasurer), Dante Barbareschi, Stuart Blake, Julia Davidson, Claire Harris, Diana Mather, Rosemary Pettit, Toni Raybould, Murray Thomas, Richard Winterton.

Members/Associate Members: John Ashworth, Ann Awakian, Anna Benson Gyles, Rosemary Caudwell, Alyce Chadwell, Neville Collins, Ian Cranna, Samantha Davies, Alan Denney, Jane Emerson, Mr/Ms Etherton, Ray Fenyoe, Sarah Fletcher, Paul Fox, Katherine Green, Marguerite Green, Annick Hardwick, Tony Hardwick, Ian Harris, Andy Hartland, Jane Hartland, Derek Hodd, Maggie Hodd, Margaret Hyde, Cllr Lucy Ivimy, Christina Kearney, Monica Krall, Chaw-Su Kyi, Shirley Lucking, Fiona Mansfield, Juliet Melford, Cllr Lisa Nandy, Rona Passmore, Maurice Payne, Steve Robson, Pamela Rosier, Peter Rosier, David Sharon, Catherine Stables, Martin Thirlaway, Joanna Thomas, Helen Thornton, Caroline Trier, Pat Ward, Lisbeth Winterton, Anne Wright, Elizabeth Wright, Michael Wright.

Guests: Cllr Mike Cartwright, Annabel Clarke (Cathnor Park Area Action Group), Cllr Stephen Cowan, PC Marc Davies (Hammersmith Broadway Ward), Merlene Emerson (Liberal Democrat PPC for Hammersmith), PC Sarah Fookes (Ravenscourt Ward), Jenny Gibbon (Godolphin & Latymer School), Evangeline Karn (Brook Green Association), Cllr Mark Loveday, Charles Rentoul (Ravenscourt Society), Bren Simson (Cambridge Grove/Leamore Street Residents Association), Andy Slaughter, MP, PC Amanda Tucker (Ravenscourt Ward), David Walton (Garden Opera).

Apologies: Lesley Andrews, Royd and Felicity Barker (Ravenscourt Society), Mark Brisenden, Uta Brouet, Angela Clarke (Hammersmith Society), Angela Dixon (H & F Historic Buildings Group), Sgt Douglas Gold (Ravenscourt Ward), Greg Hands, MP, Fiona Holmes, Matthew Hough, Gillian Mussett, Cllr Harry Phibbs, Mangeet Ramgotra, Richard Scott (H & F Historic Building Group), Lesley Spires, BRA Committee, John and Vanessa Whigham, Sgt Gareth Winnard (Hammersmith Broadway Ward).

1. Welcome

Chris Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting, including our guests.

2. Minutes of 2007 AGM

The Minutes were approved.

3. Chairman's Report

Chris Allen thanked fellow members of the Committee for their hard work during the year. It had been a successful one for the Association which had undertaken both 'business as usual' and new activities.

Business as usual: BRA's 'leading edge' **anti-graffiti** campaign had ensured a substantially graffiti-free area. Three **newsletters** had been published as usual – one being circulated to the whole community. The annual **social** was held in February at Godolphin & Latymer School and there had been an extra one in September to launch the tree project. New **neighbourhood watch** schemes had been started in both Hammersmith Broadway and Ravenscourt wards. BRA was grateful for the excellent support from the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). Residents were now more willing to report suspicious behaviour (the quicker this is done the better)

and this had led to some arrests. BRA had representatives on the two Ward Panels (run jointly by residents and SNTs) which agree crime priorities and discuss local strategies.

New initiatives: **The problem of rats and mice** had been raised at the last AGM. The Committee had gathered information on rodent activity from residents and met with Stephen Hare, the Council's Rodent Officer. As a result the Brackenbury area was made a hot spot by Thames Water who made four visits last autumn to bait the sewers. Two particular pieces of advice were that feeding birds and foxes encourages rodents and that sightings of rats emerging from drains should be reported to Stephen Hare. BRA will gather further information on rodent activity over the winter and report back to him.

