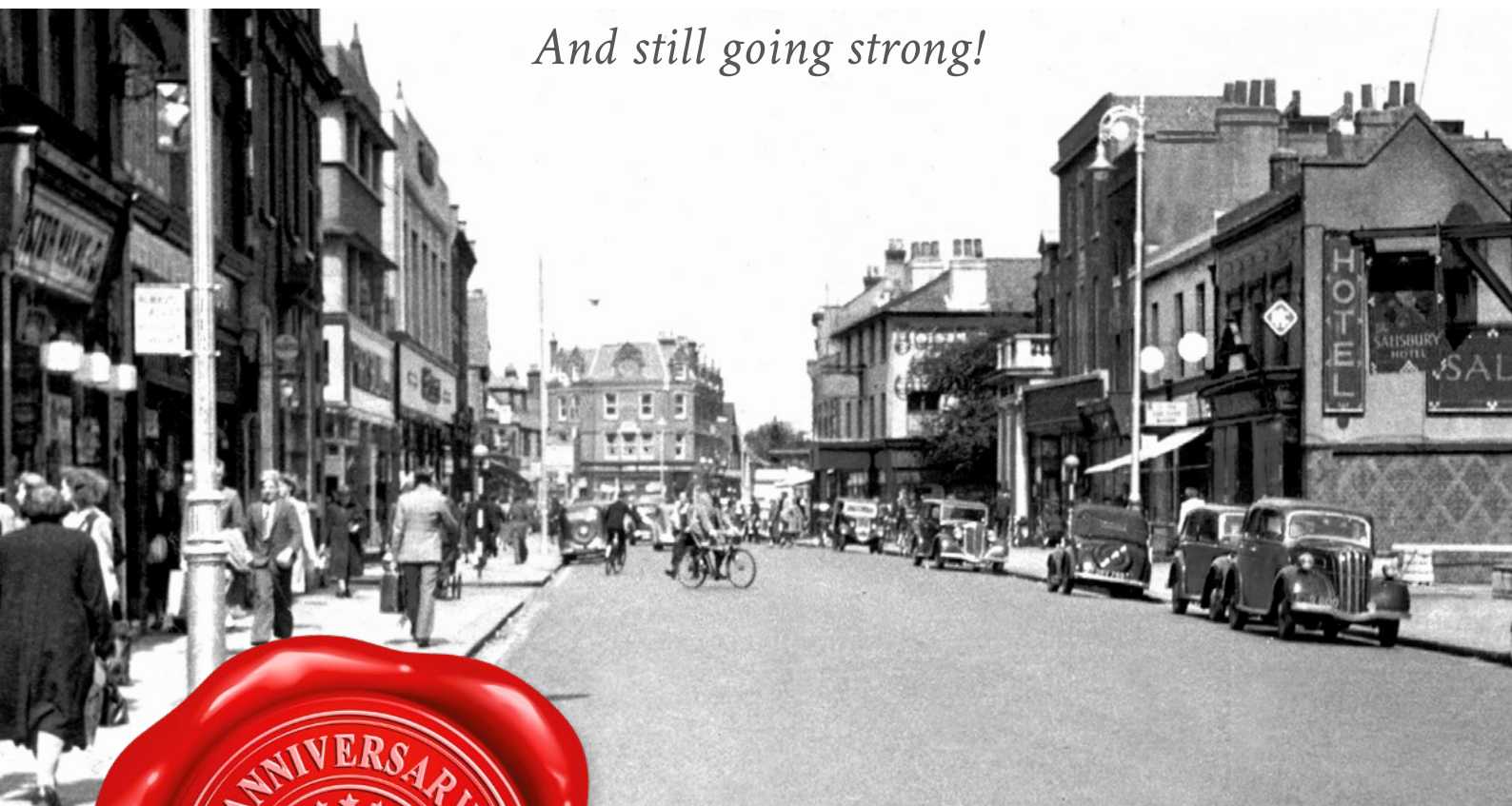


The Barnet Society

SUMMER 2025 | £2 (WHEN SOLD)

WE'RE 80!

And still going strong!



Above: Barnet High Street, 1940s

The Barnet Society has marked its 80th anniversary at a crucial time as it faces government efforts to house build on Green Belt land.

Mooted construction on Barnet's Green Belt continues to face strong opposition from the Society, which reiterated its founding aim to prevent "indiscriminate development".

Dan Tomlinson, MP for Chipping Barnet, an area surrounded on three sides by Green Belt, and Dame Theresa Villiers, the town's

former MP, commended the society's endeavours on its 80th birthday.

This comes as Sir Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, considers house building on the Green Belt and releasing grey belt - low-quality or neglected Green Belt land - for development.

