

Brentham Society
Minutes of Annual General Meeting (2017/18)
Tuesday 26th February 2019, 8.00 p.m. Brentham Club

Members in attendance: 60-70 plus Committee

Committee members present: Gina Mallin (Chair), Andy Akerman (Treasurer), Martin Mortimore, Alan Henderson, Richard Costella, Maggie Bukowska*

Apologies: Geoff Baxendale, Clive Evans, Barn Cleave, Jo Bradley*, Mike Gandon*

* co-opted since last AGM

1. Welcome

GM welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Talk by Robert Hewison

Sue Elliott introduced Robert Hewison, a cultural historian and international authority on John Ruskin. Robert told us more about how Ruskin, with William Morris, influenced the houses we live in here in Brentham and the reason why one of our streets Ruskin Gardens is named after him.

It was noted that in 2019, the bicentenary of Ruskin's birth, a number of events are taking place. Further details can be found at www.ruskinto-day.org

3. Front Garden Awards - presented by Robert Hewison

Due to apologies for absence from each of the judges Maggie Bukowska announced the winners of the Garden awards.

Rose Bowl and Spring award – 111 Fowlers Walk, Tony and Hazel Heaven
(accepted on their behalf by Gina Jenkins)

Summer Award – 1 Ruskin Gardens, Colette Donovan

Autumn award – 26 Ludlow Road, Mandy and Peter Walker (unable to be present to receive award)

4. Refreshments

5. Minutes of the 2018 AGM and Matters Arising

The minutes had been distributed to those present and their acceptance as a true record of the meeting was duly agreed by a show of hands. There were no matters arising.

6. Committee Reports

Chair's Report (Gina Mallin)

It has been a busy year again – not only do we manage the higher profile things like planning advice and support, regular productions such as the Brentham NEWS, the Strawberry tea, help with May Day, Open Gardens, public walks and talks, but there have been many other things too.

We had a professionally-run Away Day to consider and confirm our role and purpose for the benefit of all our members and residents, liaised and held a meeting with our street helpers and continued to run the website and maintain the Archive.

There had been 44 planning application during the year of which to-date 34 had been granted, 7 refused and 3 still pending. This demonstrates the usefulness of the pre-planning advice given to assist residents. (A full list of applications can be found on our website)

The biggest and most exciting project we undertook last year was the application for the Civic Voice “England’s Favourite Conservation Area”which put us on the National map !

We submitted a detailed application, were shortlisted and then, after a public vote, placed at 9th! An amazing achievement as we were up against historic towns and villages which had large populations and such publicity as town-criers at their disposal!

Civic Voice is a national organisation which promotes civic pride and the awards were part of their major conference in Birmingham which I attended – the theme was “Conservation AND Regeneration”. The range of speakers was superb – from the former head of the National Trust whose message was “The Fight for Beauty” as a moral imperative, and who outlined the beginnings of creating National Parks, in line with social thinking by Ruskin and other reformers, by taking a small group of MPs after the War to the Peak District and once they’d beheld the natural magnificence, the idea of conservation of nature for all, was born.

They are also concerned with human-scale civic spaces as a public amenity, promoting civic pride in the natural and built environment.

[All of which is part of the ethos for Brentham – this is a liveable conservation area of national importance that has the remarkable gift of conservation regulation in place to protect it and provide beauty for day to day living and for the soul – for this generation and for those who come after us – ever more important in a world where in one generation 90% of children have lost the freedom to roam outdoors and the natural and built environments are easily degraded by those who chase profit over all else].

Another thing that will be putting Brentham in the national awareness was the filming for the Stephen Poliakof BBC drama “Summer of Rockets” due to be transmitted later this year.

The film crew transformed Vivian Green for a few days and cleared the surrounding streets to give period authenticity, and Keeley Hawes was amongst the high-profile cast.

Our ongoing care and maintenance of the local conserved environment made up of our twittens or pathways, backlands and amenity spaces, included 2 cleanups of overgrown and littered pathways – it was a great communal effort.

As part of our remit to help protect the character and charm of Brentham, and to foster community awareness, we are encouraging our younger residents to take an interest in local wildlife and the perfect locale we have here for urban and endangered wildlife - and to give children a voice in the place they live – so we've initiated a children's page in the Brentham NEWS which you'll all have seen, with the lovely contributions by Emmy Azimi and Ellie Golding, which we hope will be the beginning of more involvement by our local children.

May Day was rather wet but the Green Man was well protected with his natural cover. The dancing and crowning of May Queen Grace Connett took place in St Barnabas. Grace's mum Tamzin was pleased not least as she had been May Queen herself!

Open gardens is always a treat with lovely gardens of all shapes and sizes, and last year raised £1,300 in aid of Meadow Hospice. This year the chosen charity will be the Alzheimer's Society and as always is followed by a fabulous afternoon tea.

The Strawberry Tea was another sunny magnificent affair in the glorious garden of Diana Hill and again there was more to encourage children with excellent face painting by Adel Golding. Of course the Tea was attended by our local councillors and our stalwart MP supporters Steve Pound and Rupa Huq.

Thank you's: already mentioned Diana Hill for her beautiful garden venue, Pat Baxendale and Heather Moore for their constant pre-planning advice service, Mike Gandon as on-going membership secretary and the Committee team.

Treasurer's Report (Andy Akerman)

Overall accounts were healthy. Noted the increase in Subscriptions and Donations was due to a £1,000 donation from the film company (mentioned above) for the understanding of those residents who were disrupted, and the decrease in Merchandise sales was because the previous year had seen sales of the new range of tea towels.

7. Election of Committee 2018/19

The BS Constitution allows for between four and nine members and up to four co-opted members. Two members have resigned from this year's Committee – Richard Costella, and Mike Gandon (co-opted during the year). The following members of the previous BS Committee were willing to stand again:

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| Virginia Mallin (Chair) | 66 Fowlers Walk |
| Andy Akerman (Treasurer) | 55 Meadvale Road |
| Geoff Baxendale | 18 Ludlow Road |
| Jo Bradley * | 9 Woodfield Crescent |
| Maggie Bukowska * | 218 Pitshanger Lane |
| Barn Cleave | 31 Denison Road |
| Clive Evans | 50 Denison Road |
| Alan Henderson | 47 Meadvale Road |
| Martin Mortimore | 54 Fowlers Walk |

* co-opted during 2017-18

No nominations for new members had been received. The Chair proposed that unless there were any objections, an en bloc vote should be taken. Their election was proposed by a show of hands.

8. Any Other Business

Tony Miller – highlighted the potential problem as a result of Ealing Council having deleted the post of conservation officer. Someone suggested the possibility of a volunteer undertaking an advice role.

Tony Hursey – highlighted the helpful support of the Brentham Planning Advice Group in his recent planning application.

Holly Smallman – felt that approach of The Brentham Society was much better these days – more relaxed.

Richard Costella – re-iterated the Committee’s position in not opposing double glazing if plans were submitted with recommended specification.

Carol Hegarty / Tony Hursey – concerned about the difficulty of getting alleyways gated. Tony said he believed that the BS was opposed to gating. The Chair said the problem is that gating alters the overall access across Brentham, to the backlands and open spaces, which are an integral part of the Conservation Article 4 Designation. It was agreed that the previously-mooted working group will be arranged to discuss a way forward.

Holly Smallman – asked if residents would be willing to sweep leaves off the road (if bags could be provided) to avoid blocking drains as Council cut backs have reduced this activity.

The meeting was closed at 10.10 p.m.