

CHERRY TREES RESIDENTS' AMENITIES ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Cherry Trees Residents' Amenities Association held on Monday 16 November 2009 at St. Mary Abbots Hall, Vicarage Gate

Committee Members Present

Willoughby Wynne (WW, Chairman)
Charles Penney (CP)
Ashley McNeile (AMcN)
Thomas Blomberg (TB)
Charles Shaw (CS)

Mimi Carney (MC)
Myrto Rochat (MR)
Brett Burkhart (BB)
Jennifer Crompton (JC)
Tori Robertson (TR)

1. Apologies and Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting promptly at 8pm and welcomed those in attendance (there were some 56 people). Apologies had been received from the following Committee members: Edward Buxton, Isabelle de Hennin, Stewart Robertson and Mary Marshall. The Chairman offered a special welcome to Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP, PC Robert Johnson, Councillors Robert Freeman and Christopher Buckmaster, David White (of the Campden Hill Residents' Association) and John Scott (of the Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group). The Chairman commented that it had been a reasonably successful year for the Association with various parties held.

2. Minutes of the 2008 AGM

The Chairman apologised that, due to a misunderstanding, these were not available for tabling at the meeting. The Chairman also apologised for the fact that, following the death of his wife Carys earlier in the summer, he was still in the process of sending out a number of receipts for subscriptions received from members.

3. Accounts for the Year Ended 31 October 2009

The Accounts for the Year Ended 31 October 2009 were presented to the meeting. AMcN explained that expenditure had been down and that overall funds were up by £500 (the amount of the surplus). This would be kept as a fighting fund for the future where it might be needed for campaigns etc. There was no increase needed in the level of annual subscription. To one question, AMcN confirmed that the bank accounts were held with NatWest. Another question from the floor asked what the £120 advertising income figure in 2006/7 came from and why there had been no subsequent similar income. It was explained that it had come from advertising space which had been sold at the time in the Cherry Trees Newsletter, but there had not been a Newsletter in the last two years.

The Accounts were approved (proposed by Charles Shaw and seconded by Stephen Tanner).

4. Composition and Election of CTRAA Committee for 2010

A draft List of Portfolios for 2010 had been provided to everyone at the meeting. The Chairman explained that there were a few changes. Fiona Simmons had recently resigned. The Chairman thanked her for her huge amount of work for the Committee over the past nine years. The composition and election of the Committee for 2010 was proposed by Barnabas Brunner and seconded by John Baskett.

5. Status and Membership

The Chairman reported that there were 411 members at the end of October 2009 (as compared to 434 at the end of October 2008). There were a few members who had just postponed their payment for 2009 so the final figure should be slightly higher. There were already 211 members who had paid up until the end of October 2010 (using the 3-year discounted subscription facility).

6. Neighbourhood Watch

6a Official Report. PC Robert Johnson gave a presentation to the meeting on behalf of Sergeant Anna-Lisa Andrews who could not be present. PC Johnson is dedicated to Kensington High Street but attached to the Campden Safer Neighbourhood Team (based in Notting Hill Gate). He read out a number of statistics for the period from April to November 2009 for Palace Gardens Terrace and surrounding area:

Burglary:	7 offences (but most were in the April to June period)
Robbery:	1
Car Crimes:	6 in April, 1 in May/June and 3 in July; none since August
Car Thefts:	1 (a moped)
Pedal Cycle Thefts:	3 (all towards the Notting Hill Gate end of Palace Gardens Terrace)
Dangerous Cycling:	in excess of 110 fixed penalty notices issued since July in the area
General Antisocial Behaviour:	80 warnings and 120 drink confiscations in the Notting Hill Gate/Rabbit Row/Hillgate Village area. The police continue to provide high visibility patrols to minimise youth antisocial behaviour.

PC Johnson also recommended the Select DNA Kit for Property Marking, a few of which were available for free (and where the local PCSOs would come and visit you at home and help you mark your property with a unique DNA trace).

The Chairman thanked PC Johnson for his extremely comprehensive and useful talk.

6b Garden Security Scheme. TR referred to the voluntary private security scheme which was in place for night time hours and had a guard on for 7 nights a week from 7.30 p.m. to 6.30 a.m. It had been operating for 7 years now and had led to a marked drop in crime in the neighbourhood. She thanked all those who contributed to the voluntary scheme and said that any others who wished to would be most welcome.

7. Environment

7a Trees, Lampposts, Dog Mess and Pavements. Fiona Simmons reported that we were continuing to keep the Council up to the mark on cherry trees. A number of diseased trees were being removed. There was reference to the pruning which had been carried out this year and a general feeling that this had not been done as well as previously. Councillor Buckmaster informed the meeting that the Council puts tree pruning out to tender and that we should certainly let the Council know if we were not happy. There was a general discussion led from the floor following a comment that there had been a very marked deterioration in the trees over the last 40 years. AMcN suggested that it might be possible for the Association to get an arboriculturist in to report upon the state of the trees in order for the report to be sent to the Council. There was a strong vote in favour of carrying out such action.

