

Northwood Residents' Association

Minutes of the AGM held on Thursday 21 May 2026
at Oaklands Gate Methodist Church

PRESENT: 15 officers and members of the NRA executive committee, the President of the NRA, the Vice President of the NRA, the guest speaker: the Mayor of Hillingdon 2025 – 2026 Cllr Philip Corthorne, Cllr Henry Higgins, Cllr Ekta Gohil, Sgt Gareth Blackburn and two Safer Neighbourhood Team members and two Neighbourhood Watch Representatives. About 51 resident / business members in total.

APOLOGIES: David Simmonds MP

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION AND REPORT:

The Chairman introduced himself, Tony Ellis, and welcomed all to this 60th AGM, our Diamond Jubilee, particularly those who had not attended before. He then introduced the people present as above.

The types and location of toilets and, in case necessary, fire evacuation procedures were described.

The Chairman thanked the Methodist Church for hosting us and to technical wizard, Keith Tabor, for managing sound and video.

The meeting was being recorded to help taking of accurate minutes.

The Chairman described the initiation of the organisation and its past year's activities:

The NRA was founded on the 9th of February 1966 by a group of local residents who were concerned at the gathering pace of change in Northwood, in particular to in-fill developments. In his autumn 1967 Newsletter editorial, chairman Sir Christopher Cowan said "Operation Neptune was launched a few years ago in order to protect the coastline of England from unsightly development. Unless strenuous efforts are made now there is a grave danger that the development of our urban areas by indiscriminate in-filling will be beyond rescue". For 60 years the NRA has been fighting to protect our green spaces and unsightly development. We haven't won every battle but we did win the big one when, in 2013/2014, Save our Northwood beat TfL's proposal to develop the station site.

After 60 years the NRA is still a thriving association and is respected by the London Borough of Hillingdon with whom we have a constant dialogue on matters of planning, traffic, environment and other matters that concern residents. In fact the aims of the Association have stood the test of time and remain the same - namely to maintain and develop a high standard of amenities and community spirit in Northwood.

Now more effort is required to attract the younger generation of residents.

To mark our 60th anniversary we, as a one-off exercise, offered a bursary of £1,500 to a student entering university. After a rigorous vetting exercise, we made the decision to award the bursary to William Thorne. William was congratulated.

Major events this year included the planning appeal for the old police station, which involved many residents who signed petitions, submitted photographs and made comments. A good number attended the appeal hearing and made valid comments to the Inspector. Thanks to the strong case against the development made by residents, our planning representative, Trevor Sherling, and verbal contributions made by former councillor, Richard Lewis, and our Chairman, the Inspector accepted our case about traffic congestion and pollution and ruled against the appeal.

At a later meeting with the owner of the building he was told that the NRA Committee and some residents thought the site is only suitable for an old peoples' home or luxury apartments. Other suggestions may be made, but the Council does not have the money to buy it.

David Carson, our newly appointed representative for Traffic and Highways is going to carry out a consultation to have 20 mph limits applied to residential roads where traffic is restricted by parking, often on both sides of the road. Your views are welcome.

Residents were asked to make every effort to use local shops and restaurants.

The local Safer Neighbourhood Team, known as the SNT, has been very active arresting shoplifters. Many offenders have

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received prison sentences and our thanks are due to the team for reducing the number of shoplifting incidents. Northwood remains one of the safer towns in which to live in London.

Residents were invited to give suggestions and ask about progress on replacement of a full library service, by emailing Cllr Steve Tuckwell who is the new Council Leader. Stuckwell@hillingdon.gov.uk

Richard Lewis, who was one of our local councillors for 18 years, was thanked for his service.

Our Advertising Manager, Claire Bridger, was thanked for her work. She is leaving the district and we have a vacancy for a replacement. Please contact our Secretary Ros Plume if you are interested.

Thanks also to Tina Williams who has tended the station flower beds for the last 17 years. We are fortunate that Suzanne Gillman has taken over the task.

Last year, a member suggested that we spend some money installing display boards describing the history of Northwood. It has not been possible to identify who this was but we have taken up his suggestion and propose 3 or 4 boards on the railway bridge describing Northwood's evolution.

Dennis Cave passed away last year. He was such a valued and active man who strove to keep Northwood green. The Executive Committee decided to plant a tree in his memory and a silver birch has been planted near to the entrance to the Green Lane car park.

Despite the concerted efforts of residents, the NRA and MP David Simmonds, the Minor Injuries Unit at Mount Vernon was closed down without proper consultation. We were treated very shabbily by Hillingdon Hospital. Recently, consultation was carried out to consider the removal of the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre to Watford. David Simmonds is very keen to ensure that some facilities are maintained at Mount Vernon and we are very grateful to him.

