

CHERRY TREES RESIDENTS' AMENITIES ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 15 November 2016 at St. Mary Abbots Hall, Vicarage Gate, W8

Revised version

Committee Members Present: Charles Penney, Chairman (CP), Ashley McNeile, Treasurer (AM), Thomas Blomberg (TB), Myrto Rochat (MR), Bruce Fair (BF), Brett Burkhart (BB), Frances Manthos (FM), Mimi Carney (MC), James O'Neill (JO'N).

1. Apologies and Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.07pm and welcomed those in attendance, some 45 members. Apologies had been received from the following Committee members: Romanos Brihi, Monique Bahadur, Rae Than, Caroline Cuffe.

The Chairman offered a special welcome to local MP, Victoria Borwick MP, and Councillor Robert Freeman. Apologies were received from our Council office.

2. Minutes of the 2015 AGM

The Chairman presented the minutes of the 2015 AGM, held on 11 November 2015. The Minutes were approved by the meeting.

3. Sponsorship

The Chairman thanked our sponsors, John D Wood (Matthew Harrop), Strutt and Parker (Rupert Wiggan and James Gow), Chestertons (Claire Ennis), Huntsworth Wine Company (Tuggy Meyer) and The Mall Tavern (Jonathan Perritt). All had generously supported our parties throughout the year. It was noted that The Mall Tavern party held in January had been limited to 40 invitations to members in the immediate neighbouring streets due to space restrictions.

4. Accounts for the Year Ended 31 October 2016

AM presented the accounts. There was a modest surplus of £179 on the balance sheet, with funds in the CTRAA bank account of just over £5,000. Once more, the health of the finances owes a great deal to the sponsorship, as most of the expenditure incurred relates to catering for the parties. The sponsorship amount of £773 under-reports the total as some sponsors pay suppliers directly. AM reported that the actual total is probably about twice what is shown.

With regards to membership, AM noted that the numbers have gone down. However, numbers for 2016 have not been updated yet, as a number of members only renew their membership at the AGM. The Chairman thanked AM for his hard work. The accounts were approved and adopted by the meeting.

5. Composition and Election of CTRAA Committee for 2017

A draft list of portfolios for 2017 was circulated at the meeting. The composition of the committee remains the same with 13 members. The portfolios held remain the same as before, with the introduction of two added sub-portfolios to the Membership portfolio: "local business liaison/development" will be jointly held by RB and JO'N and "recruitment" will be held by FM. The meeting approved the committee portfolios.

6. Status of Membership

AM discussed the dropping membership. This can in part be explained by changing demographics in the area: there are now more single dwelling houses than flats and more people who are not living in the area on a full-time basis, leading to perhaps a decline in

community involvement. The committee is regularly actively exploring ways to publicise the existence of CTRAA and to bring neighbours to meet each other. One initiative this year has been to distribute a leaflet about the association to newcomers in the neighbourhood, which exercise was facilitated by Mathew Harrop of John D Wood. AM reiterated that the most effective recruitment strategy remains word of mouth and encouraged the meeting to spread the word.

A suggestion from the meeting was to put an ad in The Kensington Magazine (Lucy Elliott is the editor), which has a circulation of 34,500, perhaps twice a year. This was approved by the meeting.

The payment method for renewing the membership subscription was discussed. CP explained the committee had been looking at ways to make payments easier for members and had considered various options. One would be to set up Direct Debits/Standing Orders, another to pay by Credit/Debit Card or to use PayPal. TB noted that either of the latter two options could be done through the website, with a link for each member to pay directly for their individual membership. CP asked for a show of hands on:

- Standing Orders: 20 or so (1/3 of meeting)
- Credit/Debit Card: 2
- Paypal: no support.

2/3rds of the meeting supported continuing with cheque books. There was a suggestion from the meeting that too many options would cause confusion and would be a hassle to administer for the committee (John D Wood)

AM reported that the committee had also considered whether to increase the subscription rate but had decided not to. However, he noted that the current level of £6 per year was very low and would need to be increased at some point in the near future, particularly if the current generous level of sponsorship was to decline.

JO'N reported that the committee (RB/JO'N) was hoping to launch a local retailers' discount scheme and was keen to engage with local businesses that might be interested in participating.

7. Comments from Cllr Robert Freeman (Cllr RF) and local MP Victoria Borwick (VB)

VB introduced herself and invited Cllr RF to address the meeting. Cllr RF stated that he, together with VB and Cllr Catherine Faulks, should be CTRAA's first port of call in all matters relating to Parking, Planning and (dog) Poo. VB summarised some of the issues she had been concerned with:

- Affordable housing - VB had met with the new Housing Minister and had expressed the need for proper guidance and regulations
- Stamp Duty - felt to be iniquitous but the Chancellor was not very interested
- Outreach initiatives to help the more vulnerable members of our community and to combat social isolation, a huge problem - this is a priority for VB
- Carnival - crime and violence were up this year, with 80 police officers ending up in hospital. The focus must be on a safe carnival and it cost £10M to make it happen. Why? The level of violence should not be tolerated by the residents of North Kensington
- Boundary Commission - the Commission is considering unifying Kensington and Chelsea into a single constituency, following a report by Nicholas Paget-Brown. Residents wanting to express their views on this matter should write to the Commission and Cllr RF urged the meeting not to leave it to others to do so.

