



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 13th October 2011, 7.30pm, Brentham Club

Members in attendance: 29 Members plus 7 Committee

Committee Members present:

Alan Henderson (Chair), Sue Elliott (Vice-Chair), David Ballard (Treasurer), Tim Llewellyn, Tony Miller, Heather Moore, Martin Mortimore

Apologies: Eleanor Cowie, Dave Hobbs

Also Present: Councillor Nigel Sumner, Rosanna Henderson (Events Coordinator - co-opted member)

I. BRENTHAM CLUB 1911-2011

The evening began with an illustrated talk by Sue Elliott on the Brentham Club – its origins and aims and how it has served Brentham over the past 100 years, after which John Kinder, the Club's Chairman, talked about what the Club has to offer today.

II. AGM

1. Minutes of the 2010 AGM and Matters Arising

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

2. Committee Reports

2(a) Chair – Alan Henderson

The full committee had met four times during the past year and had some lively debates on a number of issues.

Planning continued to be a major activity for the Society. This year saw the Society's continued involvement in opposing plans for the expansion of St Gregory's School which borders Brentham Garden Suburb. However despite our objections and those of a large number of affected residents both on the estate and in the surrounding area, the applicant received planning permission. Opposition to proposals for mobile phone antennae on St Barnabas Church was more successful, and plans for more BT boxes along Pitshanger Lane had been withdrawn, at least temporarily. The BS continued to work closely with the Brentham Advisory Panel in commenting on planning applications affecting the conservation area.

A proposed **CPZ** covering part of the estate was successfully opposed and the BS had recommended a response to the current consultation on a **20 MPH Zone**.

The replacement of **Street Lighting** on Brentham Roads was now finished and installation, on the two footpaths, of heritage lamps painted in original green and cream livery was complete. The latter was funded following a bid to the two Ward Forums covering Brentham and Alan thanked our local Ward

Councillors for their support. This year a bid had been submitted for funds to refurbish/replace **heritage street signs** in the coming year.

The BS was also grateful to Ealing Council for funding the planting of some **new street trees** earlier in the year. On the subject of trees - we supported residents backing onto Denison/Ludlow Green in asking the Council to establish a Tree Preservation Order on the ancient oak to stop its felling – the very symbol of Brentham!

The BS continued to work alongside committee members of the **Brentham Club** – particularly in this, its centenary year – and had supported a number of their activities, including their ambitious plans to raise funds to refurbish/maintain the building.

Digitising the vast **Brentham Archive** was still a goal. Some progress had been made and he hoped that once he had relinquished the role of Chair the project could progress more quickly.

In addition there were a number of successful **social events** held during the year, which many of those present would have attended.

Alan reiterated last year's comment that the Society would not exist without its members, and he was somewhat disappointed to report that this year **Membership** had dropped again – only 40% of all households had joined, whereas the target should be at least 50%. He thanked those who had joined for their support, as well as all the membership collectors.

The BS continued to try to improve **communication** with the Membership and this year:

- Two 6-page full-colour editions of **Brentham News** and two editions of News Extra had been published and he thanked former resident Michael McCarthy who continued as editor and also produced and organised distribution; the band of street distributors for delivering it and Grimshaw & Co Estate Agents for generously sponsoring some of the production costs.
- Events and news items continued to be posted on the **website** in a timely and appropriate manner – he thanked former resident Wendy Sender for continuing to support **www.Brentham.com**.
- The new house style for **Notice Board Posters** hopefully attracted attention – Alan thanked committee member Dave Hobbs who produces them all, also David Denscombe who looks after the postings and Tony MacKersie who continues to maintain the boards where necessary (as well as all those residents who have the boards in their gardens).
- The **email contact group** (brenthamcontacts@googlegroups.com) now had about 220 registered users with another 25 users invited to join. Only 11 notices were emailed out in the 12 month period (including two reminders for the AGM) – so he hoped no-one would think they were being spammed). He appealed to anyone with an email address who was not registered with the group, or was not getting the notifications, to join.
- Alan also thanked the **Street Representatives** for ensuring that all new residents received a Welcome Pack. Part of their role was to keep an eye out for elderly residents who live on their own and we were very pleased to be able to provide a small Christmas parcel to some 20 people last December. In view of the thank- you cards we get they are much appreciated.