The Chairman ended by thanking all of the individuals who make the NRA work: Road Stewards, Area Road Stewards and Executive Committee members, all of whom willingly spend many unpaid hours in fulfilling their duties.

He then handed over to our speaker, Cllr Philip Corthorne.

Cllr Corthorne gave the following information:

He was first elected a councillor in Ruislip in 1997. He served in the cabinet under Sir Ray Puddifoot with David Simmonds, now MP. He was asked by Ian Edwards, the recent leader of the council to be mayor and thought about it for some time. The mayoral role is ceremonial and civic, being the first citizen of the borough, so attending citizenship functions, hosting royal visits and chiring meetings of the full Council – about 6 a year. The mayor attends some 500 events during the year: business events, visits to schools and care homes, faith and residents' groups. The mayor picks 1-2 local charities to receive the money from funding raising events such as quiz nights, charity cricket matches and maybe £40,000 is raised. Cllr Corthorne chose Hillingdon Stroke Support and SEND Family Support. The mayor has no significant power in the borough, and is completely non-political.

There is very little budget for the role, most events are low budget, many organised by local businesses and so on, but it has 'soft power'. It recognises the work our people do for civil society, is a bit of a 'nice to have' but important to people. Cllr Corthorne has heard many positive stories of incredible people.

He gave good wishes to the new mayor and thanked the NRA for all that we do.

The Chairman asked the councillor whether he has any spare time and how he remembers names. Answer was not a lot and can struggle sometimes.

Sally Horsnell Whittaker asked whether having been mayor affects what he does now – no, now he can go back to being a politician

Vanessa Edwards thanked the councillor for giving '110%' to everything he gets involved in and being well known to be able to be relied on to give a truthful answer.

President Valerie Mellor spoke of many of the activities his internet profile shows Cllr Corthorne has been involved in and gave a vote of thanks for his interesting talk.

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ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Jan Harding thanked Chris Rogers for his help in preparing the accounts.

She proposed no change to the rate of subscriptions which are minimum £3 per household. This was approved unanimously. Mostafizur Rahman, Florence Court, Dean Road suggested that it was too low, but households can choose what they subscribe and most pay more.

The accounts were approved unanimously.

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Chris Rogers, has agreed to serve another year. He has already done over 30 years in this role. He was unanimously appointed, and thanked.

RESOLUTIONS TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NORTHWOOD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Chris Duffy, Vice President, read out the first resolution:

That a new clause 3.1.9. be inserted into the NRA's constitution as follows:

"make a payment for the purpose of benefitting all or part of the community within the Defined Area where such payment has been approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Executive Committee entitled to vote on the matter. Any such payment shall be subject to the 5% limit set out in clause 41."

Chris explained, in answer to a question from Adrian Paterson, that the Committee is now 15 voting members so a 2/3 majority is 11.

The acceptance of the resolution was proposed by the Chairman, Tony Ellis, and seconded by Miles Gillman. It was approved by about 25 other residents with no one against or abstaining. It was therefore passed. It will also require consequential amendments to be made to Clause 3 of the NRA's constitution.

The second resolution was to make further technical changes to the constitution to clarify specific matters:

THAT:

- a. The following be inserted at the end of Clause 13: "Any member wishing to know the date of the next AGM should contact the Secretary to the Executive Committee. Any proposed change to this constitution must be upon the requisition in writing of at least 20 members of the Association with voting rights specifying the proposed changes, or on the instructions of the Executive Committee."
- b. Clause 24 to be revised to read as follows: "At the AGM there will be elected a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, a Treasurer and a Secretary to the Executive Committee."
- c. The first sentence of Clause 25 be revised to read as follows: "There shall be at least six Executive Committee members and no more than 18 including the four officers."
- d. Clause 26 be revised to read as follows: "The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary to the Executive Committee shall constitute an Emergency Committee to deal with any matters of urgency and shall report on the same at the next meeting of the Executive Committee."
- e. Clause 43 be revised to read as follows: "Alterations or additions to this constitution shall be made only at an AGM or EGM of which notice has been given to members of the Association in accordance with this constitution and where such alterations or additions are included in such notice."

Acceptance of the second resolution was proposed by the Chairman Tony Ellis and seconded by Hoda Lacey. It was approved with no one against and 1 abstention.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS. President Valerie Mellor conducted the election of the Chairman for the 18th time, and the elections of the other officers. There being no new nominations for the officers' positions, the following were elected for the year with no one present dissenting or abstaining:

Chairman – Tony Ellis; Vice Chairman – Miles Gillman; Treasurer – Jan Harding; Secretary – Ros Plume.

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THANK YOU

The Chairman thanked Paul Barker for his 14 years on the committee. This has included spending hundreds of hours installing the new software to manage the residents' data base. He has now retired from the position of Chief Road Steward and was given a card and gift in thanks.

