

Northwood Residents' Association

Minutes of the AGM held on Thursday 6th April 2017 at Northwood Methodist Church

PRESENT: Cllrs Carol Melvin, Richard Lewis, Scott Seaman-Digby, Sgt Elisha Botha (Cavendish ward), Squadron Leader James Tenniswood (speaker), 13 officers and members of the NRA executive committee, approximately 86 residents

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Insp Trice, Sgt Phipps, Nick Hurd MP, Gerry Pimm, Richard Field, Mithu Chellaram, Mr & Mrs Sherman

INTRODUCTION. Tony Ellis, chairman, welcomed everyone to the 51st AGM of the NRA, especially those who had not attended one before, and invited guests. He asked how many were attending for the first time, 7 people raised their hands.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT. He ran through the main work and achievements of the committee during the last year:

Well, another year has slipped by and I'm still standing here. I've now been your Chairman for 8 years, I still have all of my hair, although it is somewhat greyer, and as no one is challenging me, I have agreed, subject to your approval, to carry on for one more year. 9 years will make me the longest serving chairman in the last 36 years.

In common with most residents' associations, our membership is decreasing owing to the lack of interest in volunteering and community affairs shown by the younger generations. We have taken some positive action to remedy this in so far as we have appointed Avinash Doshi to the Committee. This is a new position – Avinash is to promote and increase youth participation in the association by communicating with schools, youth groups and religious groups. Any help you can give him will be appreciated.

As ever, we have a need for new road stewards and committee members. Road stewards are the main artery of the NRA. They collect subs, deliver newsletters and feed back information to the committee. Obviously to service nearly 2,500 household we need a strong team. Without their invaluable contribution we will slowly die. If you feel you can help us, there is a list of vacancies in the foyer and our Chief Road Steward, Paul Barker will be delighted to talk to you. Three members of the committee have resigned and need replacing. Richard Field dealt with Health matters, Rikin Patel gave us a perspective on local business and Mithu Chellaram managed communications and our noticeboards. These individuals made a great contribution and will be missed and I thank them sincerely. Should any of you wish to volunteer, please let me know.

For me, the main highlight of the year has been our much-improved newsletter. It is now 25% larger, filled with interesting articles of local interest, news of forthcoming events, photographs and advertisements from local businesses. I am sure you will want to join me in congratulating our editor, Ros Plume, for producing such a masterpiece.

The second highlight was our celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday in partnership with Northwood Hills Residents' Association. After torrential rain in the morning the sun broke through as the festivities started and over 2000 residents picnicked whilst listening to the music of 5 groups. We are indebted to the Council for its considerable financial support without which the event would not have been possible.

An update on the proposed station development. I met with the project manager on Monday to learn that TfL is to consult us on revised plans in the autumn, with a view to submitting a planning application early next year. I am sure many of you will be pleased to know that TfL no longer plans to build on the bridge This will mean a loss of about 1000 sq ft of retail space, otherwise, the plans will remain more or less the same with some internal revision to allow for the inclusion of about 35% of affordable housing which is stipulated by the Mayor of London. The previous plans allowed for approximately 10% of affordable housing. TfL is still talking to existing tenants with a view to re-siting as many as possible.

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Last year I said that I was negotiating with the Council to improve traffic flow in Northwood. After constant prodding the Council finally deputed a highways engineer to meet us on site. Peter Lansdown and I did a walkabout with him and he took copious notes and photographs and we look forward to hearing if any improvements will be proposed. It would appear that the Council is somewhat unwilling to be proactive in solving our congestion so I would suggest that you individually bombard our councillors with questions and comments. The other way of resolving problems is to raise petitions. Current petitions, of which I am aware, are to eliminate speeding traffic in Dene Road and Sandy Lodge Way, restrict parking in Moor Park Road and to ban heavy goods vehicles in Kewferry Road. You will have the opportunity to discuss traffic problems during Councillors' questions.

I mentioned in the last newsletter that progress on the Anniversary clock was painfully slow. Apparently, no British clock manufacturers produce clocks that meet with new National Grid regulations for connection to the mains. Our chosen supplier has now confirmed that battery technology has improved so much that a battery-operated clock is viable. David Goodman and I have arranged to visit the factory later this month and, hopefully, finalise the purchase. The Council has undertaken to erect the clock on the Waitrose corner of Green Lane and Maxwell Road as members approved last year.