2(b) Treasurer – David Ballard

The year had been a very quiet one for the BS accounts. In the previous year the amalgamation of the two societies had brought a large cash injection into the BS accounts, but there was nothing similar this year, neither was there any large expenditure.

Overall, the Society had made a net loss of £212. If membership numbers had been maintained, we would almost have broken even, so that was an area to concentrate on in future.

For several years the accounts had been audited by Andy Akerman. This year there was a new auditor, Iquo Nwankwo, so many thanks were due to her.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Ken Butcher, seconded by Nigel Root and agreed nem con.

David then thanked Alan Henderson for his sterling work as Chair over the past three years and presented him with a wine voucher on behalf of the Committee.

2(c) Heritage – Sue Elliott

The group had met formally only once during the year, but there was significant progress to report on its main priority for the year – finding a home for the Brentham archive and preparing to digitise large parts of it for online access.

First, Sue was pleased to report that we would finally get the **Blue Plaque for Fred Perry** to coincide with Wimbledon fortnight next year. The plaque design and its positioning were now being finalised. She thanked Iver and Ronnie Benattar at 223 Pitshanger Lane for initiating the idea originally and for their support and co-operation over what had been a long haul.

On the **Archive** Sue paid tribute to the work done during the year by Alan Henderson, together with Eleanor Cowie and more recently with the help of an enthusiastic and creative group of volunteers – Lyndsay Hayward, Holly Smallman and Adel Golding – who had really energised this project and made a great start cataloguing the collection. Alan and Holly had met Ealing's Local History Librarian in July, and he had offered a permanent home for the archive, without the Brentham Society losing ownership or control. This meant that the archive could be stored in proper secure conditions yet still be accessible to those needing to consult it.

To make the archive more widely accessible, as a parallel exercise, it was intended to **digitise** key items and create a dedicated website, linked to the Brentham main site, so that the coloured plans, sepia photos, key documents and examples of ephemera would be all available for anyone to look at online. Alan and she were shortly due to meet a specialist web archiving company to discuss the possibilities. While this was a major and costly exercise, it was felt to be essential to fulfil the Society's educational remit by sharing its wonderful archive with the wider world.

Education and information were an important part of the heritage aspect of the Society's efforts. This year a group from Letchworth Garden City were welcomed in May and members had made a reciprocal visit to them in July to take part in their 'Who Do You Think You Are?' Garden City Festival. The BS had a stall with other Garden Suburbs, Cities and New Towns and attracted a lot of interest. During the summer term a number of guided tours of the estate by two local schools, North Ealing and St Benedict's, had been hosted. The children aged 10-12 seemed to enjoy the tours and she and Heather had certainly enjoyed taking them round. It was hoped to do more of this in future. In September Clive Hicks' London Open House tours were more popular than ever, with over 40 visitors on both days.

The Club was a central part of Brentham's heritage and this year the BS had helped the Club to celebrate its centenary by working with Ealing Civic Society to erect the Green Plaque for Fred Perry, unveiled in July, and by raising funds to commission a replica of the original front door. Club plans to build a house in Meadvale Road on a vacant plot next to the car park were going through Planning but the BS would continue to ensure that, if the plan was approved, any profits from this project would be properly allocated to conserving the fabric of the building.

Sue concluded by saying that this was her last report – for a while at least – after being involved with the Brentham Society for more than ten years. When they first moved here in 1987, Brian Fallon had asked her to write some initial impressions for the Bentham Newsletter, as follows:

“Moving from a 2nd floor flat, one of the first things we noticed was how much closer to nature we are here. 6 months on, I still get enormous pleasure just from looking out of the window at the other houses, their gardens, the trees and the birds. These houses have a strong sense of history too; I find myself imagining previous tenants – before the First World War, in the Twenties and Thirties – getting just as much pleasure as we do now. There's something quite special about these houses. They weren't just plonked here by speculative developers, they were carefully thought out by radical young architects of the day, not only as a pleasant home for working people but as part of a grand social plan to enhance the quality of people's lives. It's easy now to sneer at the rather naive 'co-operative' philosophy that caused our Estate to be built, but the end-product of their ideas and their work has a special charm and quality that makes me, for one, feel very privileged to live here.”

