

# CHERRY TREES RESIDENTS' AMENITIES ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Cherry Trees Residents' Amenities Association held on Monday 21 November 2011 at St. Mary Abbots Hall, Vicarage Gate

### **Committee Members Present**

Charles Penney (CP) (Chairman)  
Ashley McNeile (AMcN)  
Thomas Blomberg (TB)  
Mary Marshall (MM)  
Mimi Carney (MC)  
Tori Robertson (TR)

Myrto Rochat (MR)  
Brett Burkhart (BB)  
Peter Revell-Smith (PRS)  
Bruce Fair (BF)  
Paul Lewitt (PL)  
Monique Bahadur (MB)

### **1. Apologies and Opening Remarks**

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8pm and welcomed those in attendance (there were some 70 people). Apologies had been received from the following Committee members: Jennifer Crompton and Isabelle de Hennin. The Chairman offered a special welcome to James Burton (of RBKC), Sergeant Bob Lands and PCSO Rob Hamilton (from the local police) and our local Councillors. The Chairman commented that the Committee felt it had been a reasonably successful year for the Association with various parties held.

### **2. Minutes of the 2010 AGM**

The Chairman presented the Minutes for the 2010 AGM held on 15 November 2010. The meeting approved the Minutes unanimously.

### **3. Accounts for the Year Ended 31 October 2011**

3.1 The Accounts for the Year Ended 31 October 2011 were presented to the meeting. AMcN explained that subscriptions and total income were both slightly down, as too was expenditure, compared to last year, but there was still a fighting fund of £5,000 (kept in reserve for any campaigns).

3.2 The Accounts were approved unanimously by the meeting.

### **4. Composition and Election of CTAA Committee for 2012**

4.1 A draft List of Portfolios for 2012 had been provided to everyone at the meeting. The Chairman thanked Charles Shaw, who was stepping down, for his many years of great service to the Committee (noting that Charles was the sole remaining founder of CTAA).

4.2 The Chairman explained the rationale for proposing 3 members to cover the Planning portfolio. There had been 3 volunteers and the Chairman was keen to have as full a team, with a wide set of views, as possible in view of the relatively heavy workload involved (and

also in the light of comments made at last year's AGM about the importance of the portfolio). The Chairman also disclosed to the meeting that Paul Lewitt wanted members to be aware that his wife ran a company which specialised in assisting residents with their household renovations, including (on occasion) basement developments.

- 4.3 There followed a discussion during which the Chairman answered a number of questions about the proposed composition of the Committee for 2013, confirming that he was comfortable with the proposed List of Portfolios, which he felt gave a good balance of experience.
- 4.4 The List of Portfolios was then put to the meeting and the composition and election of the Committee for 2012 was approved by the meeting.

## **5. Status and Membership**

- 5.1 AM reported that there were 372 members at the end of October 2011 (as compared to 406 at the end of October 2010). Membership was slightly down, but not significantly. All those present were urged to encourage their neighbours to join.
- 5.2 There was a suggestion from the floor that membership dues should be altered such that younger members should pay more. Following discussion, it was agreed by consensus that there was no real appetite to alter the current basis of charging for membership (which was considered very reasonable in the circumstances), although it was agreed that the Committee would keep membership dues under review.
- 5.3 Members were once again urged to let the Association have their e-mail addresses. The number of members on the Association's e-mail address was increasing. Using e-mail does save the Association both time and money.

## **6. Neighbourhood Watch**

- 6.1 Sergeant Bob Lands, the local sergeant for Campden Ward, gave a presentation on behalf of the police. With the economy and cuts being made, in addition to the London riots, it had been a tough year for policing.

Local impacts and initiatives included:

- thefts from cafes and restaurants (unattended bags)
- an increase in scams (particularly online)
- cash machine offences (our area has the largest footprint of cash machines in the country) (they have carried out Operation Marshall which has led to a 60-70% decrease in local ATM-related crime in the last year)
- burglary (down 50% on last year – 8 last year, 3 this year) (residents are urged to check doors and windows with communal doors a particular risk)
- scaffolding ("no climb no crime" liaison with RBKC)
- safer cycling (a priority this year)
- antisocial behaviour (e.g. street drinkers on Notting Hill Gate).

- 6.2 PCSO Hamilton alerted everyone to the "Virtual Ward Panel" – an e-mail which goes out to everyone registered every 3 months, including a simple questionnaire about priorities set by the Ward Panel.
- 6.2 AM reminded the meeting that TR and he sit on the Ward Panel, so members should feel free to feed them views on which areas to set as the police's Ward priorities.
- 6.3 The Chairman thanked Sgt. Lands and PCSO Hamilton for their attendance and valuable contribution.
- 6.4 **Garden Security Scheme:** TR informed those present that the administration of the Garden Security Scheme (which is independent of the Association) was shortly to be transferred to be run directly by the security company (Defence Security Services) itself. The scheme would continue provided there was a sufficient level of resubscription support.

