



The Barnet Society

Campaigning for a better Barnet

ANNUAL REPORT

2012



Wood Street junction – railings removed.

THE BARNET SOCIETY

(Affiliated to the London Forum, the London Green Belt Council,
and the Open Spaces Society)

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2011-2012

President: Mr Aubrey Rose, CBE

Vice-presidents

Mr R.Marson
Mr David Lee

Dr J. Remfry

Life Members

Mr A Neville

Mrs M Howells

Committee

Mrs. Judith Clouston
Mrs. Gail Laser
Mrs. Becky Glenister
Mrs. Penny Dye

(Chairman)
(Vice Chairman)
(Hon Secretary)
(Treasurer)

Mr. Dennis Bird
Mr. John Gardiner
Mr Derek Epstein
Mr Peter Willcocks
Ms Mary Rossiter

(until 2014)
(until 2013)
(until 2013)
(until 2013)
(Minute Secretary; until 2014)

Honorary Secretary

Mrs. Becky Glenister

Honorary Treasurer

Mrs. Penny Dye, 10 Salisbury Road, Barnet, EN5 4JP

Independent Examiner

Mr. Peter Mellows.

Honorary Membership Secretary

Mr. John Gardiner, 66 Trafford Road, Barnet, EN5 4LR

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 67th
Annual General Meeting of The Barnet Society
will be held at
7:30 p.m. on Thursday 21st June 2012 at
Pennefather Hall, Christ Church, St Albans Road, Barnet, EN5 4LA
for the transaction of the following business:

1. To confirm the minutes of the 66th AGM held on 16th June 2011. (see page 15)
2. To receive and adopt (if approved) the 67th Annual Report.
3. To receive and adopt (if approved) the Chairman's Report. (see page 4)
4. To receive and adopt (if approved) the Hon Treasurer's Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012 (see page 13).
5. To receive a report from the Planning & Environment Subcommittee (see page 9)
6. The committee proposes the following changes to the constitution:

Clause to be added:

3.3 Any local organisation resident in Chipping Barnet can also become a member of the Society.

Clauses to be amended:

4.3 There shall be three classes of subscription, one for individuals, one for family membership and one for organisations. Life Members and the Presidency are exempt.

5.1 An Annual General Meeting shall be held in or about the month of June in each year. At least fourteen days' notice shall be given to Members.

7. To elect the Officers for the ensuing year.
8. To elect members to serve on the committee.
9. Any other business. Members are very welcome to raise points from the floor but are asked to speak to the Chairman beforehand.

Followed by an address by Dr Gillian Gear on "Barnet Museum – past present and future."

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Barnet Society has had another busy and challenging twelve months and we've certainly had our highs and lows. Firstly, our hopes of a planning refusal for the extension of planning consent for the redevelopment of Barnet Market site were dashed. Then there was the marvellous news that our bid for Outer London Fund (OLF) cash had been successful. The Council prepared draft planning briefs for the Spires Shopping Centre and Market Site and for the TA Centre (but these never moved beyond draft stage). We became very frustrated by the slow start to the OLF-funded public realm improvements for the town centre. We submitted our comments on the draft NPPF to the Government (asking for significant changes). OLF money enhanced the annual Christmas Fayre and funded initiatives around the town centre. Preferred development partners were selected for the redevelopment of the Dollis Valley Estate. On Christmas Eve we heard that UBS had bought Barnet Market site from the previous owners. The Council promised us a workshop regarding the redesign of the two main High Street road junctions (Wood Street and St Albans Road) which never materialised. Detailed planning consent was granted for the new children's hospice and environment centre on the edge of the Green Belt (currently Barnet Countryside Centre). St John the Baptist churchyard improvements finally received planning consent (but works did not begin as scheduled and will not be finished before the end of May even though all the OLF money was supposed to have been spent by the end of March!). We were told by Barnet that we could not apply for OLF Round 2 money. De-cluttering works took place in the High Street but far fewer trees than we had hoped have been planted and some works were cancelled completely. The Localism Bill was given Royal Assent and we have started working with other groups on establishing a Neighbourhood Planning Forum. A Draft Planning Framework for The Spires, Barnet Market and the TA Centre site was published for public consultation. UBS has just begun to consult with local groups regarding its redevelopment plans for The Spires and its first planning application has been made. And, in the last week, there has been a public consultation on the proposed redevelopment of the Dollis Valley estate.