Nearly 25 years later, Sue still felt exactly the same way – a sentiment which was endorsed by those present.

2(d) Planning – Heather Moore

Heather reported on another very busy year, with some different sort of applications in addition to the usual householder applications for alterations to houses.

Last autumn the planning group had learned of an application to expand St Gregory's Primary School. Although the school was outside the conservation area, any expansion would have an impact on Brentham. Residents were particularly concerned about increased traffic and nuisance during construction work; in addition the BS was very unhappy about the proposed design, which showed no respect for its position next to a conservation area with Arts and Crafts architecture. Despite a well-mounted campaign and the efforts of our local Councillor, the Planning Committee had approved the expansion plans and the unsympathetic design.

The group had been consulted about a plan to mount telecommunications equipment on three elevations of St Barnabas Church, which is Grade 2 listed. Nearby residents were understandably concerned. The group was very unhappy about the visual impact of the equipment, English Heritage was also very critical of the scheme and it was dropped before reaching the application stage.

More recently BT had applied to install large telecommunications cabinets in two locations on the estate, in Pitshanger Lane near the junction with Woodfield Road and in Woodfield Crescent near the junction with Woodfield Road. There were other applications in other conservation areas across the borough, the reason being to provide high-speed broadband. Residents would enjoy the benefits but the large and noisy cabinets would be detrimental to the conservation area and a great nuisance to nearby residents. The situation had yet to be resolved; BT had withdrawn the applications to allow for further negotiation. Heather understood that Ealing Civic Society was involved and that there was the possibility of smaller cabinets, which would reduce the visual impact; she was unable to comment about the noise.

The BS had been consulted about an unusual project for Brentham – to build a house on a plot of land in Meadvale Road next to the car park of the Brentham Club, in order to provide funds for maintaining the fabric of the Clubhouse. Care had been taken to achieve a design that would fit in with surrounding architecture, but normally no development of this kind would be allowed in Brentham and in addition this land was designated Metropolitan Open Land. There was the possibility of an exception being made if the proceeds could be ring-fenced for the maintenance of a listed building that would otherwise be in danger. The application was still with the Planning department.

The BS continued to receive a steady stream of notifications of planning applications and worked closely with the Brentham Conservation Area Advisory Panel to respond to them, always guided by the Council's policy that 'any development must preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area....' Most applications were approved, a few were refused. Applications submitted after discussion at the pre-application stage usually passed more quickly and easily through the planning process as difficulties had already been sorted out.

Where infringements of the planning regulations occurred the Enforcement section of the Council's planning services would get involved. This was inevitably a slow process that might take years as there were statutory periods to be observed. It was very frustrating but residents should be assured that serious infringements would be pursued.

Keeping the special character of Brentham for the enjoyment of residents and visitors and future generations was not an easy task and there was a need for all to be vigilant. Heather thanked the many residents who cared enough to alert the Society and the Council when they saw work that might be unauthorised, since it was always easier to act while work was in progress rather than after its completion.

This year a start had been made to put the Council's Policy and Design Guide into digital form and it was hoped to finish this over the coming winter. The Society's own design guide had also been started, but awaited considerable further work before being ready for use. Heather appealed for anyone with a background in planning and conservation who would like to help to let her know.

2(e) Events – Rosanna Henderson

Ground Force Day: There had been two Ground Force days – in November and March – to clear and tidy an area of waste land between Brentham Way and Fowlers Walk. Volunteers were asked for and there was a good turn-out on both days.

Brentham May Day: Although this was not a Brentham Society event, the BS supported May Day very strongly and provided help in erecting the maypole, dressing the Green Man, setting up chairs etc, in the playing fields and dismantling everything at the end. The Society always had a stall with Brentham merchandise. Pat Chapman was the key person co-ordinating this event, which was really a lovely day for Brentham.

Strawberry Tea: Now in its 31st year, this ever-popular event was once again held in Barbara Murray's garden. There was a very good turn-out and the weather had stayed fine.

Open Garden Day: This must be the most popular event in the calendar. Despite torrential rain, over one hundred people came along to view the ten gardens on show and £933 was raised for the Brain Tumour UK charity. Rosanna thanked Gina Jenkins for organising this event, as well as all her team of helpers and the people who showed their gardens.