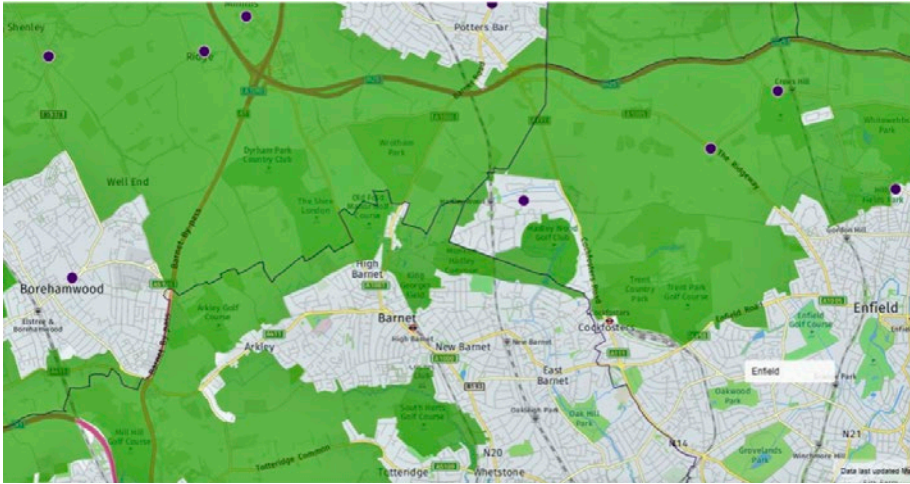
Frances Wilson, Barnet Society immediate past chair, warned of an "even greater threat today" from when the group was formed in 1945 just before VE Day.

"We still object to many proposals to build on the green belt," she said. "[Mr]

Continued on Page 2

AGM, 7pm, Thursday, June 19, Pennefather Hall, St Albans Road, Barnet EN5 4LA

Barnet Society



‘We all benefit when local institutions like the Barnet Society hold power to account, give residents a voice and foster a sense of community’

– Dan Tomlinson, MP, Chipping Barnet

Continued from Page 1

Khan is exploring the possibility of housing in the Green Belt, so there is an even greater threat today.”

The Barnet Society was founded on May 2, 1945 in response to fears that the home counties would face over-development amid a postwar construction boom.

Today, the Society continues to protect its land and communities, its efforts recognised by the area’s past and present politicians.

Mr Tomlinson said: “We all benefit when local institutions like the Barnet Society hold power to account, give residents a voice and foster a sense of community.”

He was joined in praise by Dame Theresa: “The Barnet Society has done excellent work on protecting the character of Barnet and its green and leafy environment.

“We should all be deeply grateful for their efforts,” she added.

In the 1920s and 30s, London experienced significant growth. Underground stations, houses and shopping parades sprawled over towns and villages surrounding the capital.

After World War II, Barnet

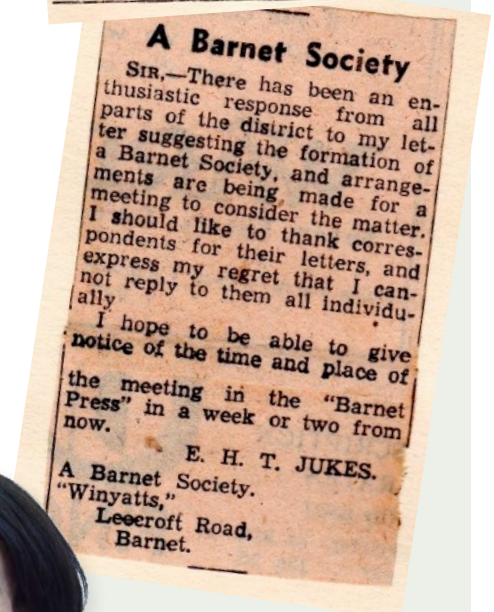
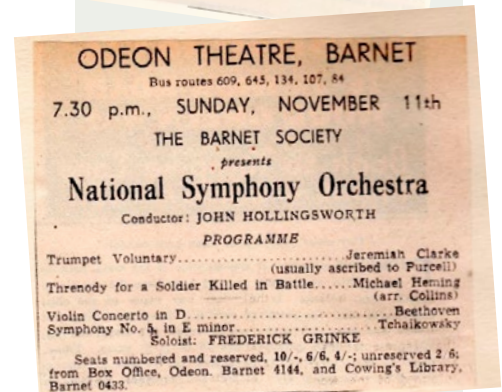
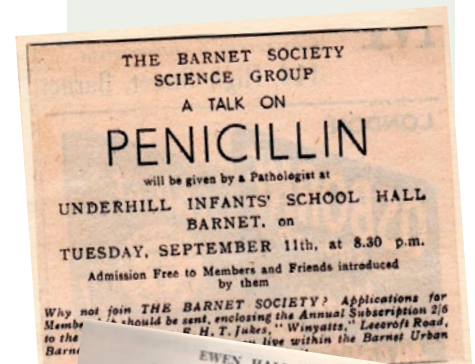
District Council planned to triple the borough’s population, a move opposed by residents Trevor Jukes, Gwyneth Cowing and Sylvia Crowe (later, Dame Sylvia) in the Barnet Press.

Outrage ensued at a meeting on June 12, 1945 when a map of Barnet and the Dollis Valley was shown. On it, pieces of black paper stuck to proposed housebuilding sites revealed almost the entire valley covered. The council was forced to refuse the developers except the area closest to the town between Underhill and the Dollis Brook, which became Dollis Valley Estate.

On the Society’s 80th birthday, we remember the efforts of Mr Jukes, Miss Cowing and Dame Sylvia, to whom the Barnet Society owes its foundation, in standing up to the threat of overdevelopment.