The tree project had taken root. The Council had planted 29 new trees in the Brackenbury area. Thirteen were replacements paid for by the Council but the remaining 16 were entirely due to BRA's efforts. Two and a half were funded by members who took on the watering of 10 trees - the Council had pledged one additional tree for every four BRA watered. A further 10 were sponsored and paid for by individual members and local businesses at a cost of £175 per tree, and three and a half were paid for by the Association.

The majority of the 29 new trees had been adopted for watering which should earn the area six more trees in 2009. One waterer could not continue watering the tree outside 16-18 Tabor Road after the end of July. Anyone who would like to take it over was requested to contact Claire Harris.

The tree project had been very successful and thanks were due to Claire for all her hard work as well as to all our sponsors and waterers.

BRA had been more involved in **planning issues** than previously, due to a number of major developments in the area. Our main involvement had been to campaign against the proposed development on the NCP site. Some minor improvements were secured in conjunction with the Hammersmith Broadway councillors but we lost the argument at the Planning Committee. However the campaign had been a valuable experience for the Association, increasing our profile and strengthening our links with other local residents' associations and amenity groups. Planning permission for the development had been granted but commercial property finances were no longer as buoyant and there was now a legal challenge to the application – BRA would watch developments.

The Association had taken a great interest in the schemes for the Town Hall site and Committee members had met Cllr Mark Loveday to comment and express their reservations on them. Plans for this and other important sites would be discussed later in the meeting and Committee would keep its eyes and ears open and react as appropriate. A meeting had been arranged to discuss the proposed development of the former Notting Hill Housing Trust offices in Hammersmith Grove.

With regard to **licensing** BRA had commented on the licensing application for Ravenscourt Park and had helped to achieve some amendments: 11 p.m. closure, some limit on types and numbers of events, two consultation meetings a year and granting of the licence for three years only. Some members had attended the first consultation meeting; no new major events had been proposed or late night disturbances reported. The Association would continue to be vigilant to keep the park for residents' peaceful enjoyment. BRA had also given, and would continue to offer, advice to members with issues with local pubs.

In conclusion, Chris referred to a questionnaire, circulated by Claire Harris, inviting members to comment on existing suggestions and suggest further initiatives for project expenditure by BRA. The Committee would be grateful for any offers to assist with projects and members would be told which projects were finally chosen.

4. Treasurer's Report and 2007/8 Accounts

Alice McMillan presented the Association's Accounts for the year to 31 March 2008 and reported that they had been examined and signed off by Matthew Hough, Independent Examiner. They showed income of £1524, expenditure of £1803, a deficit for the year of £279 and a closing balance of £3659. Income was slightly down on the previous year's and expenditure slightly up. She referred to two new costs: the NCP planning campaign costs of £244, and a contribution to the tree project of £613. The Committee had set a budget for the planning campaign costs and had not exceeded it. They would not spend money often on planning campaigns but expenditure on them was sometimes necessary. They had considered it appropriate to spend money on new trees for the tree project. BRA envisaged spending £300 – 400 per year on additional projects for the benefit of the area and its residents and she asked for further ideas (on projects for the elderly or young, perhaps).

5. Membership Secretary's Report

Rosemary Pettit reported that membership had increased for the eighth year running and BRA now had 405 members of whom 75% paid by standing order and nearly 80% were on email. The email percentage had risen by 10% since the previous year. The more members on standing order the more helpful it was to her. She thanked the street representatives for their help and asked that anyone wishing to assist in that way should speak to her, particularly anyone living in Hammersmith Grove.

6. Rule Change

Chris Allen explained that, at present, although the Treasurer's position on the Committee was in effect that of an Officer, he/she was not specified as an Officer under the terms of the Constitution and the Committee proposed to amend Rule 6 Officers to correct this.

The following wording to change Rule 6 was approved:

The Officers of the Association shall be a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The Chairman and the Secretary shall be elected by the Committee from among their number. The Treasurer shall be elected by the Annual General Meeting, as provided by Rule 10.

7. Election of Treasurer and Committee Members

Alice McMillan was elected as Treasurer. Proposed by Chris Allen and seconded by Rosemary Pettit.