A thriving community must have successful local shops, restaurants, cafes and businesses. It is incumbent on us all to patronise our local businesses to ensure their success. We now have around 80 business members and our committee member responsible, Hoda Lacey, is encouraging them to take a greater interest in the community. We are seeking a business owner to join the committee.

Many members commented about the poor quality of our Christmas lights. We accept that they look tired and something needs to be done. In the past, we have added a small amount of money to the £5000 received from the Council which isn't nearly enough to produce a respectable display. Waitrose is the only business that has made any contribution and we are taking steps to seek other businesses to donate money. Miles Gillman will talk about the options later this evening.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Cllr Carol Melvin who will be appointed Mayor of Hillingdon in May. I take it you will be plain Carol to Northwood residents Your Worship? I hope that you have a very successful and enjoyable year Carol and that Andrew can keep up with you.

Thanks as ever to Nick Hurd who still manages to beaver on our behalf whilst coping with ministerial duties – and a young family. In particular he is still shaking the NHS, somewhat like a dog with a bone, to come up with a satisfactory solution to the future of the Northwood and Pinner Hospital.

We keep our councillors on the ball with questions. Thank you all for answering them so willingly and tirelessly.

We are very grateful to Tina Williams who keeps the station flower beds in beautiful condition. It is always a pleasure to look at them whilst waiting for a train. Thank you, Tina.

Gerry Pimm represents the NRA on the Federation of Metropolitan Line Users. His regular articles in the newsletter are always amusing and informative. Thank you, Gerry, keep up the good work.

We must also thank Howard White who manages the newsletter advertising.

Now it is time to thank the members of the committee who are seeking re-election.

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Miles Gillman, our evergreen vice chairman, is responsible for woods and green spaces and continues to liaise with the Council and Ruislip Woods Committee. As well as deputising for me, he is responsible for the Christmas lights as he will explain later.

Philip Green is our police liaison member, chairman of the local ward panel and a lay member of the Hillingdon Safer Neighbourhood Board. He has continued to make great strides in improving relations and communications between the police and the community and is well regarded by the Met. As chairman of the Ward Panel he is always looking to recruit new members.

Andrew Egan was co-opted onto the committee to handle environment. He has really got to grips with subjects such as congestion and inconsiderate parking caused by schools, removal of abandoned vehicles and the poor state of pavements.

David Goodman continues to tussle with the intricacies of planning, answering members' many queries and objecting to unsuitable developments.

Peter Lansdown deals with members' questions on traffic and highways and liaises with the Council as necessary.

Another familiar face is David Blowers who continues to balance the books. Quite a time-consuming position.

Frances Meyer is our membership secretary, doing the important job of keeping our membership details up-to-date.

Paul Barker is our Chief Road Steward, responsible for managing our Area Road Stewards and Road Stewards who collect subs, deliver newsletters and recruit new members. He has the unenviable task of recruiting replacements for retiring Road Stewards.

We also co-opted Hoda Lacey who is responsible for servicing business members and is also an area road steward. Hoda's enthusiastic approach is quite something.

Last, but not least, is Avinash Doshi who was co-opted to improve communications with the young.

As I mentioned earlier, we have three vacancies to replace retirees. Somebody here must be interested in joining the committee. I'd love to see you after the meeting.

Our Secretary, Ros Plume, is not a member of the Committee. However, she attends all Committee meetings, takes minutes and keeps us on the straight and narrow. Ros is also the editor of our newsletter. I think everybody will agree with me that she does a brilliant job and I am full of admiration for her. Thanks Ros – we are fortunate to have you.

Thank you all for giving up so much of your time and making my job enjoyable.

GUEST SPEAKER. Squadron Leader James Tenniswood, Media and Communications officer for RAF Northolt, gave an entertaining and informative talk about the history of RAF Northolt illustrated with some historic photographs. James took us through the development of Northolt, first as the Royal Flying School, Ruislip to the part it played in both World Wars to its time as London Airport (1946 to 1954). More recently, Northolt kept the UK safe during the 2012 Olympic Games when four Typhoons were based there. Today 32 different units are on the site. RAF Northolt has been operational since 1915.