David Longstaff, Conservative councillor for Barnet Vale, added: “The society always has the wellbeing of the area at its heart. **George Hayes**

The Green Belt around Barnet (left) and a selection of posters, tickets and letters from the post-war period



(L-R) Dan Tomlinson, David Longstaff and Dame Theresa Villiers

70 firefighters and ten engines were deployed to fight the fire, including a 32-metre turntable ladder

Late night blaze destroys historic Hollybush House

© LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Fire engines and crews from around north London were called to a massive fire which engulfed one of the large Georgian houses beside Hadley Green, writes Nick Jones.

Such was the ferocity of the blaze that for several hours water had to be pumped from Brewers' Pond just across the green.

Hours after the fire was brought under control just before 5am on Bank Holiday Monday morning, a fire crew on turntable ladder was still damping down smouldering roof timbers.

Hollybush House, a Grade II listed mansion, which it is thought went for an estimated £4.5 million when last sold in 2020, was in the process of being renovated and refurbished.

A new roof had recently been completed and new windows installed.

Ten fire engines and 70 firefighters were called to the fire in Hadley Green Road, close to the junction with Sydney Chapman Way at around 1am.

Next door neighbour Richard Holmes, who lives in another historic property attached to Hollybush House, was woken by fire crews at 1.10am.

"I was in bed, fast asleep and was amazed to find out what was happening. It was what firefighters call a 'ten-pump shout', there were fire engines everywhere.

"They were lined up all along the road. The fire crew on the top of the turntable ladder were being supplied with additional

'I was in bed fast asleep and was amazed to find out what was happening...there were fire engines everywhere' – Richard Holmes, neighbour

water from Brewers' Pond just across the green.

"The crews did a great job. They managed to stop the fire at the wall of my house which is attached to Hollybush House.

"At one point they feared they might have to take the slates off my roof, but they have now said it is OK. There is no sign of the fire having spread to my roof timbers. I have had the all-clear."

Mr Holmes' house, close to the Wilbraham's alms houses, has a blue plaque commemorating the time when Fanny and Anthony Trollope resided at the property.

Nearby on the other side of Hollybush House is Livingstone Cottage where the Victorian explorer Dr David Livingstone and his wife Mary lived in 1857.

Hollybush House, built in the late 1700s, was in the process of being renovated by Seacon Ltd, specialists in this type of work.

Work began at the house – which is surrounded by protective hoardings – 18 months ago. The property had nine

bedrooms, six in the main wing and three in an adjoining annex.

In a statement, London Fire Brigade said the entire roof, as well as the first and ground floors were alight, and that subsequently the building suffered a partial collapse, but there were no reports of any injuries.

Helping to guide the crew on the turntable ladder was one of two drones being operated by the brigade.

Roads leading across the eastern side of Hadley Green and through Monken Hadley all had to be cordoned off.

The crew that operated the pump taking water from Brewers Pond – which was once part of Hadley Brewery – said that even after two to three hours the level of the pond was about the same.

"It seems the pond must be replenished naturally all the time by the ground water level or a spring," said one of the crew.

Crews from New Barnet, Southgate, Finchley and other surrounding fire stations were called in to tackle the blaze.

It's still all to play for over return leg of the Bees

Questions posed by the Barnet Society in its questionnaire to politicians and groups:

1 Have you declared publicly whether you are in favour or against Barnet FC's plan for a new stadium?

2 Should the planning committee and the council be influenced by Barnet's promotion?

3 Should the economic case regarding the investment in a new stadium – and its impact on the town – be taken into account as well as concern over the site's position in the Green Belt?

FOR:

Councillor Tim Roberts (Labour, Underhill):

I support Barnet FC's application for a new stadium, as I think do many of the Underhill residents I speak to. The site has excellent accessibility, close to the A1000, many bus routes and tube stations.

Gail Laser, founder of Love Barnet:

We should bring Barnet FC back to Barnet. They should never have left. While the site's position is not ideal, I am fairly confident it will be developed if not by the club, then possibly by Barnet Council. A new stadium would support revenue growth for local businesses.

Barnet Residents Association:

We judge there is nothing intrinsically attractive about the proposed site. The stadium would occupy about 50 per cent of the playing fields, almost all on land currently marked out as football pitches. Parking will be a major improvement on the old stadium. Though there would be some damage to the outlook of neighbouring properties and the loss of amenity value of green space, there should be sufficient for the public to walk their dogs and use for other recreational purposes. On balance we have concluded that the club returning to the area and the facilities they would offer would be of considerable value to the wider community and would outweigh the negative aspects of the application. Adding the risk to the club failing, plus likely absence of any alternative location, we consider the "very exceptional circumstances" test for building on the green belt is satisfied.

AGAINST:

Councillor David Longstaff (Conservative, Barnet Vale)

The location chosen by the club is the most popular section of Barnet Playing Fields and is unacceptable. This is council owned land and through a lease or purchase it would pass to what is essentially a private company. Local roads would struggle to take the increase in traffic. There is no capacity for parking in the near or middle vicinity. Since Barnet FC departed Underhill in 2013, local population density has increased and playing fields we all cherish should remain open space.

Dame Theresa Villiers, former

Conservative MP for Chipping Barnet:

I have submitted an objection because the land is green belt and an open space which is greatly valued by local residents. Of course, I want the football club to succeed and have the premises it needs, but it is vital that we protect the green belt to prevent urban sprawl and to protect the environment for future generations.

