



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 18th October 2012, 8pm, Brentham Club

Members in attendance: 40 Members plus 8 Committee

Committee Members present:

Richard Costella (Chair), Tony Miller, Alan Henderson, Heather Moore, Dave Hobbs, Martin Mortimore, Clive Evans, Adel Golding

Apologies: David Ballard (Treasurer)

Also Present: Sue Elliott (Guest speaker)

I. FRED PERRY UNVEILED

The evening began with an illustrated talk by Sue Elliott on Brentham's first Blue Plaque in honour of Fred Perry. It looks great and anyone passing through the estate couldn't miss it, located at 223 Pitshanger Lane. It is a fitting tribute to Fred Perry and also to Brentham's part in his international success. It is very difficult to get one approved, which increases their value. Only 9 have typically been approved by English Heritage per year, and is likely to be reduced to 6 per year because of budget cuts. Original application was made in 2007 and unfortunately it took until June 2012 for installation. Why did it take so long? –

- Fred didn't become eligible until May 2009 (centenary of his birth)
- Long waiting list before it rises to the top
- Thorough historical research to check facts, prominence and provenance
- Takes 2 months for design and making of the plaque itself
- Then of course the unveiling event has to be organised

But we got there in the end, with a big thanks to Iver and Veronica Benattar who currently own the house and were very fortunate to have had Martin Mortimore video record the occasion for posterity. Many thanks to Martin for the hours spent in the edit suite.

II. TOWER RESTORATION

Clive Evans gave a brief update that the Brentham Club has pursued various options to raise funds to restore the Tower, and has decided the best approach will be to fundraise. Scaffolding will be required to repair the bricks and mortar, so it would make sense to fix the guttering as well as scaffolding will be the primary expense. The Club is considering becoming a Charitable institution, through changing its constitution, in order to qualify for Gift Aid. The £800 donated from the Garden Group is being kept in the 'Brentham Club Restoration Fund' account. If residents considered social membership at the club, it would be a great help with raising these funds.

III. PLANNING GUIDE RELAUNCH

Heather Moore highlighted the continued relevance of the 'Brentham Policy and Design Guide':

What is the 'Planning Guide'?

Policy and Design Guide 1985 rev 1988 produced by Ealing Council, it was authorised for publication by the Council's Planning and Economic Development Committee on 14th March 1984.

What is its purpose?

Using words from page 2, it was produced 'to assist local residents who may wish to alter or extend their properties, to propose appropriate design solutions and to give guidance against which planning applications can be considered.'

Why re-print?

It is very useful, and is now very difficult to obtain a copy. The text is blurry with much copying, but it is still the best, most practical guide to development in Brentham. It is referred to by Planning Officers and by Appeals Inspectors from the Planning Inspectorate. The Brentham Society have decided to scan it and to make a digital version available.

How can I access it?

It will be on the website of the Brentham Society soon and hopefully on the Council's website alongside two more recent documents – The Brentham Conservation Area Appraisal and the Brentham Conservation Area Management Plan, both 2008. We have printed a few hard copies of the Design Guide on yellow paper similar to the original. It's not something everybody needs to have but it's useful to be aware of its existence and where to find it if needed.

IV. AGM

1. Minutes of the 2011 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 agreed.

2. Committee Reports

2(a) Chair – Richard Costella

Richard Costella thanked his predecessor Alan Henderson, who has continued to be his mentor throughout Richard's first year on the Committee.

Main events for the previous year were:

Garden waste and wheelie bins caused a great amount of concern initially, but in the end resulted in a largely successful campaign against wheelie bins, with only 10 on estate.

20 mph zone consultation last year was largely forgotten by residents. Final outcome meant significant changes from original plans. All is now in place except some raised tables (St Gregs School).

Fred Perry plaque installed, with many thanks to Sue Elliott for her hard work with English Heritage.

Planning guide, updated introduction which has been managed by Heather Moore.

Street sign renovation has benefited with money from the Ward Forums and ongoing works will be prioritised.

Brentham events which are a regular in our calendar enjoyed another successful year, **Strawberry Tea** hosted by Barbara Murray; **Open House Day** lead by Clive Hicks in his final year before handing over to Clive Evans- many thanks to Clive Hicks for his efforts over the years; **Open Garden Day** which is always a success.

Membership numbers could be higher and anyone able to take on the role of Membership Secretary, please let us know.

