



## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010, 8.00pm, Brentham Club

**Members in attendance:** 43, including Committee

**Committee Members present:**

Alan Henderson (Chair), Sue Elliott (Vice-Chair), David Ballard (Treasurer), Eleanor Cowie (Secretary), Dave Hobbs, Tim Llewellyn, Heather Moore, Martin Mortimore

**Apologies:** Tony Miller

**Also Present:** Rosanna Henderson (Events Coordinator - co-opted member)

Welcoming everyone to the meeting, Alan Henderson commented that this was the 41<sup>st</sup> AGM of The Brentham Society, which had been formed 40 years ago. He was pleased to see such a good turnout.

**1. Minutes of the 2009 AGM and Matters Arising:**

The minutes had been distributed to those present. As there were no matters arising, their acceptance as a true record of the meeting was proposed by Bevan Jones, seconded by Richard Costella and duly agreed.

**2. Committee Reports**

Alan explained that since the amalgamation of The Brentham Heritage Society and The Brentham Society (which was voted in at last year's AGM), the work of the Committee had been organised into subgroups. The lead Committee member for each of the subgroup would give an annual report.

**(a) Chair – Alan Henderson**

**General Report:**

Probably the most visible achievement during the year was the production of a new and revised Residents' Pack '**Living In Brentham Garden Suburb**' which was delivered to every resident on the estate. This had been planned for some time and was well received when launched last February. A new **set of postcards** had also been added to the range of merchandise and now for the first time in a number of years a new **Brentham Christmas card** had been commissioned.

**Planning-related issues** continued to be a major activity for the Society and this year had seen the start of the Society's involvement in the proposed plans for the expansion of St Gregory's School which borders the Brentham Garden Suburb. The Society continued to work closely

with the **Brentham Advisory Panel** on planning matters and in commenting on planning applications affecting the conservation area.

During the year significant progress has been made on **Ownership of common land** – all of which was now in the hands of local residents, thanks to the tireless efforts of many on the estate – and replacement **Street Lighting** on Brentham Roads was now almost complete.

In addition a number of successful events were held during the year.

Alan commented that the Society would not exist without its members, and he was somewhat disappointed to report that this year **Membership** had dropped slightly; an alternative method of distributing membership reminders with the Residents' Pack had not worked as well as had been hoped. Nevertheless just under 50% of all households were members – a good level of support – and he thanked all the membership collectors.

#### **Communication:**

The Society had continued to try to improve its **communication with the Membership**, and this year had:

- Published three editions of **Brentham News** – he expressed his thanks to Michael McCarthy, who continued as editor and who also produced and organised distribution; to the band of street distributors who push it through letterboxes, and to Grimshaw & Co Estate Agents for generously sponsoring the production costs.
- Continued to ensure that events and news items were posted on the **website** in a timely and appropriate manner – his thanks went also to former resident Wendy Sender who continued to support the website **www.brentham.com**.
- Adopted a new house style for **Notice Board Posters** to try and attract attention – thanks to committee member Dave Hobbs; also to David Denscombe for looking after the postings and to Tony MacKersie who continued to maintain the boards.
- Made more use of the **email contact group** ([brentham-contacts@googlegroups.com](mailto:brentham-contacts@googlegroups.com)). There were now about 220 registered users (a significant increase on last year). Only 13 notices (including the reminder for this meeting) were emailed out in the 12 month period – so hopefully no one would think they were being spammed!). Alan encouraged anyone with an email address who had not registered – or was not getting the notifications – to see Tim Llewellyn at the break.
- Involved **Street Representatives** in distribution of the new Welcome Pack, giving them the opportunity to meet new residents. There was now a Street Representative Co-ordinator, Elizabeth Atkinson, and he thanked her and the street reps for their work this year.

It was also important to maintain good working **Relationships with other Organisations**, and the Brentham Society continued to work with the Pitshanger Community Association (PCA) and the Brentham Club Committee.

BS representatives had attended council-run **Ward Forums** (Brentham is split between two wards – Hanger Hill and Cleveland) to ensure that Brentham residents had a voice and/or input to any plans which might have an impact on the estate. This year we had bid for a contribution towards the cost of installing refurbished heritage lighting on the two paths on the estate (between Brentham Way and Brunner Road and between Pitshanger Lane and Holyoake Walk). The outcome of the bid was still awaited.

### **(b) Treasurer – David Ballard**

David began by thanking Andy Akerman, who lives on the estate, for once again carrying out the audit of the accounts. He was pleased to say that the accounts had been given a clean bill of health, and that the Society's finances were in good shape.

He explained that these accounts were, in effect, the accounts of the old Brentham Heritage Society, the charity which had continued [under its new name] after last year's AGM. The accounts benefited from a donation of £9,432 from the old Brentham Society which had been wound up.

One major item of expenditure during the year was the printing of the new Brentham folders and inserts for the Residents' Pack, which had cost £5,249, and so, overall, assets at the year end were £4,966 less than the combined assets of the two societies at this time last year.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Paul Fodrio, seconded by Peter Bigwood and agreed nem con.

