

BRACKENBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the 2009 Annual General Meeting 7 July 2009 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, Lesley Spires, Richard Winterton.

Members/Associate Members: Jackie Ashurst, Harriet Ashworth, Ann Awakian, Mark Brisenden, Alyce Chadwell, Frank Colcord, Gary Couch, Ian Cranna, Fiona Fox, Paul Fox, Marguerite Green, Annick Hardwick, Tony Hardwick, Kathleen Herman, Maggie Hodd, Chris Horton, John Horton, Bunny Hoover, Susan Jaine, Robert Largan, Shirley Lucking, Fiona Mansfield, Liz Mason, Juliet Melford, Peter Munns, Rona Passmore, Karen Pretorius, Daniel Ricey, Susan Richards, Pamela Rosier, Peter Rosier, Bren Simson (Cambridge Grove/Leamore Street Residents Association), Helen Thornton, Jane Whitworth, Anne Wright, Michael Wright, David Walton (Garden Opera).

Guests: Shaun Bailey (Conservative PPC for Hammersmith), Estela Cartwright (PCSO), Annabel Clarke (Cathnor Park Area Action Group), Peter Coult (SNT), Cllr Steve Cowan, Sgt Douglas Gold (Ravenscourt Ward SNT), Annabelle May (Ashchurch Residents Association), Cllr Harry Phibbs, Andy Rennison (Programme Director, Building Schools for the Future), Lucy Shackleton (Godolphin and Latymer School).

Apologies: Lesley Andrews, Jo Buchanan, Cllr Mike Cartwright, Alan Denney, Marianne Denney, Merlene Emerson (Liberal Democrat PPC for Hammersmith), Elizabeth Fraser, Greg Hands (Conservative MP for Hammersmith), Matthew Hough, Cllr Lucy Ivimy, Susan Munns, Cllr Lisa Nandy, Joanna Thomas, Murray Thomas, Victoria Timberlake (Society of Friends), Anne Whatmore, John Whatmore, Cllr Eugenie White, Philip Wooller (Douglas and Gordon).

1. Welcome

Chris Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of 2008 AGM

The Minutes were approved with no matters arising.

3. Chairman's Report

Chris Allen said it had been a successful year for the Association and thanked all who had assisted with its activities. Business as usual had included the continuation of the tree project, much planning activity, production of the Newsletter, the graffiti project, neighbourhood watch (NW) and representation on the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels, and liaison with other residents' associations and amenity groups.

The Christmas Carol event had been an innovation and a great success with wonderful singing by Godolphin and Latymer and Brackenburg Schools. We intend to repeat it on Friday, 11 December 2009 and would welcome anyone interested in helping to organise it. The production of the Local Suppliers List had been another successful innovation and very popular. BRA's Tenth Anniversary had been celebrated by an excellent party in February.

Looking to the future there were a number of significant active or potential planning issues: the Goldhawk Industrial Estate, the Bridge Academy, the Quaker Meeting House and Hammersmith Town Hall, and the Local Development Framework Core Strategy – this was open for consultation and BRA are particularly concerned with conservation issues. BRA was also working on its own website and a blog. Rosemary Pettit had

suggested the beautification of Goldhawk Road as an additional project which would involve us working with other groups outside BRA's boundaries. BRA was also looking for other interesting projects on which to spend its surplus funds and any suggestions would be welcome.

In addition Chris thanked Susan Munns for agreeing to take on responsibility for the distribution of the newsletter. BRA was also looking for a legal adviser and someone willing to organise a more structured programme of events than currently existed.

4. Tree Report

Claire Harris reported on the Brackenburg Tree Project which had been launched in 2007 and continued to go from strength to strength.

This year, the Council had planted 26 new street trees, 18 of which were a direct result of BRA's tree project. Six of these had been funded by members watering 24 trees throughout the summer of 2008. (For every four trees watered, we saved the Council enough money to pay for one new tree.) A further two trees had been sponsored by members, and so earned a further two trees under the Council's new "two for one" sponsorship offer. Eight were funded by a grant from the Council's Fast Track scheme.