Chris Allen reported that Alice McMillan (Treasurer) and Richard Winterton (planning expert) had been co-opted to the Committee since the last AGM. **The following were elected to the Committee for 2008/9, having been duly proposed and seconded: Christopher Allen, Dante Barbareschi, Stuart Blake, Julia Davidson, Claire Harris, Diana Mather, Alice McMillan, Rosemary Pettit, Toni Raybould, Lesley Spires, Murray Thomas, Richard Winterton.**

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Matthew Hough of 30 Cardross Street was appointed as Independent Examiner of the BRA Accounts. Proposed by Chris Allen and seconded by Alice McMillan.

9. Guest Speakers/Special Reports

i. Annabel Clarke, Chair of Cathnor Park Area Action Group:

Hammersmith Academy – Annabel Clarke explained that H & F Council, in association with the Mercers Company and City Technologies, proposed to establish an academy on the Stamford House site. The site was landlocked with no playing facilities and a high security building on it would be demolished. The children would use the tennis courts and football pitch of Ravenscourt Park in the mornings only on four days a week and would not use the green open spaces of the park. It would be a mixed ability school for 780 pupils from 11 to 18 and would open in September 2011 (with Year 7 and the academic part of the Sixth Form only). An architect had been chosen and consultation about the plans was scheduled for the summer. The site would be basically car free and should not create too much of a traffic problem.

One member asked if there was any opportunity to protest as he would prefer the money to be spent on existing schools. Another asked if the academy would satisfy genuine educational requirements and if it would compete with other local schools. Annabel said it would work alongside them rather than competing. It would offer the most advanced technology of any school in the country and would most definitely go ahead; people were fighting for places and disappointed that it was opening later than intended.

With regard to finance, Chris Allen explained that the running costs would come out of the education grant for the borough, whereas the Mercers and City Technologies would provide the capital. It would be part of the government initiative, A Strategy for Change, and the Building Schools for the Future programme. Planning permission would be required.

A member was concerned about the disruption that 780 children travelling by bus would cause. Another said it was naïve to think the children would restrict themselves to the courts and pitches in the park. Although the children would be accompanied by a staff member in the mornings they might gallop around the park after school. Jenny Gibbon said the fact that teachers would not be able to carry their heavy teaching aids to the school by car would definitely stop good teachers applying.

Chris concluded that there were a number of issues on which the Committee and members would wish to comment.

Allied Carpets Site – Annabel said there had been a huge appeal in 2006 against plans for this site on Goldhawk Road. The proposed development (retail and housing) had now been reduced to six storeys but was not a thing of beauty. Plans had now gone back to the developers, Network Housing Group, for modification and would come back to the Planning Committee in the autumn.

282 – 288 Goldhawk Road – The site was previously an old people's home but was now empty. In May the Council held an exhibition of the five proposals submitted – all for affordable housing, with 17 units for people with mental health issues to live on site with their carers. The proposal Annabel preferred was submitted for Places for People by Peter Barker Architects and consisted of lots of little white stucco houses, most with their own front doors and outside space and all with underground parking spaces. The five proposals would go to the Council Cabinet in September.

ii. Jenny Gibbon, Head of Classics and Community Links Co-ordinator, Godolphin & Latymer School

Building and Community Developments at Godolphin and Latymer: Jenny Gibbon reported on progress with developments at the School since it acquired the St John the Evangelist Church (on a long lease) and the vicarage. They were hoping to maintain a balance between new and old and had tried to be eco-friendly and maintain the original intention of the building as far as possible. All the changes they were making were designed to be reversible.

They were building a new sound-proofed Music School, with practice rooms and a recording studio, which would be linked to the church by a glazed walkway. All their concerts would be recorded and on the School's website. The church would provide a centre for the performing arts and would also be available for community use. It would have a hydraulic floor which could be raised or lowered and various types of stage layout would be possible. The vestry would still be a changing area and there would be toilets and a kitchenette. Their capacity for guests would be doubled to 300. They were looking for community guests to use the space and would welcome any suggestions. The whole complex should be open in January 2009.