### **(c) Heritage – Sue Elliott**

The newly-constituted Heritage Group had met three times during the year, but a great deal of work had also gone on outside meetings.

Thanks to the efforts of Martin Mortimore we now at last had a splendid set of **Brentham postcards** – these were on sale at the meeting and from Walter Wyeth in the Bookshop. These were now supplemented by a brand-new **Brentham Christmas card** (also available at the meeting). Sue thanked Sally Kelly for her 'Through a Brentham Window' design and Rosanna Henderson for seeing the production process through.

The Heritage Group had also contributed key information on Brentham's history and architectural heritage to the new **Living in Brentham** packs, which were particularly important to new residents.

Progress on the **Blue Plaque** on 223 Pitshanger Lane for Fred Perry was slow but steady. It was known informally from English Heritage that a historical assessment had been done – this had established that no other London property has a legitimate claim to a Plaque. It was hoped to get the Plaque sometime in 2012 to coincide with the London Olympics.

Regular heritage activities had continued: the London **Open House Weekend** organised by Jackie Moss, with guided walking tours led by Clive Hicks in September had a good turnout on both days, and there had been two successful visits in recent weeks: to the **Gidea Park** model estate in Romford and to the fascinating **William Morris Gallery** in Walthamstow.

Two more weighty issues had occupied the group's time this year:

1. The first was a major project to find a permanent home for the **Brentham Archive**, which was at present housed in the Archivist's spare room and various cupboards. It was now a priority to identify a local or national archive to give it a permanent home. Alan Henderson and Eleanor Cowie had already met with specialists at the National Archives, Kew, and the London Metropolitan Archive, and would be talking to Ealing's Local Studies Library. The Archive must be properly **catalogued** before any external archive would accept it, and must be **accessible** to anyone wanting to use it in the future. Cataloguing was a major job and we would be asking for volunteers – relevant experience would be useful, but not essential. This was the priority for the coming year.
2. For some time, discussions had been taking place with the **Brentham Club** about how to work together to help them conserve this iconic part of the estate. The possibility of mounting a joint application to the **Heritage Lottery Fund** for funding to repair the Tower had been suggested and the Club were enthusiastic about the idea. However, for the time

being, it had been reluctantly concluded that the resources did not exist within the BS – who, as a charity, would need to lead the bid – to identify, develop and sustain the ‘community learning activities’ that were required by the HLF as a condition of awarding funding. It had therefore been decided that the BS could not engage in such an ambitious project at the moment. If circumstances changed, it was hoped to revisit the idea of helping the Club to conserve this beautiful Listed building in the future.

In the meantime, the Heritage Group continued to find ways of celebrating, conserving and informing people about Brentham’s special heritage.

#### **(d) Planning – Heather Moore**

One of the chief objects of the Brentham Society was to promote the conservation of Brentham Garden Suburb. It had been another busy year, with a steady stream of planning applications requiring comment, as well as requests from existing and prospective residents seeking advice about possible alterations to their property. Most applications were uncontroversial and received approval from the Council’s Planning Department, only going before the Planning Committee if there was a ‘grey area’. The whole process of gaining planning consent could be greatly helped if residents would seek advice before submitting an application.

When developments happened without planning consent or were built differently from the approved plans the Council’s Enforcement Department would be involved. There were several outstanding cases of infringements and the Department was frustratingly slow in taking action, so was it was necessary to keep reminding them.

Heather went on to mention the proposed expansion of St Gregory’s School. As the grounds bordered the Brentham Conservation Area any expansion would have an impact, especially in terms of increased traffic and disruption during the building work. The BS would respond once the plans had been seen.

As always, what the group could do was limited by lack of time and people to help. Heather appealed for volunteers interested in becoming more involved with the planning and conservation work of the Society to take this beautiful and unique estate into the future. She also thanked residents who were watchful and informed the BS or the Council of unwelcome developments; she confirmed that any information would be treated in confidence.

#### **(e) Events – Rosanna Henderson**

There had been a full calendar of events. Heavy snowfall combined with icy conditions had led to the cancellation of the Carol Singing in December.

The programme of activities had started with an event in February to launch the new Residents’ Pack ‘**Living in Brentham**’. Despite the bad weather, about 70 people had attended and had appreciated the opportunity to meet their neighbours and the committee.

The Brentham Society had taken a stall, with merchandise, at the **Brentham Club Open Day** on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, thus promoting the Society and encouraging people to learn about the area.

**The Open Gardens Day** on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June had been one of our most successful events, with ten gardens on show, half of them new. The weather had been glorious and over £1,000 had been raised for the charity Help for Heroes.

Two weeks later there was a good turnout for the **Strawberry Tea**. This special occasion, marking Barbara Murray’s 30 years as host as well as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her house, was celebrated with a cake and the presentation of a rose to Barbara.

A small group which included some new faces took part in the **Family Cycle** in July, cycling through the park, via the canal to Osterley and back along the river.

Every year Brentham takes part in the **London Open House Weekend** in September; each day 25 people had attended Clive Hicks' walks to learn about the history and architecture of the estate, with extra snippets of information.

Lastly, Sue had already mentioned the visit to the **William Morris Gallery** in Walthamstow.