Brackenburg's newest trees were spread over a wide area, covering 12 different streets (Agate Rd, Aldensley Rd, Banim Street, Benbow Rd, Brackenburg Rd, Bradmore Park Rd, Coulter Rd, Glenthorne Rd, Nasmyth Street, Studland Street, Southerton Rd and Trussley Rd), and included Ornamental Pears, Sargent Cherries, Pandora's Cherries, London Plane, Rowan, Himalayan Birch, Italian Alder and Mongolian Lime.

In April, to comply with the Council's requirements under the Fast Track scheme, we had emailed a very short questionnaire to members, seeking their feedback on our tree programme and the grant we had been awarded. We received 60 responses from residents in 27 of Brackenburg's 40-odd streets and sent the Council a full report of our research findings, summarised in the conclusion to our report, which read:

"Our survey shows a very high level of awareness of the Brackenburg Tree Project, and similarly high levels of support for further street tree planting and for the Council's Fast Track Grant scheme being used in this way.

Residents clearly appreciate the continued greening of our neighbourhood, while being mindful of the need for this to be done in a careful and considered fashion.

We are pleased and encouraged by the feedback we've received, and we look forward to the Brackenburg Tree Project and our partnership with LBHF continuing to flourish and grow"

This year, the Council had awarded its tree planting and maintenance to a new contractor, who included the cost of watering new trees within their contract price. We were therefore unable to "earn" new trees by watering our newest arrivals. However, the Council had said they were happy for us to continue to care for **last year's** new street trees – and again, for every four we watered, we would receive one new tree next year. At the present time, this would give us six and half new trees, as our members had offered to care for 26 of last year's arrivals - for which we were very grateful.

The only negative note was that reports of tree vandalism and other damage appeared to be increasing. Whether tree damage *per se* was actually increasing, or there was just more awareness and reporting, was unclear. One site in Carthew Road had seen bad damage for the third successive year, and one of our sponsored new trees in Agate Road was seemingly totally destroyed shortly after it was planted, although its trunk was valiantly struggling to put out new foliage.

However, by and large the Brackenbury Tree Project continued to thrive, and to act as a role model for other parts of the borough. In the words of two members:

“The BRA tree planting initiative has been a real success, both in “greening” our streets and in creating community cohesion. I am all for continuing this programme of collaboration between BRA and LBHF Council.”

“An excellent scheme which freshens the air, provides homes and food for birds, gives contact with nature to city-dwellers, and will provide benefits for years to come.”

5. Planning Report

Richard Winterton reminded the meeting that this time last year BRA had been recovering from its failure to stop the approval of the NCP site planning application. Nothing had happened there since but the developers were looking for funding and the proposal would doubtless reappear on the planning agenda sometime.

The good news was that the Carthew Road development, which had been turned down by the Council, had now been refused consent on appeal. However it would doubtless return in some form as the site was marked for development.

The Notting Hill Housing Trust had moved out of its offices in Hammersmith Grove and were intending to develop the building. The Committee had been monitoring the situation; there had been a proposal but it had now “gone away”.

282 – 288 Goldhawk Road was an important development outside the Brackenbury area. The existing 1960s building had previously been an old people’s home. The Council had held a competition which was won by a group with a scheme for some affordable housing and a percentage of social housing for people with mental problems. There was a lot of opposition to the design and BRA had been invited to help the local residents.

The main work in progress, which had occupied a great deal of time, was the campaign against the application to redevelop the Goldhawk Industrial Estate. Both BRA and the local residents had done very well with this. A planning forum had been held, attended by the developers, the Council and the community, and the developer had now produced some slight amendments to the scheme.

Something was evidently amiss with the planning process when BRA was busy representing its members’ interests to a Council which was meant to represent those interests itself. This was illustrated by the fact that, although there had been strong local opposition to the NCP development, it had received planning approval. We wished to address this problem with the planning system and improve it by peaceful means.

6. Membership Report

Rosemary Pettit reported that the Association now had 446 paid-up members – an increase of 41 from last year – of which 332 (74%) paid by standing order and 43 were new members. We were in email contact with 353 members. 79% of members now entrusted the Association with an email address and virtually all new members did so.

