

CHERRY TREES RESIDENTS' AMENITIES ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25th November 2014 at St. Mary Abbots Hall, Vicarage Gate, W8

Committee Members Present (Actual and Prospective)

Charles Penney, Chairman	CP	Mimi Carney	MC
Ashley McNeile, Treasurer	AM	Bruce Fair	BF
Thomas Blomberg	TB	Rae Than	RT
Brett Burkhart	BB	Caroline Cuffe	CC

1. Apologies and Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8.05pm and welcomed those in attendance, some 50+ members. Apologies had been received from the following actual and prospective Committee members: Monique Bahadur, Myrto Roachat, Frances Manthos, Romanos Brihi and James O'Neill.

The Chairman offered a special welcome to our MP Sir Malcolm Rifkind, Councillor Robert Freeman and Mr Bill Green, RBK&C officer. Apologies were received from Councillors Tim Ahern and Catherine Faulks.

Four sad events were noted by the Chairman: The passing of painter and major sponsor, Ann Langford Dent, and of Councillor Fiona Buxton, a good supporter of CTAA. Two committee members Peter Revell-Smith and Mary Marshall had also passed away and were thanked for their support.

2. Minutes of the 2013 AGM

The Chairman presented the minutes of the 2013 AGM, held on Monday 25th November, 2013. The minutes were approved by the meeting.

3. Sponsorship

The Chairman thanked our sponsors, John D Wood (partner Matthew Harrop also kindly attended the AGM), Strutt and Parker, Winkworth and Huntsworth Wine Company. All had generously supported our parties throughout the year. Vicarage Gate Development contractors, Sisk, has asked if they could sponsor something for the community and the CTAA committee was considering an appropriate project.

4. Accounts for the Year Ended 31 October 2014

AM noted a bottom line deficit of £59 for the year because a substantial contribution was made to the Kensington Society for a specific planning-related project. Excepting this contribution, CTAA showed a surplus of approximately £450. Subscriptions were noted to be healthy and CTAA has enjoyed very generous sponsorship. Over £500 has been received in sponsorship although this is not all shown in the accounts as amounts have been paid directly to a supplier from a sponsor in the case of our parties. The accounts were approved by the meeting.

5. Composition and Election of CTAA Committee for 2015

A draft list of portfolios for 2015 was circulated at the meeting. The Chairman thanked Jennifer Crompton in absentia for her service; she has now stepped down from the committee as she has moved away from the area. New members were introduced: Caroline Cuffe, Romanos Brihi, Frances Manthos and James O'Neill. The list of portfolios and committee members was approved by the meeting.

6. Status of Membership

AM reported that membership had declined over the past five years. There were 336 members at the end of 2013 and there are currently 290 members. Over 100 people attended the summer party in Inverness Gardens. The Chairman noted that we suffer from the demographics of the area, absentee owners and short-term tenants. Matthew Harrop of John D Wood kindly agreed to circulate CTAA welcome letters to new owners and tenants. The Chairman will circulate the welcome letters to local estate agents and asked those present at the meeting to tell their new neighbours about CTAA.

7. Environment

Mr Bill Green, Senior Contracts and Enforcement Officer for RBK&C gave a brief report. He has responded to residents' complaints, trying to investigate the matters arising within 24 hours. Fixed penalty notices are issued where appropriate (3400 so far this year). Fly tipping is addressed and street sweepers managed. There are 43% more litter bins in RBK&C this year, 12% more in Campden ward. Residents and contractors who take no notice of refuse regulations are issued Section 46 and 47 penalty notices. Our ward has three enforcement officers. Street sweepers have a regular beat and more are employed at peak leaf/blossom season. Mr Green asked residents to report any environmental issues via the RBK&C website or by calling 020 7361 3001. RT thanked Mr Green for his help with litter bins to help address the issue of dog fouling. The Chairman thanked Mr Green for his hard work.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind, MP for RBK&C praised residents' associations such as CTAA, stating that they made a difference. He addressed two subjects:

- (i) The Government Consultation concerning change of use from business to residential without the need for planning permission: Sir Malcolm stated that this does not make sense for our area due to the disparity of value and the logical conclusion that local amenities could disappear. He has held several meetings to persuade the Ministers to remove central London from this nationwide proposal. Sir Malcolm was encouraged by responses given and a final conclusion should be made by Christmas. His view was that a case-by-case response is appropriate for change of use planning applications.
- (ii) Mansion tax proposals would have damaging consequences in Sir Malcolm's opinion. He noted that a change of government would not necessarily mean that this tax would become law as primary legislation would be required and there are opponents to the proposal from both sides of the House. Sir Malcolm said that he had no official view on changing Council Tax bands, although he noted that there had been no adjustments for over twenty years and he would not resist a review if the results would not be punitive.