Subscription has been held at £2 for at least 10 years, including donations it averages £5 per member. Unfortunately this is not enough to cover major projects such as the Archive where there are plans to digitise and make the Archive more accessible. We will have to look at ways of raising funds.

Brentham News is made possible by efforts of Michael McCarthy, whom we would like to offer many thanks.

Vacant posts which we are in need of volunteers for are Membership Secretary and Website Manager.

Garden Awards

For many years now, there has been a garden competition on the estate, with prizes presented annually at the Brentham Society AGM. Prizes are given for each season, with a Rose Bowl awarded for the overall winner. The Rose Bowl was won last year for the garden at 1 Ruskin Gardens, which was described in detail but concluded, / “always subtle and elegant, this garden gets better every year”.

All gardens are entered automatically in the competition, and for the past few years the judging panel of Sally Kelly, Nita Davis and Gilda Kelly have walked the estate, peering over gates and hedges and noting the developments of each garden throughout the year. We are grateful to them for the hard work they have put in to make this competition an integral part of our year.

Sally, Nita and Gilda have indicated that they will not be able to continue this after the conclusion of the current year, so in order for this important competition to continue we are looking for a volunteer or group of volunteers to take over. This is a great opportunity for someone with an interest in gardens to take part in this annual event. If you think you would like to give it a go, please contact Richard Costella.

Richard would finally like to **thank the Committee** for their help throughout the year.

2(b) Treasurer – David Ballard

In 2012 we made a small surplus of £345 compared with a loss of £212 in the previous year. This was mainly due to greater success in chasing subscriptions, including late subscriptions.

Against that, merchandise sales were down, and our printing and stationery costs were up. We didn't have a wine tasting this year, so no profit was achieved from that.

Most of our other income and expenditure was in line with previous years.

The Garden Group contributed over £800 to the Brentham Club's restoration fund from the monies raised at the Open Gardens Day.

I would like to thank Phil Farrell for her work in inspecting and passing our accounts.

2(c) Planning – Heather Moore

Heather's report for 2012 is as follows:

This has been yet another very busy year. We have received a steady stream of notifications from the Council of applications from householders wishing to alter their properties. Most applications are for rear extensions or loft conversions, sometimes both. As is usual, the Council approve most applications and refuse just a few. In making our response to an application we consider its impact on the character of the conservation area and follow the guidance of the Policy and Design Guide. We work closely with the Brentham Conservation Area Advisory Panel led by Pat Baxendale. I should like to pay tribute to the Panel for all their work over the past year, work that helps to protect the historic environment of Brentham that we love and wish to conserve for our enjoyment and that of future residents.

Some people find the planning process slow but there are a few things that can really help the progress of a planning application through the consultation process, and chief among these is pre-application

advice. Advice from the Panel and the Brentham Society at an early stage when an application is being formulated can avoid delays and disappointments.

I wonder how many residents know that all planning applications are on the website of Ealing Council. This facility is very helpful and one that residents can use to see what is happening in Brentham. Details of an application can be found under 'application search' by typing in the address of the property concerned. Once an application has been decided the Officer's Report can also be viewed on line. This gives the background to the decision.

Looking back to last year's report, I am reminded that we were disappointed at the approval of new development at St Gregory's School. Work is now well underway. Those living nearby are having the nuisance of considerable noise but it remains to be seen what will be the long-term impact of the building on that part of Brentham. Last year I also spoke about the application for a detached house in Meadvale Road adjacent to the Brentham Club. That application has now been withdrawn.

Developments in telecommunications technology bring applications for larger cabinets. Finding a suitable site for these is difficult. No-one wants one near their property, but many residents enjoy the benefits of the improved service they bring. Recently a new cabinet was installed in Pitshanger Lane near the junction with Denison Road. The situation regarding a second one in Woodfield Crescent near the junction with Woodfield Road is quite complicated. During the year a cabinet was installed on the south side and then removed, installed on the north side and then removed. We responded to a planning application, which was then refused. We have heard nothing further.

When unauthorised works take place the enforcement section of Ealing Council investigate the infringement and may take enforcement action. This year has seen the removal of inappropriate features in a front garden in Meadvale Road. It seems the issue of the front boundary at the same property is on-going.