She urged any member still paying by cash or cheque to consider taking out a standing order to save time for her and the Treasurer. From 5 August 2010 she would be asking all members to set up new standing orders for a subscription increase.

Members received a minimum of one weekly email with news, events and other local items which helped the community to keep in touch with each other. Anyone who was not in email contact with the Association and would like to be should just give her their address; it would not be passed to anyone else.

Street reps played an important part in the life of the Association, distributing newsletters, keeping an eye on their street and encouraging new membership. At present BRA was looking for a street rep for Hammersmith Grove and for Richford St, but other streets also lacked representatives. Anyone wishing to help in this way should contact her.

Any member with other ideas to enhance or support the area should have a word with her or any other member of the Committee. If any member had new people moving into their street they could encourage them to join BRA.

Finally, she thanked the membership for all its support and interest in the area and the work of the Association.

7. Community Safety Report

i. Sergeant Douglas Gold, Ravenscourt Park Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)

Sergeant Gold explained that, as Sergeant Gareth Winnard of Hammersmith Broadway SNT was unable to attend, he was representing both of Brackenbury's wards (Hammersmith Broadway and Ravenscourt Park).

He described the role and responsibilities of the ward SNTs and gave encouraging statistics showing a reduction in crime in both wards over the last two years. Each ward had a Ward Panel, consisting of 12 representatives from the local community, who considered the results of surveys of local residents and businesses and identified the ward's top three crime priorities. (Lesley Spires and Toni Raybould both sat on their local panel representing BRA.)

Despite the reduction in crime figures, the Metropolitan police were concerned that public confidence in them appeared to have declined. Only about 35% of the people of Hammersmith and Fulham borough believed the police were doing a good job. People complained that not enough was done about such matters as cyclists on pavements and dogs defecating in the streets but the public should realise that it was difficult to criminalise cyclists as they were seen as green and that, although the police were working on these matters, they had to concentrate on the ward priorities - burglary, robbery and vehicle crime. Possession of dangerous dogs was a crime and the police did patrol regularly to identify pit bull terriers.

There was now a strategy in place to restore confidence, including the Police Pledge, and the expectation that community policing would include much more engagement with the general public. The police might patrol singly instead of in pairs to make them more approachable. Engaging people in conversation was particularly valuable as it encouraged them to open up to the police.

Having originally been sceptical about Neighbourhood Watch (NW) Dougie was now sure that the reduction of crime in the area was a direct result of the increase in NW schemes and the help they had given police.

He went on to answer questions about the way the different SNTs functioned, in particular the enhanced teams, such as Broadway, and the 24 hour teams in the borough.

ii. Lesley Spires, Neighbourhood Watch

Lesley Spires explained that she and Toni Raybould as NW coordinators encouraged NW activity in the Brackenbury area and kept BRA updated.

The number of schemes in Brackenbury had grown since the launch in May 2006 to rejuvenate NW in the area and the SNTs of both wards supported them. Councillor Belinda Donovan encouraged the growth of NWs across the borough and the executive committee of the H & F NW Association, formed in 2007, also supported and advised them.

Lesley said Broadway had about 12 schemes, of which 8 were in Brackenbury¹, and Ravenscourt Park had 20, of which 2 were in Brackenbury². She encouraged any residents who did not yet have a NW scheme in their road to consider setting one up or suggesting to a neighbour that they might do so. It was not a labour intensive role and plenty of support and advice was available. Anyone interested in becoming a coordinator could contact their SNT or email her at lesleyspires@yahoo.com.

The NW worked through good communication and the SNTs sent alerts about local crime, or trends and advice on crime prevention, to NW coordinators in their ward and the coordinators then passed these on to NW members. Residents were encouraged to report any suspicious activity to their NW coordinator or, preferably, directly to their SNT. In the past year the police had made many successful arrests simply because residents had looked out for each other.

Lesley concluded by thanking the two SNTS for their great support throughout the year, especially PCSO Theresa Keeley and PCSO Oliver Agular. She reported that the Ravenscourt Park team now had a new addition, PCSO Marek Slodkowski, whose primary role was to support and promote NW schemes across the ward.