Although many of the above developments have been 'on the cards' for some time, we are finally beginning to see proposals emerge. These are significant schemes and will potentially have a big impact on our town centre and Underhill. We need to work closely with the developers and the Council to ensure we get the best we can for Barnet. It is early days for The Spires, but what we have seen so far appears to be leading in a positive direction. At Dollis Valley, we are pleased to see that the developers have engaged well-

respected architects to design the new housing and note that, although still achieving reasonably high densities, the proposals are mostly for 2 and 3 storey buildings (with some 4 and 5 storey for apartments). The masterplan aims to re-connect the area with its surroundings – *‘physically, socially and environmentally’* – adding two new road connections, a mix of tenures (affordable and private sale) and making the new buildings highly energy-efficient. This time, we trust, the developers will be able to work successfully with the Council to deliver the quality scheme this much-neglected neighbourhood has long hoped for. The signs so far are that it will. We must remain vigilant, of course, regarding other potential development sites in and around the town centre that may become available in the near future: the TA Centre site (which is covered by the draft Planning Framework), several sites belonging to local NHS Trusts that are long overdue for redevelopment (and are currently a blight on our neighbourhood) and there is still a question regarding the future of Barnet FC and whether it will be staying here.

One of the major issues that continued to concern us over the last twelve months has been the future of Barnet Market. After the disappointment of an extension being granted to the previous planning consent in July (against our better judgement) and an Autumn of no change, the owners of The Spires surprised everyone by buying the site from the Walshes just before Christmas. We made our views regarding the importance of the continuation of the market known to UBS as soon as possible. They responded positively, but with little detail, until recently. In the last few weeks we were told of the appointment of a company that specialises in *‘design and business planning advice for market owners, operators, traders and developers.’* They *‘undertake ‘best value’ reviews and planning for market authorities and offer a full marketing and strategic development service to all market businesses.’* They have been charged with studying the present market site, facilities (or lack of), other local markets, community aspirations etc and to come up with an appraisal and business plan for the improvement and upgrade of Barnet Market. We were invited to a meeting with them, UBS, Savills (UBS’s agents), our MP, the Leader of the Council, local Councillors, senior planning officers and other residents’ groups. At this meeting, we hammered home a three-part message from Friends of Barnet Market: to urgently re-surface, to provide a permanent home for the market in any new plans and to increase ‘connectivity’ to the High Street and The Spires. We await further developments and hope to be able to give more details at the AGM.

The reason for the above initiative is that UBS are finally beginning to make planning applications for improvements to The Spires. No one can have failed to notice the increasing number of empty shops within the Centre and the

dampening effect this has on shoppers and other retail outlets. We have known for some time that UBS wanted to make a number of larger units to attract some of the better known High Street chains as ‘anchor stores’. Derek Epstein’s report below provides more detail.

Whilst all this has been happening, of course, we have been pursuing the need for a town centre strategy and whilst the latest attempt at providing planning briefs for the key town centre sites was also abandoned by the Council, Barnet finally came forward with a Draft Planning Framework for the Spires, Barnet Market and TA Site. The Framework will ‘*provide detailed guidance to manage future development and other improvements to the town centre to ensure long term vitality and viability.*’ As I write, the six-week public consultation period for the draft document has just come to an end and after submitting our detailed comments, we await the final version, which should be adopted by the Council by the summer. This will not replace the need for a town centre strategy, as it only covers the immediate areas mentioned above, and ideally it should have been produced a long time before the Spires planning applications started coming in, but it is better than nothing. We will continue to pursue the need for the broader strategy.