What are our current concerns? One is the pressure for large garages, out of scale with the size of the garden and surrounding architecture. Another is the gradual loss of hedged boundaries at the rear of properties. Hedges when properly maintained make a very secure boundary that contributes so much to the green rural character of Brentham. Raymond Unwin, a key figure in the garden suburb movement, who designed the layout of much of Brentham, likened small gardens with fences to 'cattle pens'. Not only is the loss of hedging detrimental to the character of Brentham; it also reduces security. No intruder likes to get through a hedge but fences are easy to scale.

We could do more with more help, particularly to take forward work on our own Design Guide. We are looking for someone with a planning or conservation background and a concern for the protection of Brentham, so if you are that person or know someone who is please talk to us.

I would like to conclude with the words Cllr Gareth Daniel in his introduction to the 1988 Design Guide, 'The layout of the estate comprises houses of different sizes, types, designs and materials set in a leafy, almost rural setting and it is the relationship between these elements which establishes the area's special character. To retain this character we must all be watchful. The conservation section appreciates speedy reports of unauthorised works before it is too late'.

3. Election of Brentham Society Committee 2012-13

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. Richard Costella (Chairman) | 64 Brentham Way |
| 2. David Ballard (Treasurer) | 10 Brentham Way |
| 3. Alan Henderson | 47 Meadvale Road |
| 4. Dave Hobbs | 65 Brentham Way |
| 5. Tony Miller | 6 Winscombe Crescent |
| 6. Heather Moore | 127 Fowlers Walk |
| 7. Martin Mortimore | 54 Fowlers Walk |
| 8. Clive Evans | 50 Denison Road |
| 9. Adel Golding | 23 Brentham Way |

No other nominations for new members had been received.

Richard proposed that unless there were any objections, an en bloc vote should be taken. All were duly elected.

4. Members' Questions/Suggestions

20mph: comment that it hasn't made any difference and is it likely that police will patrol or use a speed gun? Richard highlighted a similar discussion at a Ward Forum had explained that on the whole this limit must be self enforcing as there is no funding to enforce. Richard said that in 6 months the council will do a quick review, and that typically they would only see a 1 or 2 mile an hour difference. Richard also commented that there is a proposal for a traffic island at Pitshanger and Woodfield Road which should hopefully deter heavy goods vehicles.

'Message in a Bottle': Mary Fear Hill was very helpful in highlighting the Lions Club initiative of a 'Message in a Bottle' which is free to anyone interested and were available on the night of the AGM. What is it? - 'It's a simple idea designed to encourage people to keep their basic personal and medical details on a standard form and in a common location – the fridge!'

Brentham Society fundraising : Pat Baxendale asked if there were any plans for the Brentham Society to raise money for the Tower. Richard clarified that there were no plans currently.

5. Garden Awards

Sally Kelly, Nita Davis and Gilda Kelly are judging their final garden awards, and we are very grateful for all their hard work over the years. They had the following view on Estate's gardens this year:

What a very wet summer! The greenery has been magnificent...it is surprising that many of the gardeners managed to have so much colour for us all to appreciate.

Spring bulbs are always good for colour, but later herbaceous plants struggled, firstly in the rain and later in the very hot spells which followed.

But it's always a pleasure to look at the gardens around us in Brentham.
Awards this year go to:

Spring award – 18 Brentham Way

A relaxed spring planting, lots of yellow and lime green leaved shrubs with welsh poppies and bluebells, very fresh and natural looking, a lovely combination of colours and tones

Runners Up: 23 Neville Road, 30 Brunner Road, 1 Neville Road.

Summer award – 91 Fowlers Walk

A delightful small garden with an inviting garden seat and lots of pots bright with colour around the door. A very pleasant spot on a sunny afternoon.

Runners up: 26 Holyoake Walk, 13 Winscombe Crescent, 29 Denison Road

Autumn award – 27 Woodfield Crescent

A small, shady north facing garden, very pretty – excellent use of soft colours. Beautiful begonias and pansies, small well-tended shrubs and ferns all in perfect proportion.

Runners up: 26 Ludlow Road, 28 Winscombe Crescent, 26 Meadvale Road

Rose Bowl – 21 Ludlow Road

A well thought-out, all-year round lovely little garden with planting and many pots showing good colour combinations, as well as the skilfully maintained centrepiece of box hedging enclosing a free-flowering dainty standard rose bush. A joy at any time of year.