NEUTRAL:

Dan Tomlinson, Labour MP for Chipping Barnet:

I want Barnet FC to return to Barnet. The club should be playing in its home borough. It would be good for the local economy, good for the fans and good for the borough. However, the site identified by the club is open, green, public land and I understand the big reservations from residents about losing this space to a stadium.

Barnet Society:

Barnet FC's responses to the society's comments are generally encouraging, especially its willingness to accommodate community uses and enhance local biodiversity, but we must await a full planning application to see if they are delivered. Although we would welcome any economic benefits the stadium would bring, we are not yet convinced that they would be substantial. Therefore, after careful consideration, the society's committee sees no reason to amend our comments and overall, our position remains neutral.



Split decision

Barnet's promotion to League Two of the Football League is being hailed by supporters as a boost to their campaign to win approval for plans to build a new football stadium at Underhill.

High hopes among members of BringBarnetBack that the club's most successful season for seven years might help persuade Barnet Council to grant planning permission are up against some equally vociferous objections to any encroachment of the Green Belt.

A survey conducted by the Barnet Society of opinion among councillors, politicians and community groups indicates that the town is split down the middle over whether a 7,000-seat stadium should be built on Barnet Playing Fields.

So far there is no official guidance as to when the application will be considered by the council's strategic planning committee, but several members have indicated privately that it might be late summer or early autumn before the committee is in a position to make a recommendation.

Supporters of the plan argue that if Barnet FC were allowed to return to Underhill – from its current base at The Hive, Harrow – it would be a significant economic boost for the town, an argument they believe has been strengthened immeasurably by Barnet FC's promotion to League 2.

The club believes a move back to Underhill could increase crowds to around 3,500, up from 1,800.



Grand reception

A long-time resident of East Barnet, has moved to a new, smaller, eco-friendly house which is next door to what had been a family home for 60 years.

Kathryn Finlayson readily acknowledges her good fortune, having had a house to sell and space alongside large enough for a new architect-designed property.

Her achievement, at the age of 83, has won her national acclaim.

Her ambitious, high-spec self-build won glowing praise from television presenter Kevin McCloud when he visited the house for his programme *Grand Designs*, which was followed by an expansive feature spread in *House Beautiful*.

Kathryn decided to see if she could downsize – and still live nearby – after the death of her husband, Jon. Kathryn's son introduced her to architect James Mak who came up with the idea of a living area and bedroom on one level with two bedrooms above for family members.

"His drawings and design for the house were lovely. It seemed like the dream solution as I would end up living in the same street in a new super-efficient, low-cost home."

Built London Ltd started construction in September 2023 and Kathryn moved in last November.

"Here I am living in an ideal position close to so many friends, near the station, and just a short walk to East Barnet village and lots of bus routes, which will be so important if I have to give up my car."

The construction costs of over £800,000 were met from the sale of the family home next door, a four-bedroom Edwardian house built in 1908.

Kathryn was rather pensive for a moment when asked whether the whole exercise had all been a little daunting for an 80-year-old.

"Yes, I would do it again. The new house is so well insulated, with triple-glazed windows, and the energy use is so much more efficient."



Trish's volunteering recognised

A decade-long association as a volunteer at the Rainbow Centre, the community hub for the Dollis Valley estate, has been rewarded with a Barnet Council "Inspiration All" award for Patricia Gay.

Trish – as she is known to one and all – hopes her award will help publicise the campaign to end the continuing uncertainty over finding a permanent home for what is considered to be a vital resource for residents of the estate.

A weekly food bank and lunch club for children in the school holidays are just some of the many activities that could be threatened unless Barnet Council can find new premises.

Under existing redevelopment plans, the Rainbow Centre's lease was due to expire in May and the building is due to be demolished for the next phase of the housing regeneration scheme for the Dollis Valley estate.

"Unfortunately, we have been fobbed off time and again," said Trish, who is a director of the Rainbow Centre's users' group.

"The council have assured us that they are actively searching for new premises. Volunteers who give so much of their time to running a foodbank and children's lunch club should not have to face uncertainty like this."

At Trish's request, Councillor Barry Rawlings, Labour leader of the council, visited the centre together with Underhill councillor Zahra Beg, to see whether they can finally get some clarity over what might happen.

"Ideally, we would like to stay where we are. We cannot understand why the building cannot be properly renovated or even rebuilt, but the council assure us they are still looking for alternative premises."

To the great disappointment of Trish – and Steve Verrall, director of the charity Barnet Community Projects – the council has withdrawn an earlier proposal to re-house the Rainbow Centre in a former cricket pavilion in Barnet Lane, Underhill.

This was first suggested four years ago.

There were high hopes as late as 2023 that the move would go ahead, but the council has informed the centre that this option would be too costly in view of the work needed to refurbish the pavilion, which has been vacant since construction of the Ark Pioneer Academy School on the site of the former Barnet Football Club stadium.

Trish said the volunteers at the centre – and other users such as a regular martial arts class – find the lack of any clear answer to the future extremely disconcerting.

"Let's hope my Inspiration All award – which recognises the hard work of women and girls in supporting the community – will alert the rest of the council to our plight."

Trish – who grew up on the Dollis Valley estate and who became a head girl at Ravenscroft School – started volunteering at the Rainbow Centre after she retired from her work as a secretary in the City of London.