The new National Planning Policy Framework has been published and will affect us all. Derek Epstein covers this in his report. Under the new Localism Bill, local communities such as ours are able to set up neighbourhood planning forums to draw up planning policy for their area, as long as it does not conflict with the Local Authority’s Local Plan and National, or GLA, policy. Much of the activity that The Barnet Society has initiated and been involved in over the last few years with other local groups has been in line with the new philosophy and we generally support the idea. However, and it’s a big however, no one knows how this will work in practice. The development of planning policy is a highly specialised and complex process and, without adequate resources (such as senior planners’ time), it is difficult to see how such a thing can be pulled off. We are willing to give it a try and tentative moves have been made to start the process. We will keep you informed of progress.

Derek Epstein also gives an update on the OLF below. We are delighted (finally) to see new trees in our High Street, even if far fewer and more spread out than we were hoping for. The de-cluttering has made a difference and there should be some additional benches by the time you read this. We have to say that we were not given any say in the location or type of new bins and as they were installed in the same places as the old ones they appear to have been scattered at random, undoing some of the effect of the de-cluttering. The biggest impact is likely to be the re-vamped churchyard which, although far

from finished as I write, is due to provide a much more attractive and usable public open space. We will have to hope for some sunny weather to encourage a pavement café to use the space to help enliven this end of the High Street. We were planning to hold an event in the new churchyard to mark the Queen's Jubilee weekend, but have had to cancel it due to the long-delayed completion. What a shame.

I'm surprised and frustrated to have to report that little appears to have changed in a year regarding the future of Barnet Museum. In spite of the Museum having produced a Business Plan, held a number of meetings and had numerous correspondences with the Council, they are still very much in the dark regarding their status. The Council still say they want to charge the Museum a commercial rent, but have not said what they think that is. I'm delighted that the Museum's Curator, Dr Gillian Gear, has agreed to be the speaker at this year's AGM, so she will be able to give us the latest news and you can ask her questions. We will, of course, continue to support the Museum and campaign to keep this valuable local resource here in Wood Street.

I would like to thank all our Committee members for their contributions over the last twelve months. I'd particularly like to mention Dennis Bird, who has decided to stand down after many years contributing to the work of the Society and who organised many of our Events. Unfortunately we have also lost our Hon Secretary, Becky Glenister, over the last few months. We'd like to thank them both for their input and wish them the best. The remaining Committee members and Officers continue to provide invaluable input and energy, and I'm sure you'd wish me to extend appreciation for all they do. I would also like to thank our regular band of volunteers who help out in numerous ways - we are extremely grateful for their continued input. We are always on the look-out for new people to get more involved in any way they feel they can, so if you'd like to, please let me know at the AGM or by e-mailing me at: chairman@barnetsociety.org.uk

The last twelve months have proved to be busy and by degrees, challenging, frustrating and rewarding. The next twelve months could be even more interesting.

JUDITH CLOUSTON, Chair



“Cover” shop before,



and after



“Flairline” shop before,



and after



Paper shop before,



and after

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

We welcome the following new members to the Barnet Society and would encourage them to participate in our activities as fully as they feel able:

Mr and Mrs J Merron, Mr and Mrs B Mackie, Mr P Woodhams, Ms K Garland, Ms A Lefteni, Miss J Bennett, Mr and Mrs C White, Mr D Poole, Mr and Mrs K Rowland, Mr D Parry, Ms S Sullivan, Mr and Mrs D Mackenzie, Mrs J Treschi, Mr and Mrs G Breskal, Mr S Bairfelt, Mr and Mrs M Deacon, Mrs J Haw, Ms J Broadhurst, Mrs H Storey, Mr M Bye

With this copy of the Annual Report you should have received a membership renewal document, and for those who have not yet chosen to pay the annual subscription by standing order, a form to do so. However you pay, and if as a recently joined member you will have nothing to pay this year, please check that your details are correct and up to date before returning the membership document to me. We have remembered to leave the delivery envelope unsealed this time, so do save paper and use it to send in the form and any payment requested.