8.

9. Environment

- Trees - MC reported that there were no dead trees this year. Pruning was scheduled by the Council only in 2018
- Dog Mess - JO'N reported having put up new signs with a more direct message to dog owners, which appeared to have had a positive effect on reducing incidences of dog fouling. An additional bin to that effect had been provided by the Council, so the area now has 3 bins.

10. Police Liaison/OWL

PC Gurjit Rehill introduced himself as a member of the Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhood Team for Campden Ward and gave the meeting telephone numbers for the police hotline. His team has been moved to Earl's Court. PC Rehill outlined his team's duties. He personally locally patrols the area and holds street briefings on crime prevention. The team is also proactive in targeting crime prevention by putting up stands in local businesses, e.g. Post Office, Barclays Bank in Notting Hill Gate. Another target has been to protect residents from fraud at ATM machines, which is a borough-wide problem. Current efforts are also under way to address drug related crime, motor vehicle and moped theft - the latter is a consequence of the fact that mopeds are becoming the vehicle of choice for street crime, now an epidemic across the whole of London. PC Rehill provided information about assistance with Crime Prevention and advised residents to contact the Crime Prevention Officer for help on home security and how to avoid scams.

The OWL service (Online Neighbourhood Watch Link) is a valuable online service reporting and alerting people to local crime issues and welcomes any member of CTRAA wishing to subscribe.

11. Traffic and Parking

BB raised the issue of parking bays suspended for construction works/deliveries. Often, these remain suspended even after the work has been carried out because the person who paid for the suspension does not immediately notify the Council. VB pointed out that householders are supposed to inform the Council when the work is completed so that the notice can be removed. Cllr RF noted that it is usually not householders but contractors or removal companies who are too slow off the mark. The meeting also discussed the issue of double parking by contractors and removal trucks/vans, which seems to be a recurring blight, especially in Palace Gardens Terrace and Brunswick Gardens.

12. Planning Issues

TB gave his update and reported on:

- Newcombe House - an Appeal would be heard by way of public hearing, set for 14 February 2017 and expected to last 2 to 4 days. The Planning Inspectorate is expected to give its decision a week later. A week ago, the Council's Planning Committee allowed the application by Frogmore Estates for the total refurbishment of Astley House and David Game House, including the addition of extra 1/2 floors. The applications were accepted as they were, save for the requirement for contributions from the public.
- Lancer Square - all existing buildings have now been demolished and the excavation works for the new foundations will start soon. The anticipated finish date of 2017 has now been pushed back to 2019/2020. The complex will be in the main a block of luxury flats with some commercial offices and some more affordable housing.
- Vicarage House - 8/14 flats remain unsold, despite having been marketed for 2 years.
- Astley House - the plans present an issue for Broadwalk Court. The committee tried to help with this but the Council allowed the application.

- Basements - following the change of rules limiting basement digs to one storey and no more than 50% of garden area, the number of new applications has dropped from 505 in 2015 to 248 this year so far. TB is of the view that perhaps this is not so much due to the change of rules as to the fact that the property market is weakening, with people realising that it is harder to sell now.

TB noted that CTRAA is a corporate member of the Kensington Society, he himself being an officer of it.

The meeting noted that the redevelopment of Notting Hill Gate would be an incentive to develop something imaginative and attractive for future generations to be proud of. TB commented that, although the area is approved for refurbishment, the overall look is likely to remain 1950s concrete blocks.

13. Website

TB reviews this continually and is regularly adding to its functionality.

14. 2017 Parties

The Chairman confirmed the committee hoped to organize 2 parties again in 2017, in accordance with current timetable, i.e. one in early summer and one in early autumn.

15. AOB

Andres Mejia brought the meeting's attention to the overgrown tree in Inverness Gardens. The garden's supporting wall is now severely fractured. The Chairman commented that the Council had been contacted about it and, after inspection, had decided that there was no sufficient lift to warrant extraction. It is also the Council's view that it is a privately-owned tree and therefore the responsibility of Inverness Gardens residents.

Cllr RF spoke again about the Boundary Commission. There is only a week left to write in to express one's view and he urged those present at the meeting to do so. He also encouraged the meeting to join and support the newly-opened Design Museum, a very positive development for the borough.

FM spoke to the meeting of a winter coat donation drive which she launched in November 2011, "Calling London", whereby unwanted winter coats are donated at numerous points in London and subsequently redistributed to charities and needy people. There are over 50 donation points in locations throughout London, including in Kensington Church Street, and residents are encouraged to look in their cupboards and donate any redundant coats.

The Chairman thanked the committee for their time and help. A vote of thanks was offered particularly to the Chairman, AM and TB for their work and efforts in keeping the community together.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.