Ode to Caravaggio

A lifetime's fascination with the work of the prominent early Baroque painter Caravaggio has led to an unexpected twist in the career of High Barnet painter and art lecturer, Keith West.

Because of his frustration at the failure of art historians to provide answers to unresolved questions about Caravaggio's troubled life, West has written an historical novel – *Caravaggio's Boy* – in which he explores the meteoric rise and fall from grace of the greatest Italian painter of his generation.

Keith is well known locally for his own religious paintings which over the years have been displayed at various settings and galleries.

His oil painting depicting the 1471 Battle of Barnet was unveiled at the Barnet Museum shop in 2019 during the 30th anniversary celebrations for The Spires shopping centre.

Holding the High Barnet launch of *Caravaggio's Boy* at the parish church was an added honour because West's painting *Majestas Domini* (Christ in Glory) is about



to be hung in the parish church's Ravenscroft side chapel which will also display his next painting, a newly commissioned *Madonna and Child*.

Keith, a long-time High Barnet resident, was formerly a lecturer and head of arts at the Camden Institute. He came up with the idea of writing an historical novel about Caravaggio during the Covid lockdown, after his retirement from teaching.

"Since a teenager, I have always been fascinated with work of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and his model, Cecco de Caravaggio.

"I had acquired so much material during my research and preparation for lectures, that I realised I should have a go myself

at answering some of the unresolved questions about his life.

"In the many books about Caravaggio, art historians offer their individual take on the who, when, where and what about Caravaggio, but they don't answer the why, and they fail to explain why he became such a violent, touchy and provocative man.

"By choosing the form of a novel I had the opportunity to speculate about the background to his paintings and the role of his favourite model, Francesco Boneri, who was known as Cecco."

In recommending the book, the Very Reverend Jeffrey John, formerly Dean of St Alban's Cathedral, said Keith had "imaginatively and convincingly" filled in some of the gaps in knowledge of Caravaggio's life and that of Francesco, his model, student and lover.

"It is a rollicking story which vividly brings to life the violent contrasts of their time: the opulence and squalor, piety and corruption, sophistication and degradation of 16th and early 17th century Italy."

Caravaggio's Boy, published by Vanguard Press, £14.99, available from Waterstones and Amazon

Something to crow about

After being unable to play at home last year because crows had dug holes in their green, the East Barnet Valley Bowls Club has been holding a series of open days in a bid to boost their membership.

Lawn bowls has been transformed in recent years as a family sport and the club's green at the Victoria Recreation Ground is considered to be one of the hidden sporting gems of New Barnet.

New and experienced players are welcome. Their recruitment drive has already proved a success, according to club secretary Dave Mulford.

Nine new members have joined so far, and they are all said to have been enjoying the experience of playing lawn bowls.

Coaching is being provided during the open days which continue in June.

East Barnet's first home match since 2023 was against Potters Bar Bowls Club and with the green restored, the club is anxious to build up its membership and hopefully by next year have enough members to enter teams in contests run by the Finchley and North London Bowling Association.

After the club's green was damaged repeatedly in the summer of 2023 by crows looking for larvae (leather jackets) of crane flies (daddy longlegs), the lawn had to be reseeded last year, and after considerable care and attention, was ready in the spring for play to resume.

Geoffrey Partridge, captain and treasurer, applied top dressing



East Barnet Valley Bowls Club is welcoming new members after being out of action last year when crows damaged the surface of its green at the Victoria Recreation Ground in New Barnet.

to help restore the grass to tip top condition. The green was inundated with crows in the summer of 2023. They were digging holes in the grass with their beaks as they hunted for the crane fly grubs.

"For some reason, the crane flies like to lay their eggs in short grass and bowling greens are often a target.

"The damage was so bad we had to take the top off the lawn and then we reseeded it last year and hopefully the crows won't come back."

The East Barnet Valley club was founded by members of East Barnet Urban Council in 1927.



Medieval Festival time again

Moving the Barnet Medieval Festival – to be held on Saturday and Sunday June 7 and 8 – to a new site on farmland off Galley Lane has attracted heightened interest among military re-enactors who are looking forward to having more space for Wars of the Roses camp sites and displays, writes Nick Jones.

Promotion of this year's festival – which is being supported by a free shuttle bus service from The Spires shopping centre – is in full swing. Festival director Dr Susan Skedd believes that the stage is set for what could be the largest medieval camp and re-enactment display staged in the town since the start of recent events to commemorate the 1471 Battle of Barnet.

A 12-acre field at Fold Farm – home of Lewis of London Ice Cream – offers access via Galley Lane which can be approached by re-enactors and visitors without having to pay the ULEZ charge.

A free shuttle bus to the festival site will leave every 15 minutes from a stop in Stapylton Road at the rear of The Spires between 10.30am and 6pm – pre-booking is advised via www.barnetmedievalfestival.org

There will be a full programme on Saturday and Sunday of battle re-enactments, displays by mounted knights in combat, cannon firing and archery together with living history encampments and a medieval market, craft stalls and food and drink.

A special feature will be an exhibition of medieval art by Graham Turner.

Organisers hope the enlarged festival site at a new location with ample space for car parking will make up for the disappointment following the forced cancellation of the event last summer.

