

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, 21st October 2014, 8.00 p.m. St. Barnabas Church Hall

Members in attendance: 29 members, plus Committee

Committee members present: Richard Costella (Chair), David Ballard, Alan Henderson, Heather Moore, Martin Mortimore, Tony Miller, Ann Wolf

Apologies: Clive Evans

Also present: Councillor Nigel Sumner

1. Introduction and Welcome.

RC welcomed everyone to the meeting which began with a showing of the film, the Brentham War Diaries introduced by Sue Elliott.

2. Film – Brentham War Diaries

3. Minutes of the 2013 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 duly agreed by a show of hands.

4. Committee Reports

(a) Chair (Richard Costella)

Richard said that it had been a busy year, the main objective being outreach to the community. The main events had been:

- New web site, more user friendly, interactive, allowing contributions from residents. RC thanked Louise Honan for her work on the website.
- Discussion following RC's comments on conservation and where it stops.
- Club/PCA liaison, regular meetings to co-ordinate programmes
- Much more work on digitising the archive – all copies of Brentham News and photos of nearly all the May Queens on web site thanks to Alan Henderson's work.
- Many more street signs in place
- Launching the Tower Restoration appeal. Clive Evans was not in the meeting but gave an update on progress by film.

Another successful year for the regular events in the Brentham calendar: the Strawberry tea – kindly hosted by Barbara Murray, Open house weekend, more than 30 on walk, and Open gardens day – organized by Sheila Fowler. Some Committee members also gave talk to KBR as part of their Conservation week.

In CE's absence RC spoke about the progress of the Tower appeal. He said that it might be possible to get all monies needed from National Lottery, but very competitive, so needed to have a detailed and workable plan to show good outreach. One suggestion which had been made by Pat Baxendale was to run a "Brentham Festival" each year. Possible themes would be:

- An exhibition in the ground floor tower room.
- 1 day hands-on art or drama project for children to be held in the club hall.
- Children's walk around the estate with teachers and educational packs.
- A lecture to be held in the hall.
3 study days to be held in the sports bar with access to the tower archives. Themes for lectures could be
 - Class in the original garden suburb
 - Form of Arts & Crafts architecture
- One event every year on an aspect of planned housing for the disadvantaged.
- Various walks about the estate with opportunities for discussion.

This would obviously involve a lot of organisation so a volunteer would be needed to take this on as a regular annual event.

RC said the Brentham Society had done a number of things over the year. These included:-

- Membership holding up well, more than 50%, higher than last year
- Printed and distributed Brentham News, 3 times per year, now regularly expanded up to 6 pages. RC thanked Michael McCarthy for all his work.
- Open house weekend and several groups have had private walking tours (more booked for next year)
- Updated web site, in blog format so that people are able to comment
- New and refurbished Street signs – originally match funded by BS
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Unfortunately the Subscription Fee of £2 no longer covered the costs of running the Society. There was some sponsorship from Grimshaw Estate Agent but this was not sufficient to cover the cost of producing the Brentham News and it was proposed that the subscription fee should be increased to £5.

This proposition was agreed by a show of hands.

RC said it had been a year of interesting challenges and thanked his colleagues and all those who had contributed to its success. He also thanked the Panel (Pat Baxendale and James Rowlands). RC said the Society was always looking for new blood to join the Committee.

(b) Treasurer's report.

David Ballard said that for the first time the accounts had not been inspected this year. There was no legal requirement to have an audit but he preferred to have this done. He pointed out that the person who audits the accounts does not need to be a qualified accountant. It needs someone who is numerate, intelligent and involves a few hours work. Pat Baxendale felt sure that her husband would be willing to audit the accounts. He would get in touch with DB to arrange this.

DB went on to say accounts very similar to previous year. Society has made a loss, spending each year more than it has received. Last year ITV filming fee boosted funds. Actual subscriptions higher than last year but these still do not cover costs

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Heather Moore gave the following update on planning issues:

It has been another busy year!

Ealing Council continues to notify the Brentham Society about planning applications in the Brentham CA and invites us to comment on the proposal. The Council also notifies the BGECA Advisory Panel, which is set up by the Council to give advice to its officers on conservation in Brentham. As in previous years, the most frequent applications are for extensions and loft conversions, indicative of the need for more living space to cope with the demands of modern life.

The Planning Department of Ealing Council either grants or refuses the application. In the first 6 months of this year we looked at 32 applications of which the Council approved 22 (69%), refused 9 (28%) and 1 was withdrawn. Of those that were refused all but one of the applicants had either not sought advice at the pre-application stage or had chosen not to take account of the advice given. Of those that were approved 13 had sought advice from the Brentham Society Advice Group at the pre-application stage and followed it. So statistically, if you want your application to have a successful outcome, seeking and following advice before making an application makes good sense!