8. Treasurer's Report and 2008/9 Accounts

Accounts: Alice McMillan presented the Association's Accounts for the year to 31 March 2009 and reported that they had been examined and signed off by Matthew Hough, Independent Examiner. The rise in income from subscriptions and donations (£1350 compared with £1127 in 2007/8) reflected the rise in membership. The total income for 2008/9 (£4089) reflected the LBHF grant of £2,000 for the tree project. This grant was now spent. Expenditure on social events had been higher than last year (£1021 as opposed to £486) because of the Tenth Anniversary Party, the net cost of which was under £300.

There had been two other major project expenditure items: the Christmas Carol event (£304) and the donation of a chair to Godolphin and Latymer School (£400). Costs for the former should be lower this Christmas as BRA now owned the electric cabling and lights; also less money would be spent on the children's presents. The Committee had agreed to donate a chair to Godolphin and Latymer's new performing arts centre as the School contributed so much to the neighbourhood.

Alice concluded by saying that BRA held a closing balance of £3808 at the financial year end and was looking for a couple of small projects for the coming and following years.

There were no questions on the Accounts and they were accepted by those present.

BRA Subscription: Alice reported that the Committee intended to increase the annual membership subscription to £5 from August 2010. **Members agreed that the proposed increase in 2010 was acceptable.**

9. Election of Treasurer and Committee Members

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

¹ Brackenbury Road, Iffley Road, Agate Road (with Coulter, Marco, Amor, Hebron and Beauclerc attached), Tabor Road, Richford Street, Hammersmith Grove (south end). Benbow Road, Cambridge Grove/Leamore Street.

² Perrers/Atwood Roads, Nasmyth Street (just starting)

The following were elected to the Committee for 2009/10, having been duly proposed and seconded: Christopher Allen, Stuart Blake, Julia Davidson, Claire Harris, Diana Mather, Rosemary Pettit, Toni Raybould, Lesley Spires, Richard Winterton (Associate Member).

Chris Allen reported that two members of the Committee, Dante Barbareschi and Murray Thomas, were standing down. He thanked them both for their work - Murray as Legal Adviser and Dante as the grandfather of the tree project, having had the original idea.

10. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Matthew Hough of 30 Cardross Street was re-appointed as Independent Examiner of the BRA Accounts. Proposed by Alice McMillan and seconded by Rosemary Pettit. Alice expressed her appreciation for the time he had spent on the accounts.

11. Special Reports

i. Andy Rennison, Programme Director, Building Schools for the Future (BSF)

Bridge Academy: Andy Rennison explained that H & F Council hoped to receive up to £200 million from the BSF programme in order to reconfigure its secondary education. He outlined the key points of the Council's plan and explained that they wished to relocate Cambridge School to Phoenix High School by 2011, and the Bridge Academy from Finlay Street to the Cambridge School site. The latter move would provide an opportunity to redesign the Bridge Academy. Planning briefs for it had been circulated to give a rough idea of what was envisaged so that the Council could decide on the best provider and talk to the local community about issues. The Council hoped to have the detailed designs by January 2011. Seamus Oates, Headteacher of the Bridge Academy, would be very happy for residents to see the work they were doing at Finlay Street and allay any residents' concerns. The whole of the BSF programme was about community engagement and what the community wanted. The Council envisaged that the building would be two-storey on the Godolphin and Latymer side and would not overlook people's homes. Cambridge School had just under 90 children and the Bridge Academy about 150. As the Bridge Academy children should mostly be able to travel there on their own there should be a decrease in traffic. They did not attend school on Mondays.

Despite Andy's assurances, the primary concern among Association members was that there *would* be an increase in traffic. Anne Wright pointed out that 150 children was 50% higher than Cambridge School's intake and was concerned in particular about delivery lorries. She said residents felt that access should be divided between Banim Street and Cambridge Grove and should not be from Cambridge Grove alone. Chris Horton said that, despite what was said, children might well be driven to school. Bren Simson urged Andy to focus on liaison with the community on this project and to be aware that there was a very serious traffic problem in Glenthorne Road. Linden London had a planning application in for 81 new flats and there was also a planning application for an 18 bed "B & B" at the top of Cambridge Grove. The increase in population, rubbish and traffic would be huge.