The war memorial within the School had been completely restored. They had not damaged a single tree and hoped to put in new ones. All lines of vision would be maintained. She hoped everyone would visit the finished development. Reports in the Press that the School had received a huge grant were untrue and they were still trying to raise money for the building works.

She was delighted to be at the AGM with so many members of the Ancient Greek and Roman Breakfast Club and hoped more would attend the Club when it moved to the dining hall in the autumn. The School would also be starting a new *How To Series* and already ran a film club.

iii. Cllr Mark Loveday, Cabinet Member for Strategy

Town Hall Site: Cllr Mark Loveday described the reasons behind the decision to develop the site and regenerate the area and events prior to the adoption of the chosen scheme by Grainger/Helical Bar (G/HB) who were now working on their proposals before presenting a planning application towards the end of the year. Residents on the site and stakeholders (which included BRA and other residents' associations) had been consulted. Broadly speaking, the town hall extension would be demolished, there would be a square facing onto King Street, a medium-sized supermarket (probably where the cinema was), houses/flats, office accommodation for the Council and a bridge over the A4 to Furnival Gardens (where there would be some landscaping). The bridge had been largely supported by the public consultation but some were opposed to it. However, proposals for the site were in a considerable state of flux and there would definitely be some changes to them. Discussions were being held with the current occupiers of the site and he envisaged work starting in three years' time.

A member asked if the supermarket would be a Tesco or a Waitrose. Cllr Loveday explained that St James's Investments (Tesco's property partner) owned the cinema site and had submitted a second application with plans for a Tesco on the site. G/HB proposed a Waitrose. He was fully aware of the residents' preference with regard to retailers but there were all sorts of options and nothing had been decided. The consultation with stakeholders had been handed over to G/HB.

Another member asked what else would be lost besides the cinema in G/HB's proposal. Cllr Loveday explained that the flats, owned by the Pocklington Trust as an investment property, had a mixture of tenants over half of whom were on shorthold tenancies. Some had lived there a long time and six were partially sighted; some of the flats were not brilliant and some were well loved. Alternative housing for these people would have to be found and discussions were in progress with the Pocklington Trust as to the most appropriate place. The Friends Meeting House would also have to move. Various alternatives had been discussed, one of which was that it should move to the Bradmore Children's Centre (which in turn might move to Flora Gardens School).

A member asked for more detail on how the new buildings would be finished and if the business plan had changed. Cllr Loveday said they had put as much as they were willing to publicise on the Council's website. He agreed that the market had changed since the proposals were first made and the scheme was complicated with residential and office components, which were in different property markets. The Council was confident

that they had predicted roughly what would happen and allowed for a drop in the market. However, they would only know if they had been correct when the development was completed.

Members of the BRA Committee had been very testing of the project, making their views clear, and had made a good job of ensuring that the proposals did not go through on the nod. Chris Allen said BRA would continue its constructive engagement.

iv. Rosemary Pettit, BRA Membership Secretary

London Underground Signal Control Centre: Rosemary Pettit referred to a clear and constructive report by Lesley Andrews, a Hammersmith Grove BRA member, on a proposal by Transport for London to turn Trussley Road Builder's Yard into a new signal control centre for London Underground's sub-surface lines. She explained that the building would be quite a large one with a major computer system and air conditioning. London Underground owned the land and was not required to go through the normal planning procedures but was consulting residents and appeared to have taken a neighbourhood-friendly position. For example they proposed sinking the building to reduce its height, had arranged that light spillage should be minimal and had pledged to replace all the mature trees they cut down. Some of the existing trees on the site were subject to a Tree Preservation Order, procured through an initiative of BRA member, Nicola Lesbirel. As there was not sufficient time to go through the report in detail Rosemary offered to send a copy to anyone who wished to read it.

v. Bren Simson, Secretary, Cambridge Grove and Leamore Street Residents Association, and Cllr Stephen Cowan