James answered a number of questions from the audience and refuted any suggestion that the base would be replaced by a housing development in the near future. The runway will be closed for six months in 2018 when it will be refurbished, indicating that its future is secured for another 15 to 20 years.

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James explained the procedure for buying tickets for Norfest, Northolt's community day, on 22nd July; a second batch will go on sale at 09:00 on 14th April.

Valerie Mellor proposed a vote of thanks to James to which the audience responded with a round of applause.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS. The chairman presented a token of our thanks to Chris Rogers, who has audited the NRA accounts for 35 years and has agreed to continue doing so. David Blowers then presented the audited accounts for the year ending 31st December 2016. He said that as many members pay more than the minimum subscription, the low minimum sub can be maintained. The proposal to continue with a minimum rate of £2 per household and the Business member rate of £10 and the adoption of the accounts was approved by a show of hands. There were no questions.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS. President Alan Prue appealed for members to consider volunteering for one of the vacant positions on the committee, especially chairman. He then conducted the election of officers. There being no new nominations for the officers' positions, the following were elected for the year by a show of hands:
Chairman – Tony Ellis; Vice chairman – Miles Gillman; Treasurer – David Blowers; Auditor – Chris Rogers

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. The chairman introduced each of the members standing for re-election. Those elected for the year by a show of hands are:

David Goodman - planning advisor
Marie-Françoise Meyer - membership,
Paul Barker - chief road steward,
Philip Green - police liaison,
Hoda Lacey – business membership
Avinash Doshi – youth participation and
Peter Lansdown who takes care of Transport and Highways

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT. The chairman proposed that Alan Prue be re-elected as President and Valerie Mellor as Vice President. This was agreed by a show of hands.

NICK HURD MP sent his apologies as he was unable to attend the meeting because a family member was seriously ill. He had, however, sent an email to the chairman in which he said:
On TfL, as you know we should be expecting a fresh planning application Spring 2018, with significantly more affordable housing. I have asked Peter Elliott what consideration they were giving to sheltered housing: given the demographics of the area I felt that this might be more acceptable. He said that they had given it serious consideration but the feedback from the market was that it needed to be on a bigger scale than TfL were suggesting to be economically viable. So at the moment, it is not a feature of TfL plans. We may need to revisit this.

I met with the Mayor of London yesterday, together with his senior officials, and made him aware of the Northwood situation, and the likely ruckus if something was imposed on Northwood that was inappropriate and turned down by the Local Council. He noted the point, and his team were going away to educate themselves.

Finally in relation to the Cottage Hospital, I am told that a decision will be forthcoming "within weeks" but I have been told that for some time. We are on NHS time.

AOB.

- a) **1st Northwood Scout Group New Scouting Centre £100k Appeal.** The Committee had provisionally recommended a donation of £2,000 to the appeal which requires approval at an AGM or EGM. Richard Plume, representing the Appeal Fund-raising Committee, gave a short presentation to explain the reasons for replacing the hut, how they are going about it, the budget and progress to date. He also commented that community events such as the Music & Picnic in the Park event of 2016 would not be viable without manpower and equipment provided by 1st Northwood Scouts.

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There followed a discussion with the following points being made:

- Where will scouting take place during the building process? Hillside schools help out with accommodation during the annual jumble sale period and we hope to extend that next year. St John's school has also offered help with accommodation and storage facilities.
- Could the NRA consider raising the proposed donation? We have strong reserves and this is an excellent cause.
- A donation of £5,000 was proposed from the floor; a show of hands gave the majority in favour with three voting against.
- Perhaps raise the subs to bring in more income? This has been discussed previously and it is generally agreed that as many residents give £5 or more it is better to keep the minimum at £2.
- Perhaps donate £2,000 now and reconsider at the next AGM?
- Should the scouts obtain charitable status? The group is a registered charity. They are also registered for Gift Aid and we'll pay zero VAT on the building.
- Hazel Paterson proposed that in view of its reserves of £32k, NRA should give £5,000. The chairman said there would be other demands on the reserves e.g. the anniversary clock (£4,500) and the Christmas lights (possibly £2,000). A vote was taken with the majority voting in favour and 5 against. **THE MOTION WAS CARRIED.**