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. The Chairman introduced each of the members standing for (re-) election. Those elected for the year, with no one present dissenting, are:

Richard Shave - chief road steward
John King – membership secretary
Andrew Egan - environment
Brian Geminder - business membership
Hoda Lacey – police liaison
David Carson - traffic and highways
Trevor Sherling - planning advisor
Sue Mansfield – minutes secretary
Rajen Shah – IT Systems
Vik Chudasama – newsletter

The Chairman then thanked Valerie Mellor for 40 years of work for the NRA, as President for the last seven years. A truly exceptional record. She was given a card and gift in thanks. The whole meeting applauded her.

APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT The Chairman proposed that Chris Duffy be appointed as President. This was agreed with no one present dissenting.

QUESTION TIME FOR CLLRs HENRY HIGGINS (HH) and EKTA GOHIL(EG) and SGT GARETH BLACKBURN (GB)
The procedure for asking questions to the panel was described. Speakers were asked to wait for a microphone, speak clearly, and state their name and the road they live in.

Pat Collis, Highfield Road asked whether anything could be done to stop the use of street furniture for flags as they get damaged and degrade the symbol. EG explained that the Council can remove damaged flags if safe to do so. HH noted that flags are often put up before local elections, and thought it unlikely that Northwood would follow Harefield's example.

Sally Horsnall Whittaker asked if household burglaries could be made higher priority given the recent violent incident. HH said there are from time to time spates of burglaries and police reacted well to a recent one in Copsewood. HH also pointed out that Sadiq Khan reduced police numbers, which meant reduction of admin staff and consequent paper work for the SNT.

GB said burglary is one of top 5 of priorities, SNT try to assist by visiting 5 properties each side of the property and gathering evidence and giving advice. Can try to impact local burglars. Response teams are fully occupied with their heavy workload, and priority is given to current on-going situations and where injuries have been caused. Crime must be reported to raise its priority.

Vanessa Edwards asked if there are any recommendations to protect everyone. GB offered individual advice.

Hoda Lacy asked for volunteers to help by joining the Ward Panel.

Sally Horsnall Whittaker and Vanessa Edwards said they would volunteer.

Anna Mackenzie asked for Council action on the garden by the Green Lane car park. HH pointed out the Council is in Extra Financial Support so has no money but could give approval to NRA expenditure. The Chairman recommended setting up a petition with 20 signatures on it.

David Sullivan, Green Lane asked why we need a new library in place of the current pop-up library. HH pointed out a massive increase in library usage between 2006 and 2012 with many activities and services available. Northwood was one of the smallest and busiest libraries in the borough until it had to be shut. EK said a survey of residents about a

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new library showed 2,200 responses with 75% supporting the idea.

The Chairman asked GB to speak of the SNT recent successes. He instanced action on shoplifting, taking place over the last year with Northwood Hills. They had an operation over three days in shops, and targeting drug dealers, and worked with Waitrose. They collected evidence and cases were brought against the shoplifters, with zero tolerance to shoplifting. After conviction an offender could be given a Community Behaviour Order, preventing them from visiting some shops and other places, carrying drugs and, with the Council, could close the house they lived in and get them evicted. One offender with 23 previous convictions got a lengthy prison sentence. Peter Morgan who was becoming increasingly violent and dangerous in Waitrose received a 4½ year sentence.

They had also worked successfully on begging problems and still put a lot of effort into looking at burglaries and robberies, identifying criminals from CCTV. They took less than 24 hours to recover the car stolen from Waitrose car park.

The Chairman then asked the audience for comments on the running of the NRA.

William Thain, Hallowell Road, said there is great information in the newsletter but nothing about what people want and also that everything from the NRA seems to be top down. The Chairman pointed out we have a web site and the newsletter gives contact details and encouraged residents to bring matters they want action on to him.

Rosemary Mastin, Langton Grove, thanked whoever was responsible for getting the Moor Park Road pavements done, but the new trees are dying from lack of water and can residents water them? And could Kewferry Road be done as well? The Chairman said residents should be responsible for the pavements outside their houses. Valerie Mellor said the new tarmac pavements were icy and dangerous in winter, and if trees were beside a fence, not anyone's frontage who is responsible? HH said that if anyone can water such trees to please do it and he will take the matter up with the Environment Team in the Council, but there is a limit on what councillors can do.

Philip Newfield said other residents of other boroughs who saw our newsletter would ask to have our Editor for their publications.

The Chairman announced another pop-up event outside Costa on Saturday 11th July 2026, from 11am to 1pm and invited residents to come and chat. *[Subsequently replaced by stall at WoodsFest100 on 5th July 2026]*

The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.50 after thanking everyone for their contributions.