Councillor Steve Cowan secured an assurance from Andy that the Council would be open to receive a submission regarding residents' concerns and issues at this early stage before the planning application. Steve also pointed out that there were a number of other planning applications that would bring in extra lorries and traffic and asked if these had been taken into account. He asked Andy for a traffic survey which took into account all these developments. Andy said he would feed this back to his colleagues.

Chris Horton pointed out that a sports hall for the new Bridge Academy would probably be much higher than the existing Cambridge School building. Andy did not know how high it would be.

Bearing in mind that 2011 marked the end of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Council was focussed on ensuring the BSF money was not lost, Paul Fox was concerned about what would happen to this

central government money if there was a change of government. Andy understood that, provided their proposal was accepted before then, the money would be forthcoming.

Richard Winterton said residents wished to participate in the planning process because they were not confident that local government would deal with it properly. Planning briefs should take a bigger picture of what effect developments would have on an area. Currently documents were vague, developers came along with plans and steam rolled them through, the Council lost control and then apologised to residents that they were already committed to the plans and could not change them.

Chris Allen concluded the discussion by welcoming Andy's commitment to consultation during the development process.

ii. Jackie Ashurst

Goldhawk Industrial Estate Development: Jackie Ashurst said most of the previous comments applied to the Goldhawk Industrial Estate Development. The fact that there had been very little consultation between developers and residents beforehand explained why they objected to the development so strongly.

She explained that the developers planned at least 56 residences and 10 offices and the development included a four storey central prominent block and was completely out of character with the surrounding area. The estate would be in operation 24/7, causing parking stress and additional traffic flows, whereas the current business estate was open only during weekday work hours and residents had no traffic, parking or noise problems. The developer claimed that traffic would decrease by a third but residents maintained that it would increase substantially. Once the parking restrictions end at 5 p.m. Brackenbury Gardens and other nearby streets would also be affected negatively.

The entrance for all the two-way traffic would be via Vinery Way, a narrow single lane opening on to Brackenbury Road. Three mews houses, trees, parking spaces and a path as well as the two-way traffic would all be squeezed into this lane. The school playground next to it would no longer be relatively private and the danger to the children of crossing the entrance road would increase considerably.

The current estate tenants included Innocent who were community friendly, helped a lot with local community projects and made no noise. They and the other units employed around 200 people and these jobs and such a prestigious estate would disappear forever from the locality.

Amenity and garden space planned for the residents was insufficient and breached current planning policies, and the mews houses had no gardens at all. There were a number of technical breaches with regard to overlooking and loss of privacy – the development would be only yards away from Cressy Court and right up against Brackenbury School.

The developers had recently submitted some very moderate and inadequate modifications. The current round of consultation by the Council ran until the following day and Jackie urged members to write letters of objection to the Council Planning Officer.

Kathleen Herman asked if the health authorities would be able to handle all these new residents and if anyone had contacted the Fire Department. Rosemary Pettit said this was an excellent point but the only people consulted had been the police. Brackenbury School was oversubscribed already and was due to have a bulge class in September.

It was pointed out that accident and emergency and ambulances were not planning matters but Richard Winterton said it was up to the Council to develop the necessary infrastructure.

Steve Cowan congratulated Jackie and her colleagues on their campaign and urged everyone to write to the Council objecting to the development. He warned that a new application was going in for the garage site in Hammersmith Grove and said it was important that residents supported each other and built up a bank of knowledge. Jackie and her colleagues deserved their support.

Rosemary agreed to email members with Jonathan Wright's submission to the Council. He was the planning consultant commissioned by the residents to analyse the scheme. Members were also supplied with the relevant email addresses and reference nos. to send their objections.

iii. Rosemary Pettit on behalf of Lesley Andrews

London Underground Signal Control Centre: report by Lesley Andrews.