The Brentham Society Advice Group gives advice to residents wanting to make alterations. Most weeks there are requests for pre-application advice. This involves emails, phone calls and site visits to meet residents and

perhaps their architect to discuss what alterations might be possible while preserving the character of the CA and thereby making a positive outcome more likely.

We also receive calls from residents very concerned that the proposed alterations to a neighbouring property will affect their amenity and have a negative impact on their enjoyment of living in Brentham. It's a fine line – one man's meat is another man's poison! Now that most properties are privately owned it's easy to lose sight of Henry Vivian's words, 'Not this house in mine but this estate is ours'.

I have mentioned that most applications are approved but to regard approval as something positive and refusal as something negative can be misleading. Sometimes there is an application that has a potentially damaging effect on the CA. One example was the proposal to build a new house on the site of two garages in Pitshanger Lane. I am not aware of any support for this scheme from Brentham residents. On the contrary opinion was united in regarding the proposal as damaging to the CA and the Council's decision to refuse the two applications was welcomed.

Other examples may be less clear cut. For example, a resident found it hard to understand why his application for a garage on the Green between Ludlow Road and Denison Road was refused when there are other garages nearby. The issue here is one of incremental damage to the character of the CA. If more garages were built the character of the Green as a green open space surrounded largely by hedging would be lost, so the Council conservation officer decided no more garages are to be allowed.

There have been some encouraging developments this year, particularly things that strengthen the green character of Brentham. Some residents have planted new hedges to replace dead or diseased ones and the Council have planted a number of new street trees. There has been a radical clean-up of derelict allotment land between Fowlers Walk and Brentham Way including reinstatement of the hedging. The scheme looks very new and will take a few years to mature.

But as in previous years there are unauthorised developments which threaten the character of the conservation area. We try, via our newsletter, website and Information for Residents Pack, to make it clear to all residents that almost any alteration needs a planning application but still unauthorised work happens. Unauthorised work is investigated by the enforcement section of Ealing Council's Planning Department who may take enforcement action, which can result in costly reinstatement.

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. The newly launched Brentham website has a revamped section on planning which we hope residents are finding useful. Feedback is welcome.

We could do more with more help with our planning and conservation work. We are looking for someone with a planning or conservation background and a real concern for the conservation of Brentham, so if you are that person or know someone who is please talk to me.

I would like to conclude this report in the same way as I did last year, with the timely words of Cllr Gareth Daniel from 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.'*

6. Election of Brentham Committee 2014/15

RC pointed out that this was the end of his third year as Chair and under the Constitution the holding of this position was limited to three years. However as no successor had been found he was willing to continue as "Acting Chair" for another year. He sought the meeting's approval for this, up to a maximum of two years. Proposition agreed by a show of hands.

RC pointed out that Dave Hobbs should not have been included on the Election of Committee sheet as he had stood down the previous year. 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. Tony Miller | 6 Winscombe Crescent |
| 5. Heather Moore | 127 Fowlers Walk |
| 6. Martin Mortimore | 54 Fowlers Walk |
| 7. Clive Evans | 50 Denison Road |
| 8. Ann Wolf | 10 Neville Road |

No other nominations for new members had been received. The Chair proposed that unless there were any objections, an en bloc vote should be taken. All were duly elected.

7. Members' questions

There were no questions from the floor. Ken Butcher thanked the Committee for their efforts during the year.

8. Garden awards 2014

RC thanked Vicky Snodin for organizing this year's garden awards and announced the results which were as follows:

Spring Award

Claire Williams, 99 Fowlers Walk - A lovely woodland garden full of spring flowers beneath a silver birch. The judges thought that this garden was the epitome of a Brentham cottage garden. A delight after the dark winter months.

Runners-Up - 48 Fowler's Walk and 47 Brentham Way

Summer Award

Diana Hill, 10 Winscombe Crescent - This was a very elegant courtyard garden using a mainly white colour scheme, yet it remained true to the style of the house. The judges were very impressed by the balance in the planting scheme and the use of high-quality pots.

However, the resident, Diana Hill, who was unable to attend the meeting, has disclaimed all responsibility for the garden; instead she says that all credit should go to her gardener, Robert Edwards. She says that he has worked very hard to keep both the front and back gardens maintained, particularly during all this wet weather. Having a garden of this size in Central London is always a challenge – with the constant wildlife burrowing in the garden!

Runners-Up - 47 Meadvale Road and 15 Meadvale Road

Autumn Award

Krys Mackersie, 39 Brentham Way - A very well-maintained and neat garden with many attractive plants but the dominating feature was the use of stunning yellow begonias to line the pathway.

Runners-Up - 14 Denison Road and 67 Meadvale Road

ROSEBOWL

Joyce Adefarasin, 57 Meadvale Road - The judges were delighted with this front garden during every season. The design is very attractive with the backbone of lots of evergreens and a curved path. The garden is casual in style with a variety of colourful seasonal plantings yet it is neat and well-maintained. Always a pleasure to look at throughout the seasons.

Congratulations to all the winners.

The meeting was closed at 10.00.