Glenthorne Road Housing Development: Bren Simson presented the CGLSRA's views on the proposed housing development to replace an office block at 63 – 75 Glenthorne Road. They felt that the planned exterior was ordinary with no attempt at innovative or pleasing design, the layout of the flats was poor and the living space very cramped. However, they thought that any changes to the developers' plans could only be brought about through pressure from the Council Planning Committee and their experience (from campaigns re. 1 Cambridge Grove and the NCP site) was that the current Council had little interest in pressing for innovative, people-friendly architecture or even preserving the integrity of the local conservation area. Judging by the floor spaces of the new flats at 1 Cambridge Grove (all below the minimum recommended standard), the Council was not interested in applying its own guidelines on appropriate sizes for living space and would have no interest in insisting on changes to the exterior or living spaces in the Glenthorne Road development. They therefore saw no point on putting any extra pressure on the developers and would concentrate on developing a positive relationship with them with the aim of benefiting the built environment surrounding the building. The historic railings of Cambridge Grove and Leamore Street were in desperate need of restoration and repair and CGSLRA hoped the developers would make a substantial contribution to this. They hoped that a petition they had circulated for the restoration of the railings would add further weight to the developers' efforts on their behalf.

Cllr Stephen Cowan said he had first met the developers six months ago and pointed them in the direction of BRA and CGLSRA. They then presented a series of plans with a substantial amount of blue metallic frontage and red tiles, which he told the architect he did not like, and they subsequently changed their designs. The current design was not particularly pleasant; it was one floor higher than the current building and consisted of about 74 houses. As yet we did not know whether the planning office would recommend it and he would report back whenever he could. There had been long-standing problems with the Cambridge Grove area - the wall was crumbling and the railings in need of repair. We had to see what the planning office would recommend but he hoped any Section 106 money would be invested in the neighbourhood.

Alice McMillan asked what his reaction was to the fact that the Council didn't follow its own recommendations on the size of flats – we did not want properties that are rabbit hutches. Another member pointed out that people are larger than they used to be and asked why they were being crammed into tiny rooms. Stephen Cowan said profit was often the motive.

10. Questions from the Floor

The following questions were asked:

What feedback on planning applications had BRA sought from its membership? **Chris Allen said there was a lot of email traffic and other comment but currently no formal mechanism for seeking or giving feedback. However, one should be established for major planning applications.**

Were there any objections to another opera in Ravenscourt Park on 12 September? **No objections were raised.**

What was the situation with regard to Secrets Club? It now looked hideous and, although it had been agreed that no reference should be made to the use of the building, it advertised its lap dancing. Chris understood the colour scheme of the building had been agreed with the Council but thought perhaps enquiries should be made to ascertain if the open advertising was in breach of agreement. **Stephen Cowan said this had been looked at and, in the Council's view, was in keeping with the conditions imposed on Secrets.**

What could be done to appoint a **design champion** to help with development projects in the borough? Chris said the Committee had suggested this to Cllr Loveday in relation to the Town Hall development but had had no response. He suggested that the Hammersmith Society, which had been involved with the London Festival of Architecture and had encouraged eleven architects to come up with a vision for King Street and the Great West Road, should be consulted about representing the argument for such a champion.

A member was very interested in the information about the proposed **Children's Centre in Flora Gardens School**. Three trees had been cut down and there was now an ugly view of Ravenscourt Park station. The Council had said one tree was diseased but all three were removed as the roots would interfere with the Children's Centre. He thought two were healthy and it was a clear case of *chainsaw massacre*. He also enquired about the recent pre-planning meeting about the Children's Centre.

Chris explained that the pre-planning meeting between the School and the Planning Department had merely been a sensible precaution to see if any of the ideas for the Children's Centre would encounter problems because of planning policy. A planning application had now been presented and could be viewed. **BRA's Committee would consider it** but he would have to abstain as he was a Governor of Flora School. With regard to the trees, he understood that one or more were a potential danger to the children; there was a commitment to replace them with semi-mature trees.

A member drew attention to the number of poles cluttering up the very narrow pavements of the Brackenbury area. **Chris said the Committee would look at this issue and another member suggested it be expanded to that of excessive street furniture.**

Chris said the Committee would report back on these matters at the next AGM.

11. Thanks and Close

Chris Allen concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and thanking the speakers for their interesting and informative reports. The meeting ended with a glass of wine.