- b) **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.** Miles Gillman explained that as we have no local Chamber of Commerce we get no financial input from the businesses and have to fund the lights with a grant of £5,000 from LBH plus a small sum from the Waitrose token scheme. This has to be shared between two shopping areas (High Street and Green Lane) whereas other towns in the borough have only one area to decorate. We have been leaving the lights in the trees permanently to reduce labour costs, but they all failed this year. Miles has obtained quotes from two new companies for a new display. He will apply for a larger grant from LBH, but he would like permission to spend up to £2,000 from NRA funds if necessary. A vote was taken by a show of hands; **ALL WERE IN FAVOUR.**

Sponsorship is a possibility – one estate agent has agreed to sponsor a Christmas tree.

The chairman added that Hoda Lacey will be suggesting to our business members that they contribute to the lights fund.

OPEN FORUM. The three Northwood councillors, Carol Melvin (CM), Richard Lewis (RL), and Scott Seaman-Digby (SSD) took their places on the platform and invited questions from the floor.

Q1. Howard Lyons. Can we have an update on the plans for Mount Vernon to be an out of hospital hub?

TE replied as Governor of Hillingdon Hospital Trust. The CCG did plan for three such hubs, but none have been built due to lack of funding. If it happens it will not be for a long time. However, proposals for the Pinner and Northwood Cottage Hospital do include a large unit which could possibly become a hub.

Q2. Roger Kojecký. We have 48 signatures on a petition for speed reduction in Dene Road and Sandy Lodge Way, will the councillors give us their support?

RL. The petition will go through the accepted process, Cllr Burrows will suggest possible options and there will be a full investigation and survey. As councillors we always try to find solutions for our residents.

Q3. Anna Mackenzie from The Glen. Why doesn't the council look after the garden in front of Green Lane car park? The trees are covered with ivy.

SSD. I will ask officers for the maintenance schedule.

Q4. Savi Cockeram from Roy Road. Parking in High Street causes congestion. Also, vans parked at the lower end of Hallowell Road block sight lines for turning out into High Street.

SSD. We have discovered that parking cannot be enforced as the bays and signage are incorrectly marked out – this will be remedied this month. However, the double-yellow lines are enforceable.

TE. In view of the increasing number of parking schemes in the borough, do we have sufficient parking wardens?

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SSD. I will ask officers for the statistics regarding number of wardens and number of parking schemes 2 years ago and 5 years ago.

Q5. Alice Crabbe from Hawes Close. Who receives notification of planning applications? There is an application for 33 Chester Road which will affect many more residents than have received notification.

SSD. Planning notices are sent to neighbours whose property adjoins the applicant and a notice must be posted outside the property, usually on the nearest lamppost. If you email me, I will help you organise a petition, which is the best way to get your objections heard.

VM. It is worth registering your dropped kerb with LBH, then you can call out the parking warden when someone parks across your drive.

Q6. Caroline Field from Highfield Road. Where the mature tree has been felled in Oaklands Gate there are still barriers and lots of rubbish.

CM. This area has been cleared on many occasions, but it does attract fly-tipping.

Q7. ? Ban on turning from Ducks Hill Road into Northgate is not policed.

Sgt Botha. Sgt Phipps has run operations and has booked motorists for dangerous driving. Enforcement is strictly a council matter.

CM. We have agreement for a camera to be installed. We would like to thank the police for their operations there.

Q8. Does the camera on Rickmansworth Road work?

Yes, many reported seeing it flash.

Q9. Jean Bellchambers from Queens Silver Court, Rickmansworth Road. Parking on both sides of Rickmansworth Road makes it too narrow for trucks and buses.

CM. We have had a survey carried out during term time. There is the possibility of having double yellow lines on one side of the road.

TE. I walked round the area with Bob Castelijn of LBH and Peter Lansdown at school leaving time and took photos.

There being no further questions, the chairman thanked everyone for coming. He closed the meeting at 22.00.