The Trussley Road site of London Underground's intended signal control centre had now been cleared and the footprint of the main building excavated. The construction work was due to begin in a few weeks' time although the actual finish of the building had not yet been decided upon. However, TfL had told the Hammersmith Grove residents' group, formed for the purpose of keeping an eye on the development, that more detailed information on the building design would be ready at the end of the summer. The landscaping plan would not be finalised until well into 2010.

Currently, a major issue for residents was the lack of protection from the noise and sight of tubes running on the Hammersmith and City line. Previously, the mature trees and buildings on the yard had afforded a level of protection from the trains. TfL was not prepared to mitigate this problem but had said that, once the building was erected and the landscaping in place, the problem would be solved. Residents were also concerned that there was no formal promise to rectify any noise issues when building work had been completed. The noise problem was exacerbated by night-time work on the tracks to prepare for the future running of the Circle line to Hammersmith.

The other key area of concern for residents was the noise from the planned air-conditioning units. TfL had assured residents that they would use "the best possible equipment", and were "taking ambient noise readings at appropriate times of the day". However, it had come to light that TfL was not monitoring during the night and at weekends when noise from air conditioning units would be more apparent. Residents had asked for round-the-clock noise assessment monitoring to achieve an accurate picture of the residential environment and, if TfL did not respond, residents would involve the Council and councillors.

iv. Rosemary Pettit on behalf of Victoria Timberlake

Friends Meeting House: report by Victoria Timberlake.

The proposal arose out of the need for a new site for the Friends Meeting House if the development of the Town Hall site went ahead. The Friends were proceeding on the grounds that this would happen and had been offered the site of the Bradmore Children's Centre, which would be moved in any event. The Council had recently given approval in principle for the site swap for the Meeting House and the Society of Friends were in the process of appointing an architect. They had received 80 expressions of interest from which they would draw up a shortlist and had posted a Statement of Need on the Meeting House Project website. The Friends wished to be part of the Brackenbury community; rooms in the building would be available for community use. They would be delighted for anyone to join their worship and Rosemary was going on August 2nd when anyone else interested was welcome to join her. She had asked that the Friends work with the community at an early stage as we did not want to be presented with a building at the last moment. Any questions should be addressed to Frank Colcord.

The concern was raised that, if the plans went ahead, such a central Brackebury site would be occupied by a minority group and it was wondered if anyone had been consulted about it. Richard Winterton said they had not. Steve Cowan said the decision about the Bradmore site was not a planning matter but an executive decision and, if residents wished to object to the site being used by the Friends, they should write to the Council and say why it was needed by the community.

Bren Simson wondered if, with many developments pending that would have a major effect on the lives of Brackebury residents, there was a general feeling among members that something should be done about the fact that the Council was not responding to the community's concerns. The Hammersmith Society felt that residents should start pooling their expertise for any consultations that arose.

Chris Allen thought there was indeed an ongoing push for a 'tool kit' so that residents could make use of each other's expertise, and there was also the need for the community to be involved in the planning process and to suggest to the Council that there was a better way to organise it. Councillor Harry Phibbs agreed that a change in the planning process was necessary and that it would be much better for everyone if the community input was at an earlier stage when the developers would be more amenable to change. Chris said the Committee was working with the Hammersmith Society to look at what was needed to make this happen and the Committee would report further on it next year.

12. Swifts

Fiona Mansfield referred to the fact that the numbers of swifts had declined and some boroughs had lost them. She suggested that BRA might like to point out to planners that it was very easy to put swift boxes into buildings. She also knew a swift expert who was willing to come and give a talk.

Toni Raybould said she had been told that there was no evidence of swifts in the tower of St John's Church but Godolphin and Latymer's maintenance men would be able to go up the tower to put swift boxes there. She thought it might also be interesting to get someone to talk to the Association about bats as well as swifts. Such talks would be interesting for the schoolchildren.

13. Garden Opera

David Walton, Chairman of Garden Opera, reported that they would be performing The Barber of Seville on 11 September in Ravenscourt Park and would be grateful for any support and help distributing leaflets. He encouraged people to book early when discounts would be available.

14. Thanks and Close

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