JOHN GARDINER

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT REPORT

With all the frustrations and set-backs experienced by those of us actively working in The Barnet Society and the Town Team, it is necessary to remind ourselves that a lot has actually been achieved over the last twelve months, both in terms of improving the appearance of our town centre and its future planning.

Winning £417,000 last summer from the Mayor of London for improvements to the town centre and support for local businesses was a major coup. Chipping Barnet was one of only thirty places that secured a grant from the Mayor's Outer London Fund out of seventy that applied. Some of the money was used for a Christmas events programme and marketing support for two dozen local traders but the majority has been spent on physical improvements to our town centre which will leave a lasting legacy.

The removal of the ugly pedestrian guard railings around the pavements at the Wood Street and St Albans Road junctions has made a huge difference, making these spaces feel open and spacious - less like prisons! The complete re-lay of the pavements from Fitzjohn Avenue, all the way up to and into Wood Street has given that stretch a much fresher appearance. Twelve trees

planted in the southern section of the High Street, seven in the stretch north of St Albans Road and two in Wood Street will create a softer appearance; it's just a shame that no space was found to plant trees in the central section of the High Street. Two dozen hanging basket brackets have been affixed to lamp columns, allowing the separate hanging basket posts to be removed – same number of baskets, more widely spread and less street clutter. The flower baskets will go up in May together with flower troughs on the retained railings around the pedestrian island opposite the police station. A few new benches are to be installed along the High Street and some existing ones refurbished. Six shopfronts have received much-needed makeovers – three facing the end of St. Albans Road, two in the Grade II listed building just south of The Bull, and Café Pacino in Church Passage. Several of those have had new traditional-style awnings installed. The hope is that these will serve as exemplars, demonstrating to others what can be done to create a tasteful traditional appearance at relatively modest cost.

The biggest project is the remodelling of the churchyard garden of St John the Baptist Church, creating a much more accessible and visible public space for the enjoyment of residents, shoppers and visitors. Tree works and removal of hedges have already created a more open appearance, giving a taste of what is to come.

But it has all been far from plain sailing. All of the work was supposed to have been completed by the end of March. Because of various delays by the Council, completing the churchyard works by then became an impossibility and the GLA was obliged to grant an extension to the end of April. Further muddles led to a two-week delay in the start on site and work seems to be proceeding painfully slowly, so we reckon we will be lucky to see the works completed before the end of May. The removal of the old green equipment box at the High Street end of Church Passage will be even later since negotiations with UK Power Networks were begun far too late by the Council. The planned 'civic boards' and replacement street name signs referred to in my last report have had to be scrapped because of an over-run in the cost of the churchyard works. At the time of writing (early May), the benches are still awaited. And the cheap and nasty hanging basket brackets that have appeared on lamp columns are certainly not those that the joint Council/Town Team Steering Group specified and are going to have to be replaced.

As for future planning, similarly, this has suffered frustrations but also enjoyed some progress. Permission for the demolition of the Barnet Court House, on the corner of Normandy Avenue, and its replacement by an over-large and bland 3-4 storey block of flats above shops was refused by the

Council. The applicants appealed but the appeal was dismissed, the inspector writing “The proposal makes no pretence to reflect the predominant building form or roofscape in the vicinity of the junction, which is characterised by tiled hipped roofs, small gables and dormers. The rendered finish would also contrast with the prevalent facing brickwork. The hipped roofs of nearby buildings have the effect of reducing their massing and dominance. The cuboid form of the appeal building, the dominating stairway and lift shaft, and the contrasting facing materials would create an impression of excessive scale, bulk and prominence on this sensitive corner.” We wait to see what the owners will come up with next.

At long last, after years of false starts, developers have been chosen for the redevelopment of the Dollis Valley estate and work on phase 1 (on the site of the disused school) is expected to start next year. The overall development will be in five phases, spread over a period of about five years. There will eventually be over 600 new homes of which “up to” 386 will be for sale, including intermediate sale, and “at least” 230 rented. The development is predominantly 2- and 3-storey with a few 4- and 5-storey blocks of flats. Half of the dwellings will be traditional houses. Two new vehicular accesses from Mays Lane will help to better integrate the estate into the surrounding area. There will be new “parks” (says the PR material - i.e. some garden squares) and the developers, L&Q and Countryside Properties, have dubbed the development “the Smart Garden Suburb”! It is a relief that the development will be less dense than was once contemplated by the Council.