Dr Skedd said the move from the Byng Road playing fields to farmland off Galley Lane has given the organising committee an ideal opportunity to grow the festival and widen its appeal.

Entry is free for children under 12 years; £5 for children aged 12 to 17; £10 for adults.

Tickets are available on the gate or in advance via the website, www.barnetmedievalfestival.org/



Dear Member

I am writing to inform ALL members that receive our updates by email that we launched our new Membership Database on 1st April 2025. It is a self-management system where members, who have provided us with an email address, can maintain their own membership record for the Society. This will ultimately cut down the amount of work we'll need to put in behind the scenes and encourage members to ensure that their record is accurate.

We have spent considerable time over the past few months transferring every member record individually onto the new Membermojo system. All members who have provided their email address will receive an email from the automated system through Membermojo from the email address: noreply.barnetsociety@membermojo.co.uk with instructions on making sure your member record is complete with the correct information, and how to renew your membership directly. Some of you may have already received an email. This is NOT spam or a scam, it's genuine. You can change and update information yourself. The email will arrive approaching your renewal date. If you pay by a recurring payment method (e.g. Standing Order or PayPal) you only need to check you are happy with your record entry. Other payment methods will have to act (e.g. Electronic Bank Transfer or Cheque) to avoid your membership lapsing.

Our new Membership Secretary is Anthony Mak-Fan and he can be contacted at membership@barnetsociety.org.uk as always.

There will be some further changes later in the summer. We have held off membership fee rises for existing members for many years and only applied the increase to new members, but to sustain the Society and our work we will have to bring all subscriptions up to date and into line to make it fair for everyone. It means that after the AGM, all remaining £8 Individual subscriptions will rise to £10 and remaining £12 Family subscriptions will rise to £15, both per annum. These will be the only two rates. Sums received above this will be classed as a donation.

Please ensure that if you need to post anything to us, you send it to our correspondence address below:

The Barnet Society
c/o Barnet Museum
31 Wood Street
Barnet
Herts
EN5 4BE

Currently, I am unable to send emails from our [info@](mailto:info@barnetsociety.org.uk) or [chair@](mailto:chair@barnetsociety.org.uk) email addresses, but I can receive them.

With Best Wishes

John Hay

Chair

The Barnet Society

M: 07721 030933

E: info@barnetsociety.org.uk

2025 AGM - NOTICE

The Barnet Society NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of The Barnet Society will be held on Thursday 19th June 2025 at 7pm at Pennefather Hall, Christ Church, St Albans Road, Barnet, EN5 4LA

Doors open at 7pm for a 7:30pm start

Speaker and Q&A Sgt Glenn Parker – Metropolitan Police (Barnet)

1. Approval of Minutes of 79th AGM 11th July 2024
2. Approval of Annual Accounts (as published)
3. Election of Independent Examiner
4. Election of Officers and Committee
5. Any Other Business

Membership Report

President	Elected	Until
Aubrey Rose	2008	N/A
Vice Presidents		
Dr Jenny Remfry	2016	N/A
Robin Marson	2016	N/A

Hon. Independent Examiner

Nominations sought	2024	2025
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Committee Members 2024

John Hay - Chair	2024	2027
Eamonn Rafferty - Vice Chairman	2022	2025
Frances Wilson - Minute Secretary	2024	2027
Andreas Tjirkali - Hon. Treasurer	2024	2027
Kim Ambridge - Membership Sec	2024	2027
Robin Bishop - P & E Lead	2022	2025
Susan Skedd	2024	2027
Simon Watson (Web Officer)	2022	2025
Nick Jones	2024	2027
Simon Radford	2022	2025
Mahender Khari	2022	2025
Christine Klein	2022	2025

EXTRACT FROM CURRENT CONSTITUTION

10. ELECTIONS

- 10.1. The President, Vice Presidents and Honorary Independent Examiner shall be proposed by the Committee and elected at the AGM.
- 10.2. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer shall be proposed by the Committee and elected at the AGM and shall normally serve for no longer than three consecutive years.
- 10.3. All other members of the Committee shall be proposed either by the Committee or by any Society Member and elected at the AGM. Such members of the Committee shall be elected for a period of three years and then stand down for a period of one year. The Committee may propose for co-option of any Committee member whose term has been completed.
- 10.4. Officers and committee members shall be elected by a show of hands and the result decided by a majority of those present and voting.

UP FOR RE-ELECTION IN 2025

Eamonn Rafferty – Vice Chair
 Frances Wilson
 Anthony Mak-Fan – Membership Secretary; (Kim Ambridge has resigned)
 Robin Bishop – P & E Lead
 Nick Saul
 Simon Watson is standing down. New Webmaster required.
 Simon Radford
 Mahender Khari
 Christine Klein

Chair's Annual Report

The past year has been busy and very challenging for the Society. Much has been going on, and on all fronts. Several high profile local projects have taken much, if not all of our Planning and Environment Sub Committee's time with Robin Bishop and his team working tirelessly to keep abreast of all the consultations on High Barnet Station and the proposed development there, the proposed return of Barnet FC to Underhill and The Spires development which still occasionally reemerges with yet more ideas. There are of course many other projects which I've no doubt Robin will endeavour to cover in his P&E Report.