Councillor Freeman raised the issues of subterranean developments and confirmed that double or triple basements are not being considered by the Council at present. A review of policy concerning subterranean developments is under way.

RT announced a competition for original, humorous or decorative laminated signs that might be placed locally where dog mess continues to be a problem. She continues to make weekly calls to the Council and is actively trying to reduce this problem. The Chairman thanked her for her hard work.

MC said that some cherry trees had been removed and will be replaced shortly. Pruning will take place after the blossom in 2015.

A question was raised about the safety of the Inverness Gardens wall. The Chairman said that the CTAA committee has no power in this area as Inverness Gardens is privately owned. The Council had looked at the wall last year and deemed it not to meet criteria where the Council would step in. Residents voiced the fear that the wall may fall on someone.

8. Police Liaison

No police liaison representative attended the meeting. It was noted that the private security service, Granimpex Ltd., continue to operate effectively and its principal, Kris Vaskilis, was present at the meeting. A question about the amount of burglaries in the area was raised. Kris was not aware of actual numbers of offences but knew of one daytime burglary and the theft of a car recently from Palace Gardens Terrace. He suggested that burglars posing as local builders could present an issue.

9. Traffic and Parking

It was noted that notice for parking suspensions was often considerably less than one week, sometimes just two days. A question about the poor quality of information from the Council about suspensions was raised. The Chairman felt that it was not possible for the Council to give 100% accurate future suspension information online as some suspensions arise as emergencies. TB noted that emails about future suspensions are currently running with a two-week delay, making them irrelevant.

10. Planning issues

TB raised several planning issues:

- a. Subterranean developments - these are on hold awaiting the Planning Inspector's report. One basement developer has appealed. A decision is due in January or February 2015. Five to six basement developments are on hold as a result. Some have submitted new applications within the current rules, but have not withdrawn the original applications.
- b. The "Savills building" on Kensington Church Street is under development; the new property will include a basement garage; it will be higher than the previous structure and include 4 flats, shops and offices.
- c. Lancer Square will be demolished in the Spring. The new development will take several years.
- d. Olive Court, the grey round building opposite the local Sainsbury's on Kensington Church Street, has two planning applications pending. Two further storeys are proposed, but neighbours in Winchester Court have complained about loss of light.
- e. Notting Hill Gate has three major developments under way:
 - (i) An application has been submitted for a seven storey tower where the discount book warehouse currently stands.
 - (ii) West block, where M&S currently stands, is likely to be the subject of an application for a seven storey building of luxury flats.
 - (iii) Newcombe House (where Waterstone's bookshop is, extending to the Fish shop on Kensington Place) is likely to be developed. The Kensington Society engaged a team of architects to review and counter the first proposal submitted by the developer. The developer has taken the suggestions made into consideration. CTRAA donated £500 to the Kensington Society to help fund the proposal which seems to have been effective.

Councillor Freeman confirmed that RBK&C has 9 enforcement officers. More prosecutions are being made and construction traffic management plans must now be lodged with planning applications. CC commented that one call to the Council does result in prompt action when construction vehicle block the highway.

Councillor Freeman confirmed that the Holland Park surgery will move to the basement of the Hornton Street Library in May 2015. A new medical facility will be available to local residents.

11. Website

TB outlined the new website design and the Chairman noted that we hope to use the website more in the near future.

12. 2015 Parties

The Chairman confirmed that 2015 parties will follow the same format as 2014, a June summer party, an autumn party in September and the AGM in November. Dates will be shown on the Inverness Gardens noticeboard.

13. AOB

The Chairman encouraged residents to support the new Coronet theatre/cinema as it reopens. MC has headed an initiative to rescue this local icon.

The meeting ended at 9.40pm.