In terms of dog mess, there was much discussion about dog walkers leaving their small plastic bags of dog mess on the pavements, about the adequacy (or otherwise) of existing signage and about the lack of bins. Following general discussion, a vote was passed (*nem con*) to encourage Association members to engage with dog owners and persuade them to take away their dog mess. It was also agreed that the Council could be asked to improve and elaborate upon their signs.

It was reported that some pavements have been replaced while others remained eyesores. One member present asked a question about the gingery gravel around the trees which was both a nightmare and very messy when it had rained.

Members were encouraged to contact the Council if any lampposts were not working or were blinking. The Council is good at mending them quickly.

8. Traffic, Parking and Congestion Charge

It was reported that the Congestion Charge is now not to be removed from the local area until 2011 at the earliest.

9. Planning Issues

9a Vicarage Gate Care Home. Councillor Buckmaster updated the meeting. He reported that the issue had gone to the High Court for the second time, but that the Council had lost on a technical point of planning law. The result that there was now permission for the developers to turn the former home into housing. He was very apologetic on the Council's behalf that they had lost the court case. He reported that the Council had developed and strengthened its Local Development Framework which would hopefully come into force in 2011 – it currently needs central Government approval to be implemented. The Chairman thanked Councillor Buckmaster for his handling of the issues.

9b Holland Park School. David White, Chairman of Campden Hill Residents' Association, reported that the Holland Park School redevelopment, costing £80 million, will now go ahead, having been approved by the Cabinet. There is still some debate going on as to whether or not to sell the southern part of the site. As an Association the CHRA is considering its position. Current information will always be available from their website, www.chra.info.

9c Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group. John Scott, the Chairman and Founder of the NHGIG, reported that the effect of the credit crunch was that Land Securities, who owns 60% of the buildings in Notting Hill Gate, have done nothing in the past year to progress redevelopment plans. For the moment everything would stay as it was (including Chegworth Farm Shop and the Farmers' Market).

One member present reported that the Farmers' Market had led to an increase number of mice and rats in the area. Members were encouraged to report this kind of matter to the Council's Health Department.

John Scott reported that the big news for NHGIG was a proposal to install a clock in the area in the middle of the Kensington Church Street directly outside Kensington Place Restaurant. They were hopeful of obtaining formal planning permission in the near future. It would be an avantgarde sculpture by a well-known sculptor.

To AMcN's question, John Scott confirmed that nothing at all is happening on the redevelopment of Newcombe House at present.

9d Other Planning Issues. MR drew the meeting's attention to the Considerate Construction Scheme (a voluntary-based scheme) which anyone having bad experiences with noisy neighbours' building works was encouraged to promote.

10. Cherry Trees Newsletter

Thomas Blomberg reported that he had been working abroad for the past 3 years, but hoped to revive the Newsletter in Spring 2010.

11. 2010 Garden Parties

The Chairman noted that there would be three garden parties:

- Spring Party at Inverness Gardens: Thursday 13th May 6.30 p.m. – 9.30 p.m.
- Mid Summer Party at St Mary Abbots Vicarage: Wednesday 23rd June 6.30 p.m. – 9.p.m. (date to be confirmed).
- Autumn Party at Inverness Gardens: Sunday 12th September Noon – 2.30 p.m.

AMcN expressed the Committee's thanks to The Huntsworth Wine Company (at 108 Kensington Church Street) who provided the wines for various of our parties at an extremely competitive rate. He also expressed thanks to a member, James Hull, who had very kindly donated wines for our Spring Party in 2009.

12 AOB and Concluding Remarks

Sir Malcolm Rifkind MP gave a short presentation on developments within the local constituency. There were two particular things to note:

- (1) every street in the constituency is extremely active with numerous Residents' Associations, not least CTCAA. He encouraged any residents with issues locally to contact him as their MP. He currently has over 1,500 live cases on in K&C. He urged us not be shy(!); and
- (2) the Kensington and Chelsea constituency is being reorganised for the next election so that there will be a Kensington constituency (covering South and North Kensington) (and for which he will be the Conservative Party candidate) and a Chelsea and Fulham constituency (for which Greg Hands will be the Conservative Party candidate). Hammersmith will become its own free-standing constituency (Greg Hands is currently the MP for Fulham and Hammersmith).

CP asked the meeting to give a quick show of hands for those who would welcome receiving information from the Cherry Trees Association by e-mail. Approximately 40 of those present indicated that they would like this and 10 that they were against the idea.

CP then referred to the sad death earlier in the summer of Carys Wynne, the Chairman's wife. Her contribution to the Association had been absolutely enormous and we would all miss her tremendously. The meeting concurred.

The Chairman then concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for attending.

The meeting ended at 9.30 p.m.