## 7. Environment

- 7.1 James Burton (of RBKC), one of the Council's team responsible for trees, gave a presentation on their work. He explained that they deal with 1,100 applications a year for residents to prune private trees, as well as advising the planning officer where applications have an arboricultural angle.

In terms of the cherry trees in the Association's area, these are not – contrary to popular belief – Japanese cherry trees, but are in fact the double-flowering white cherry, *prunus avium*, a native species. The oldest tree would be less than 80 years old.

They had consulted (through his colleague Mr Fuller) on the tree replacement programme locally. They were acutely aware that there were still 6 empty holes to be filled in the Association's area, caused in part by issues with underground cables etc. Replacement of these trees was in hand (and should be completed by February 2012 at the latest). Two further mature trees are under watch for possible cutting down and replacement.

Mr Burton acknowledged that there had been issues with the external contract placed by the Council for pruning the trees. Next year would be the 4th year of a 6-year contract. There was general agreement that matters seemed to have improved on the pruning. Mr Burton said that they are always grateful for any feedback – they certainly did not claim to get things right all the time.

The Chairman thanked James Burton for his interesting and helpful talk and for taking the time to attend the AGM.

- 7.2 In terms of cherry trees, there was nothing further to report beyond James Burton's report (above).

There were no particular issues with lampposts at present.

Dog mess continued to be left throughout the area, though the issue seemed no worse than usual right now (the plastic packets left by dogwalkers continue to be an issue).

Pavements seemed generally under control at the moment with the Council having a rolling programme of pavement replacement.

The Association continues (through its Committee Members) to deliver letters to those who leave their rubbish out on the pavements on non-collection days in an attempt to lessen the practice.

- 7.3 Susan Wolfe, an Association member, then made a presentation at her request on noise pollution. She felt that noise in the area was becoming worse – from construction work, basement excavations, scaffolders, car alarms, fireworks, emergency service sirens and even leaf blowers. She felt it was having a detrimental effect on residents' health. There was then a discussion as to whether or not the Council acted upon these issues when reported to them (it was clear that they do on occasion, but perhaps not often enough for some residents' desires). Whatever the position, residents were urged to contact the Council whenever they felt there was excessive noise which they were unable to alleviate by a direct conversation with the perpetrator.

## 8. **Traffic, Parking and Congestion Charge**

BB reported that the Congestion Charge Western Extension no longer applies to the Association's area, which therefore now falls outside the Congestion Charge area once again. One member present reminded the meeting that the rules as to which cars are exempt from the Congestion Charge are changing and recommended that people check the website.

## 9. **Planning Issues**

- 9.1 TB informed the meeting that, while the big issues used to be estate agents' boards and dog dirt, the new "big thing" was subterranean (i.e. basement) developments. There were two Government-led initiatives relevant to basement developments, namely the Localism Bill and the National Planning Policy Framework. The Association had been keeping abreast of both on behalf of its members.

Our area currently had about 12 basement developments already carried out, approved, under construction or under application. 3 imminent ones were:

- (i) 3 Inverness Gardens
- (ii) 10 Strathmore Gardens
- (iii) 48/50 Palace Gardens Terrace.

The Committee had put in representations to the Council on all of these.

The number of objections and complaints received on a regular basis across London has led to the Considerate Basements Development Group, which has been trying to influence politicians to adopt appropriate legislation to govern basement developments.

In conclusion, as an Association we need to know what all the residents in our area (and not just our members) think. They were all encouraged to let the Planning members of the Committee know their thoughts – what do they want, how do they want the area to look in the future, what should the Association's position be, should we support the activities of the Considerate Basements Development Group? Everyone present was encouraged to be proactive in giving their views.

- 9.2 **Vicarage Gate Care Home:** It was reported that demolition of the old care home has started on the basis of their existing planning approval, although a new revised planning application is currently in with RBKC for decision. The demolition exercise was expected to last until January 2012.
- 9.3 **Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group:** It was reported that Land Securities had sold its interests in Notting Hill Gate to the Pears Brothers. There was a fear that commercial tenants' rents would arise.

10. **2012 Garden Parties**

The Chairman invited discussion on what type of garden parties members would welcome in 2012. As a result, there was strong demand for a celebratory party around the time of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, but no particularly strong support for the idea of a Bonfire Party around Guy Fawkes Night.

11. **AOB and Concluding Remarks**

TR concluded comments from the floor by thanking the Chairman on behalf of the Association for his work on behalf of the Association over the past year.

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

The meeting ended at 9.33p.m.