Wine Tasting: This was a fund-raising event to raise money for new doors for the Brentham Club. Harrisons provided the wine and the event was enjoyed by a lively group of 26 people. The money had now been raised for the doors but that did not mean that there could not be more wine tastings in the future.

Open House Day: As always, there was a good turn-out, with a record 45 people joining the walk and talk on the Sunday. Thanks were due to Clive Hicks who leads the walk each year and is the expert on all things architectural and Brentham.

Rosanna commented that as well as the Brentham Society Committee, there was a huge band of 'helpers' working behind the scenes to make all these events and Brentham activities happen. They baked cakes, sold merchandise, organised events, set things up then took them down again, distributed newsletters, collected membership subscriptions, plus lots of other jobs. The Committee wanted to acknowledge and thank all those people for their continual support during the year.

3. Election of Brentham Society Committee 2011-12

The Constitution allows for between four and nine members and up to four co-opted members. The following members of the previous BS Committee were willing to stand again:

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| 1. David Ballard (Treasurer) | 10 Brentham Way |
| 2. Alan Henderson | 47 Meadvale Road |
| 3. Dave Hobbs | 65 Brentham Way |
| 4. Tony Miller | 6 Winscombe Crescent |
| 5. Heather Moore | 127 Fowlers Walk |
| 6. Martin Mortimore | 54 Fowlers Walk |

Richard Costella of 64 Brentham Way, W5 had been nominated by Sue Elliott, seconded by Heather Moore.

Clive Evans of 50 Denison Road, W5 had been nominated by Pat Baxendale, seconded by Alan Henderson.

Adel Golding of 23 Brentham Way, W5 had been nominated by Rosanna Henderson, seconded by Tim Llewellyn.

No other nominations for new members had been received.

Alan proposed that unless there were any objections, an en bloc vote should be taken. Their election was proposed by Paul Fodrio, seconded by Bevan Jones and all were duly elected.

4. Members' Questions

HS2: Nigel Root asked what the BS view was on HS2. As the BS had not discussed this in Committee yet, Alan threw it open to the floor for views. Paul Fodrio commented on it going via a tunnel; Bevan Jones was concerned about noise pollution; Councillor Nigel Sumner said the Council opposed HS2.

Membership: Pat Baxendale wanted to know the BS views on why membership was down to 40 %. It was generally agreed by BS and Tim Llewellyn (Membership Sec) that the Membership Collectors were key to the success. It was accepted that some collectors were really pro-active, knocking on doors etc., and this gave good results – Pam Turner and Anne Barnes were acknowledged for their diligence. It was agreed that there should be a push next year to raise the membership level. The view was that low membership was not due to the current economic climate nor to people being anti the Brentham Society, just general apathy.

Notices: David Humphreys commented that notices of Planning Applications were put on trees for a 21-day period and then not taken down, making the area look scruffy. Nigel Sumner said we were able to take the applications down after the 21 days. Other people then commented about different literature going up, e.g. funfairs, lost cats, builders and decorators – could these 'legally' be taken down? As the conversation was starting to 'stray' Nigel Sumner suggested he should be contacted direct to discuss the Council's view on posting notices.

5. Garden Awards

Sally Kelly commented that after another very cold winter, the beginning of the gardening season had been hot and dry for many weeks. Plant life had raced ahead, bringing on tender seedlings which it was feared might be lost if there were frosts still to come. But luckily this didn't happen so gardening in 2011 was off to a flying start.

In June and July there had been a great deal of rain which rather dampened the Open Gardens event, and strong winds had battered new growth. However, gardeners were a resourceful lot and much care had been taken to make up for these troubles. It had been a pleasure once more to walk round the estate and admire all the lovely gardens.

Before presenting the awards, Sally Kelly thanked Nita Davis and Gilda Kelly for their help in judging.

Spring award – 45 Woodfield Crescent

Runners Up: 47 Meadvale Road, 93 Fowlers Walk, 50 Meadvale Road.

Summer award – 39 Brentham Way

Runners up: 1 Neville Road, 29 Denison Road, 111 Fowlers Walk.

Autumn award – 20 Brentham Way

Runners up: 10 Neville Road, 64 Meadvale Road, 115 Fowlers Walk

Rose Bowl – 1 Ruskin Gardens

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 9.45pm.