Rosanna commented that some events had already been lined up for the coming year and would be publicised on the notice boards. She expressed her thanks to the huge network of people who help to make all the events happen by running stalls, opening their gardens, making cakes, collecting money, handing out tickets etc. The Committee was always open to suggestions for new events and would welcome anyone who would like to come forward to organise an event or join the band of helpers.

Alan thanked the group leaders and all the current Committee members for their work during the year.

### **3. Election of Brentham Society Committee 2010-11**

The Constitution allows for between four and nine members and up to four co-opted members. All the current members of the Committee were willing to stand again, as follows:

- |                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Alan Henderson (Chair)    | 6. Tim Llewellyn    |
| 2. David Ballard (Treasurer) | 7. Tony Miller      |
| 3. Eleanor Cowie (Secretary) | 8. Heather Moore    |
| 4. Sue Elliott               | 9. Martin Mortimore |
| 5. Dave Hobbs                |                     |

Alan proposed that unless there were any objections, an en bloc vote should be taken for the Committee members standing again. Their election was proposed by Pam Turner, seconded by Barbara Murray and all were elected nem con.

### **4. Members' Questions**

**Planning:** Commenting that there was now more pressure to make houses environmentally efficient, Paul Fodrio wondered whether legislation would force us to comply, in contravention to conservation principles. Asked to respond, Clive Hicks referred to a Planning Officer's talk at a previous AGM. Double glazing would never pay – it was ecologically unsound to replace windows, but internal cladding of walls was a possibility and secondary glazing was allowed. Conservation areas were exempt from the rulings. Heather Moore confirmed that English Heritage were 'on the case', cf. their website [[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)]. In fact older houses were more efficient than the usual formula would suggest.

**Brentham Club:** Peter Bigwood congratulated the Brentham Club on the rapid rebuild of the sports pavilion.

**Archive:** Clive Hicks commented that in 1985 the Brentham Society had handed material to Ealing Council, who now published his postcards as their own! Why could the archive not be stored in the Club? Sue Elliott replied that this had been considered, but creating a room for the archive in the Tower was not practicable because it was not accessible or secure enough. Nor was Ealing Library our first choice, but we had been told to try them first by the London Metropolitan Archives. Wherever it is stored, the archive must be made accessible and our aim was to digitise all the plans and photographs and make them available as part of the Brentham website, so that everyone could see how the estate had been planned and had developed. Paul Fodrio suggested that Gunnersbury Park Museum would be another possibility.

**Notice Boards:** Denis Costello drew attention to the poor state of repair of some notice boards, which was an invitation to snails. Alan took note.

**May Day:** Colleen Hicks commented that May Day was a big part of Brentham and it had been a pity not to mention it in the events report. Rosanne apologised for the omission, which had been an oversight. In fact it had been a successful day in unusually fine weather.

Alan concluded the formal business by highlighting again that we were celebrating 40 years of the Brentham Society. In looking through the archives for a few items to display he had found the original notice to every resident inviting them to a public meeting to discuss the formation of a society.

The initial objectives were plain and simple:

- To encourage the preservation and improvement of the character of the estate
- To promote such social activities as may be desired by residents

We had to thank the founding members for the work they did to get the Society off the ground and for running it in the early years – including some who were present (Pam Turner, Barbara Murray and the first Chairman Clive Hicks) and others who couldn't make it (Tony Oliver, Brian Fallon).

He hoped that the Society would achieve as much in the next 40 years – with members' help.

In connection with the website, Alan said that although we knew where external users were coming from, it was not known whether the site was being used by residents. During the next 12 months it was intended to try to find out more from members. A show of hands indicated that around three-fifths of those present had looked at the website and of these about half found it easy to navigate. Alan said that more planning guidelines would be added during the year.

## **5. Garden Awards**

Before presenting the garden awards, Nita Davis thanked Pam Turner and Brian Vaughan, who had been involved in the awards for many years [Alan confirmed that the awards had in fact been running for 31 years]. The judges had enjoyed walking around and looking at all the charming, varied gardens on the estate again this year.

After a much harder winter than in recent years, followed by a late spring, it was wonderful to see the gardens in Brentham burst into life. In the early part of the summer the gardens had looked great, particularly around the time of the Open Gardens Event, but then came the month of drought which spoiled gardening for some time. Fortunately the subsequent rain and cooler temperatures in August had brought another wave of colour and growth, lasting well into the autumn.

### **Spring award – 5 Brunner Road**

Runners up: 34 Ludlow Road, 47 Brentham Way, 76 Brentham Way.

### **Summer award – 21 Ludlow Road**

Runners up: 42 Holyoake Walk, 93 Fowlers Walk, 10 Neville Road.

### **Autumn award – 58 Holyoake Walk**

Runners up: 119 Fowlers Walk, 1 Ruskin Gardens, 29 Denison Road

### **Rose Bowl – 38 Holyoake Walk.**

Alan thanked the judges, Sally Kelly, Nita Davis and Gilda Kelly, and congratulated all the winners. [A full report on the awards will be published in Brentham News.]

Finally Alan thanked all for attending and hoped to see them at events during the forthcoming year.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.