Plans for redevelopment and expansion of The Spires are also emerging. A planning application has been submitted for substantial alterations to the High Street frontage. The recently-closed WH Smith unit is to be combined with the disused gym on the first floor to create a new large ‘anchor’ store for a fashion retailer. The columns and arches are to be removed from the entrance which, together with improved lighting within the mall, will present a much more inviting entrance from the High Street. At first floor level, some of the brick pilasters will be removed to create large display windows. A draft masterplan for further development has been shown to local stakeholder groups. The proposals are at a very early stage but an almost complete phased redevelopment is in contemplation, to provide a number of large stores, with retail space on two and sometime three levels. Waitrose might be expanded onto the bandstand area and into the service area, but all of this is tentative at this stage. A key aspiration is a new retail link through to Barnet Market which would create, at last, the Spires-Market-High St “retail triangle” that we have been advocating for so long. All of this is subject to planning consent and further consultation in due course, but as a general vision and objective it

must have our strong support. Key to the scheme's success (and indeed to its implementation) will be success in attracting 'big name' stores to occupy the larger units. It will be a 3- to 5-year development programme that we will monitor carefully, but seems to be heading in the right general direction.

Much has happened in the last twelve months in terms of strategic planning. The Localism Act received Royal Assent last November, introducing many changes including the possible preparation and adoption of Neighbourhood Plans, prepared by local stakeholders constituted as a Neighbourhood Forum. The draft National Planning Policy Framework, published last summer produced a storm of controversy. The final version, published in March, addressed some of the concerns that we expressed to the government (and which Theresa Villiers brought to the minister's attention on our behalf) although we cannot claim sole credit since the DCLG received around 3,426 responses! The worst deficiencies have been rectified by reinstating a presumption in favour of developing 'brown field' (previously developed) land and presumption in favour of town centre over out-of-town development. The countryside, not just the Green Belt and national parks, is now recognised as being worthy of protection. The worrying statement that developments contrary to an approved plan must be approved "*unless the adverse impacts of allowing development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits*" has been removed. Nevertheless, the reduction of over 1,000 pages of detailed planning policies to just fifty is thought by us, and by many commenters, likely to provide a field day for planning lawyers. Rumour has it that the government realises this and is planning to re-publish much of the old material as guidance notes.

In parallel with all of this, Barnet's Core Strategy and Development Management Policies documents have been going through the necessary approval process, involving an Examination in Public before an inspector. The publication of the NPPF has now required a further round of amendments and consultation, but these are mostly minor consequential changes such as the deletion of references to the old planning policy documents and the renaming of the LDF as the "Local Plan". The "presumption in favour of sustainable development" is now incorporated. The Core Strategy states "Planning applications that accord with policies in Barnet's Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.... Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the council will grant permission ... granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole."

So much is changing, not least the One Barnet plan to outsource the borough's entire planning control function. It is hard to keep up!

DEREK EPSTEIN



A sketch of the possible Dollis Valley redevelopment.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The subscriptions were raised last year and the amount collected during the year reflects this, rather than any increase in membership. Although we have had some new members this year we have also lost a similar number.

The expenditure this year has increased significantly as we have been able to support other activities in Barnet including sponsoring the Circus Skills workshop during the Christmas Fayre at a cost of £600 and also sponsoring the Spring concert at a cost of £300. We also had an advertising leaflet drop which cost £639. All other expenditure is similar to last year.

The net result this year is a loss of £97.81, making the total funds £6,749.93. The accounts have been examined by Mr Peter Mellows and a copy of his report will be available at the AGM

I will be at the A.G.M. and I am prepared to stand for Treasurer again for the coming year.