As I say, it has been a challenging year for us as we now reach our 80th Anniversary year. The way we communicate and market ourselves today is vastly different to when the Society was first formed 80 years ago. There were no mobile phones, no social media, no internet, no email and no personal computers, laptops or iPads. The words Website, Facebook and Instagram hadn't been invented, or at least not as far as I know. The Society relied on a printed Newsletter every quarter. We still do, but keeping our members up to date has become much faster and easier. We still have loyal, longstanding members, but we're having to modernise with the times. Even our banking and how we manage our membership database is having to dramatically change. My thanks goes to Simon Watson and Marcos Scriven for everything they've done to help us get our IT into the modern era, especially the website and Membership Database.

This year, behind the scenes we embarked on a long overdue major rebuild and upgrade of our website. This is the first major upgrade since the original website was built, I understand, around 2013. The software it was running on was virtually obsolete and it was better to switch to a much more modern and easier to use platform. We sourced a reputable Web Designer and started the process for the rebuild in December 2024, completing with the launch of the new site in the last week of March 2025.

In addition to the new website, we have completely moved the Membership Database online now using software linked through to Membermojo where all our members can now access and manage their own record directly. This is a major improvement that cuts down a lot of time needed by our Membership Secretary and we are gradually making more beneficial improvements to this all the time. My sincere thanks goes to Marcus Scriven who has helped us manage our way through this process and future proofing our Database.

In December, our Membership Secretary, Kim Ambridge resigned. We have been fortunate in finding Anthony Mak-Fan who is gradually taking over the role. This is taking time due to our major IT changes, and it is better he takes over a brand new system than a legacy. I've no doubt over the coming months some of you will come into contact with him for whatever reason.

There will be more changes for the Society to come over the next year where we will be looking at becoming an incorporated organisation to secure its long term future. Something that needs serious consideration for its survival for at least the next 80 years.

On that note, I'd like to thank all our Committee members for their hard work and commitment over the past year and look forward to what the coming year has in store. Have a great summer all of you.

John Hay
 Chair The Barnet Society

Election gave us fresh impetus

Our focus on the key issues of transport, town centres, housing and the environment in our four general election year newsletters encapsulated the Barnet Society's main architectural, planning and green concerns

Robin Bishop writes:

Dan Tomlinson, who succeeded Theresa Villiers as MP, has declared publicly, "Our green spaces and the beautiful Green Belt here in this constituency is something that I will always fight for and protect." We'll hold him to his word.

We've looked at far fewer planning applications this year (58), commenting on 20, objecting to 7 and supporting 3. As a member of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee, we also contributed comments on 60 applications in the **Monken Hadley and Wood Street CAs**, plus a number of enforcement cases.

The election result exacerbated threats to our locality. Labour is more committed than the Conservatives to new housing. Both the Mayor of London and Barnet Council support this aim. So do we – provided it is the right kind, in the right place, and sensitively and sustainably designed.

It's no coincidence that proposals for up to **300 flats on High Barnet Station car park** have been revived by Transport for London. We submitted detailed criticisms of the plans, focusing on their excessive height (up to 10 storeys), loss of car parking and the need to improve accessible interchange between tube, buses and cars.

They'll be an early test of Barnet's **Local Plan 2021-36**, which has been formally adopted by the Council, and limits building on Barnet Hill to 7 storeys.

At High Barnet Station, 40% of the flats would at least be affordable. But at **49 Moxon Street**, the developer initially claimed that affordable units weren't financially viable. If the second of their two buildings is approved, only 7 of the 154 flats (5%) will be affordable.

Following Council approval last year of **120 homes at Whalebones**, we appealed to the Mayor against the loss of a unique part of the Wood Street CA. Despite

Visualisation of 300 flats proposed on High Barnet Station car park



considerable support, he did not intervene.

We haven't had to deal with the redevelopment of **The Spires**

and its car parks. Since the last owners went bust no new plans have emerged, but they surely will.

Another concern has been development in the Green Belt, protection of which is central to the Society's mission. We were among 1,304 objectors to **two travellers' pitches** off Mays Lane. A Planning Inquiry is under way as I write.

We were neutral about alterations and an attic floor to the **Hall for the Centre for Islamic Enlightening**: their effect on the Green Belt would be insignificant and improve a dull building externally. But we asked for conditions to be set and those have been incorporated in the approval.

We were also neutral about the outline planning application for a new stadium for **Barnet Football Club** on Barnet Playing Fields. Outdoor sport and leisure is permitted in the Green Belt and the project is an opportunity to enhance biodiversity, but we're unconvinced about the economic benefits. Opinion among members is divided, but if the stadium guarantees facilities for other community activities, we could welcome it.

But these cases are peanuts compared with what's happening in the Green Belt just beyond Barnet's border. Approval has been granted for **220 homes near Stirling Corner** and for **warehousing at South Mimms**. Applications are in for more **film studios** by the A1, monster **data centres** on the fields between South Mimms and Potters Bar, and **900 homes** on fields north of the M25. Even worse, Enfield proposes major developments at **Hadley**

Wood, Crews Hill and elsewhere. If all these are approved, much of the Green Belt separating Barnet from its neighbours would be built over.