PENNY DYE

**BARNET SOCIETY
TREASURER'S REPORT
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
For the Year ended 31st March 2012**

Year to 31st March 2011		Year to 31st March 2012
	INCOMING RESOURCES	
2,361.00	Subscriptions	3,562.50
32.00	Sales	32.00
5.00	Bank Interest	4.75
<u>2,398.00</u>	Total Incoming Resources	<u>3,599.25</u>
	RESOURCES EXPENDED	
1,207.80	News letter printing & expenses	1,171.11
0.00	Leaflets	659.00
369.30	Website	59.99
0.00	Poster and Notice Board	<u>320.00</u>
1,577.10		2,210.10
<u>437.08</u>	Lectures & Activities	<u>320.58</u>
2,014.18		- 2,530.68
172.00	Affiliations to Other Associations & Societies	55.00
74.25	Stationery, Postage, Phone & Other Administration	48.20
184.95	Other Activities including AGM costs	1,063.18
184.95	AGM costs	81.72
0.00	Sponsor circus Skills	600.00
0.00	Xmas Stall	81.46
0.00	Sponsorship for concert	300.00
<u>2,445.38</u>	Total Resources expended	<u>3,697.06</u>
<u>(47.38)</u>	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) for the year/period	<u>(97.81)</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st March 2012

	ASSETS	
6,727.98	HSBC Deposit Account	6,488.73
107.76	HSBC Current Account	119.20
57.00	Prepayments	150.00
(45.00)	Less Creditors	(8.00)
<u>6,847.74</u>		<u>6,749.93</u>
	FUNDS	
6,895.12	Opening Balance at 1st April 2010	6,847.74
(47.38)	Current Surplus/(Deficit) for the year to date	(97.81)
<u>6,847.74</u>		<u>6,749.93</u>

**Minutes of the 66th Annual General Meeting of The Barnet Society
held in Pennefather Hall, St Alban's Road on Thursday 16th June 2011**

Present

Mr Aubrey Rose	President
Dr Jenny Remfry	Vice President
Mr Robin Marson	Vice President
Mr David Lee	Vice President
Mrs Judith Clouston	Chairman
Mrs Gail Laser	Vice Chairman
Mrs Becky Glenister	Hon. Secretary
Mrs Penny Dye	Hon. Treasurer
Mr Dennis Bird	Co-opted
Mr Derek Epstein	Planning & Environment
Mr John Gardiner	Membership Secretary
Mr Peter Willcocks	Newsletter
Dr Mary Rossiter	Minutes Secretary, co-opted

There were also some 27 of the Society present.

Apologies for Absence: Sir Michael and Lady Franklin, Mr and Mrs C Smith, Mr and Mrs A J Williams, Mrs Anna Batchelor, Mrs Sue Bird, Mr Chris Nightingale.

President's welcome

Mr Aubrey Rose, welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting and thanked the Committee and Officers for injecting a burst of energy, vision and sense of purpose into the Society. Our Society had an important part to play in the area in relation to Barnet Council and other bodies.

He reminded the audience of the pleasure of living in Barnet, with its rich history, and particularly commended the voluntary work done in Barnet including the help for the disadvantaged and others in need of help.

1. Minutes of the 65th AGM

The minutes of the 65th AGM, held on 17th June 2010 were amended – Dr J Remfry's name was misspelled. Otherwise the minutes were agreed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

Proposed Derek Bird, Seconded Patrick Gaskell-Taylor

2. 66th Annual Report

The 66th Annual Report was particularly commended by Aubrey Rose and was received and adopted by all present. There were no comments

Proposed Barbara Rossiter, Seconded Valerie Napier

3. Hon. Secretary's Report

The report was received and adopted by all present. There were no comments.

Proposed Robin Marston, Seconded Sue Blain

4. Hon. Treasurer's Report

Penny Dye referred to her report and accounts in the Annual Report. The accounts had been approved by the Independent Examiner Peter Mellows. Penny Dye again thanked him and commended his re-election as Independent Examiner.

She discussed the increase in the Annual Subscription due partly to a reduced number of Society members. The report was approved and adopted by all present

Proposed Margaret Chatwood, Seconded Peter Willcocks

5. Increase in membership fee.

A motion had been proposed by the committee to increase membership fees to £8 (single membership) and £12 (family membership). This had been explained under item 4. A member of the audience commented that the increase was very modest and was less than inflation.

The motion was approved by all present,

Proposed Penny Dye, Seconded Denis Bird

6. Hon. Membership Secretary's Report

There are now about 480 members, 350 households. Some 30 people have been removed from the list because of non-payment. He thanked those who had added a little extra to their subscriptions in spite of the new higher rate.

About 20% of people had opted to pay by Standing Order. He thanked Penny Dye and Derek Bird for advice and IT support, also David Ely again for helping with the collation and distribution of the newsletters

He was planning a recruitment campaign in the autumn and asked for help in distributing leaflets.

7. Report from Planning & Environment Subcommittee

Derek Epstein referred to his entry in the Annual Report.

The approval given by Barnet Council to the application by Ravenscroft School to annex and enclose a prominent section of the Dollis Valley open space had demonstrated the problems of challenging a Council applying for consent from itself.

An application has been made to demolish and redevelop the Court House on the corner of Normandy Avenue. Since the current application is blatantly in contravention of the pre-application advice given to the applicants, it is almost certain that it will be refused on design grounds. The big question remains whether the Court House can be saved. Although its current derelict condition masks its character, it is worth saving and we will join others in the fight for the Court House to be retained.

The normal problems in progressing anything with the Council have been exacerbated recently by the constantly repeated mantra "there is no money".

Esther Kurland from the floor commented that the government's "sustainable development" policy, confirmed in an announcement this week, means that Local Authorities are being instructed to apply a presumption in favour of always granting planning permission for development.

The report was accepted. Aubrey Rose thanked Derek for all his hard work and referred the audience to the verse on p17 of the February Newsletter.

8. Election of Honorary Officers.

Judith Clouston took the chair to propose Aubrey Rose as President for a further year, seconded by David Lee. This was approved by all and Mr Rose resumed chairing the meeting.

All the present Officers were re-elected for another year.

9. Election of Committee Members

All the present Committee were re-elected for another year.

Peter Mellows was re-elected as Independent Examiner.

Proposed Judith Clouston, Seconded Gail Laser

10. Any other business

- (i) Owen Jones gave details of a concert on 22.6.11 and a walk led by him on 12.7.11
- (ii) Judith Clouston reminded members of the 10-day Barnet Summer Festival starting 17.6.11 including a walk led by Denis Bird on 19.6.11 and a picnic on Hadley Green on 26.6.11
- (iii) Judith Clouston reminded members about the Barnet Society Garden Party c/o Barbara Rossiter on 10.9.11: details in the next newsletter.
- (iv) Aubrey Rose congratulated the Barnet Society on the creation of the Website.

11 Presentations

i. Judith Clouston (Chair, Barnet Society):

Judith explained that this year we had no speaker but instead she would review what has happened and what was happening in Barnet. These topics covered our current campaigns and live issues.

Rebranding

We had re-branded our image and introduced our new strap-line, 'Campaigning for a better Barnet'. The website had been re-vamped, with many thanks to Martin Standley, with the principal aim of attracting new members.

Chipping Barnet Town Centre Strategy Board.

This had started well in 2010 with many meetings and discussions, during which most of those involved had been able to achieve a remarkable degree of unanimity but no

strategy document was produced. Towards the end of last year, the Board was told the whole exercise was to be put on hold whilst the Council appraised the likely impact of the Localism Bill

We have been assured that there will be Planning Briefs for the key sites such as The Spires and the TA Centre. However, we also need them for other sites such as St Martha's convent Union Street and Marie Foster Home in Wood Street

The whole point of the strategy was that the town centre should be looked at as a whole, not as a series of individual plots.

The group that comprised TCS Board agreed that it would become a Neighbourhood Planning Forum and had informed the Council of this intention

Barnet Market.

After months of speculation, the owners finally made an application to extend the time to implement their 2005 planning consent in September last year. Consent ran out in November. They finally produced the long-awaited additional information.

The redevelopment of the market site should be seen in the context of the whole town centre, not as an isolated site. The Town Centre Strategy Board would, ideally, like to see the market moved back to the heart of the town or, at the very least, linked into it.

Barnet Museum.

We are fully behind the campaign to save our local museum and have written to strongly support it. Barnet's consultation was token as decisions had already been made.

The museum now needs to have an accountable Board which we have been asked to join.

Barnet Council Cabinet

The new leader, Councillor Richard Cornelius, was previously a Cabinet Member for Planning & Environment.

The new Cabinet Member for Planning is Joanna Tambourides (East Barnet Ward Member)

David Longstaff is promoted to the Cabinet as Member for Safety & Resident Engagement, Joanna's previous portfolio

Stewart Murray is leaving the Council this week and his post is being combined with Environment & Operations.

Pam Wharfe will be Acting Director for the foreseeable future.

ii. Gail Laser (Vice-chair Barnet Society and Chair of the Barnet Traders Association):

The Barnet Traders Association is composed of High Street traders, other local stake holders and the Council (represented by Hemant Amin - Business Development Officer.) It now has a formal Constitution and the Executive Committee (EC), elected by the traders, meets with the traders monthly at Barnet College. Gail Laser was elected as Chair and Jo Vargas as Hon Secretary. Barnet College has signed up which is significant as they are the second largest employer in the borough.

The first High Barnet Lottery has been created and tickets are on sale. The EC wants to encourage a relationship with the football club.

A Mayors Bid application is taking shape with the hope of securing money for things like signposting, de-cluttering of High Street plant troughs on railings, improving the St John's Church garden, some new shop fronts. The bid has to be in by July 18th with any work carried out before end March 2012. There is a Mayors Bid Team and Hemant supports the application. Barnet Council will be placing the bid. They believe that High Barnet has a very good chance of winning a share of the money.

Parking: Gail constantly raises the issue of cost, parking meters, residents permits, pay by phone etc at Council meetings and will continue to do so. This sparked a heated, slightly controversial debate, with Angela Ratcliffe suggesting a drive-in (as opposed to a sit-in) in the High Street.

12. Question and Answer session

Issues discussed were Parking, Redevelopment and the Spires, Support by Politicians etc, Protest

There was discussion about ways to have our voice heard. It was felt that only lip service is paid to "Localism".

13 Finally

Aubrey Rose thanked all for their enthusiasm and positive approach.

After a round of applause, the meeting concluded at 9.30pm in time for refreshments and chat.



Pacino Restaurant awning with churchyard works.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**THURSDAY 21ST JUNE 2012: Annual General Meeting. 7:30 p.m. at
Pennefather Hall, Christ Church, St Albans Road, Barnet, EN5 4LA**

TUESDAY 26th JUNE 2012 10.00am

A Walk in the Wildhill Area

A walk of about 4 miles in the countryside south west of Essendon with a mixture of woodland and undulating farmland. We will pass by Camfield Place, once the home of such literary figures as Beatrix Potter and Barbara Cartland.

The walk will start at The Woodman Pub in Wildhill and drivers are asked to leave their cars at the top of the car park.

Wildhill is most easily reached by going through Potters Bar from Barnet then continuing along the Hatfield road. Take the B 158 on the right towards Essendon and then the second on the left to Wildhill.

The Woodman is a Mecca for real ale lovers and offers good basic pub grub with a pleasant garden if the weather is fine.

If you need a lift, or can offer one, then please contact Owen: 020 8440 7550.

CONTACTS

Chair	Judith Clouston	chairman@barnetsociety.org.uk	
Editor	Peter Willcocks	editor@barnetsociety.org.uk	8449 6153
Hon Secretary		secretary@barnetsociety.org.uk	
Membership Sec	John Gardiner	membership@barnetsociety.org.uk	
Planning	Derek Epstein	planning@barnetsociety.org.uk	8275 0976
Website	www.barnetsociety.org.uk		