We continue to track smaller cases. Recent shockers have included the unauthorised replacement of **No.190 High Street** (Wilkinsons Chemist) shopfront. But we've supported sensitive change such as refurbishment of the shopfront to **No.88 (Hopscotch)** and addition of a home above and behind it. And we can claim success of sorts at **70 High Street** (fka After Office Hours), where the owner has been forced to rebuild it 1.5m lower, as originally approved. The project has taken nearly 10 years and is still unfinished. There's a moral there.

Another success is the Grade II-listed **The Mitre**, 58 High Street. Greene King took our criticisms of their applications to heart, and are carrying out a much more appropriate makeover. The jury is still out on **St Mary's Church House**, Camlet Way, also Grade II. We objected to its replacement in Neo-Georgian style. The applicants are reconsidering the design.

We objected to the Council's proposed bus lanes in the lower High Street and to raise parking charges. But we supported its proposal for a **Barnet Loop**, an accessible walking and cycling route around our Borough. We encouraged the Council to include **BarNET ZERO** information and advice on home retrofit on its website. And we responded to the latest consultation on the **North London Waste Plan**.

Most of this would not have been achieved without Committee support plus the expertise of Peter Bradburn, Guy Braithwaite, Markus Geiger, Simon Kaufman, Dave McCormick and Katy Staton. My thanks to them all.

Barnet Society Accounts to 31 Mar 2025

OPERATING STATEMENT TO 31 MAR 2025

	1 Apr '24- 31 Mar '25	Apr '23 - Mar '24
INCOME		
Membership Fees: minimum	5,349.57	5,252.00
overpayments	383.74	1,336.21
On-line donations	81.06	25.00
Gifts & Donation: members	0.00	0.00
Gifts & Donation: non-members	0.00	7.55
Activities & Fund Raising Events	541.91	893.90
Newsletter sales	105.00	0.00
Books sales	0.00	75.83
Bank Interest Earned	140.89	59.42
Other Income	0.00	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	6,602.17	7,649.91
EXPENSE		
Events		
AGM	299.03	183.27
Christmas Stall	61.45	52.50
Other Events	59.35	80.00
Insurance	87.00	87.00
Total Events	506.83	402.77
Newsletters		
Design	1,320.00	1,440.00
Printing	2,133.00	1,951.00
Postage & Stationery	306.60	252.96
Total Newsletter	3,759.60	3,643.96
Donations & Contributions		
Donations & Contributions	0.00	225.00
Total Donations & Contribs	0.00	225.00
Computers and Internet		
IT support/ software	1,600.00	347.85
Website admin	0.00	0.00
Total Computers and Internet	1,600.00	347.85
Other Expenses		
Membership admin	85.95	0.00
Membership Expenses	175.00	180.38
Other printing	0.00	288.50
Gifts & Flowers	0.00	0.00
Dues & Subscriptions	234.39	175.00
Bank and PayPal Fees	93.60	174.28
Legal fees	1,380.00	0.00
Total Other Expenses	1,968.94	818.16
TOTAL EXPENSE	7,835.37	5,437.74
SURPLUS/ (SHORTFALL)	-1,233.20	2,212.17

BALANCE SHEET TO 31 MARCH 2025

	1 Apr '24- 31 Mar '25	Apr '23 - Mar '24
CURRENT ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Pre-paid expenses	0.00	350.00
Cash at bank and in hand		
HSBC - Deposit Account	5,149.44	7,508.55
HSBC - Current Account	455.74	699.69
PayPal	2,627.09	711.73
Total Cash at Bank and in hand	8,232.27	8,919.97
Total Current Assets	8,232.27	9,269.97
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Advance Receipts	-315.00	-119.50
Total Current Assets	-315.00	-119.50
NET ASSETS	7,917.27	9,150.47
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Movement		
Opening balance	9,150.47	6,938.30
Surplus / Shortfall for the period	-1,233.20	2,212.17
Closing balance	7,917.27	9,150.47
Comprising		
May Finnerty Memoriam Reserve	1,000.00	1,000.00
General Reserves	6,917.27	8,150.47
TOTAL Capital and Reserves	7,917.27	9,150.47

COMMENTARY

This last financial year the Society has undertaken significant investment in updating our Website and seeking Legal Guidance on our terms to ensure we have a Website that meets all current legislative requirements. These investments totalled £2,980 and were mostly funded from our reserves.

The key fundraising activity for the year was the Dinner at Le Rose which raised over £500. Some receipts from the upcoming Dinner have been carried forward into the 2025/2026 accounts

As a result of our annual activities we closed the financial year 2024/2025 with a deficit of £1,233 reducing the Society's Capital and Reserves to £7,917

Andreas Tjirkalli Hon Treasurer

Minutes of the 79th Annual General Meeting

Pennefather Hall, St Albans Road, Barnet, 11 July 2024

Frances Wilson (Chair) thanked everyone for coming and said it was good to see so many people at the AGM and to know there was so much support after 79 years. She then introduced the members of the Committee and said apologies had been received from Aubrey Rose (President), Our Vice President David Lee passed away in January aged 93. He was responsible for planting many trees in Barnet, most notably the line of trees along the A1000 known as Lees Trees and Barnet Council have agreed to plant a tree in his memory. Other apologies were from Nick Jones, Mary Rossiter, Jasmine & Robin Marson, Fiona Evans, Vincent Wallace, Margot Oberman, Dave McCormick, Paul Burnham, Geoff Crabtree, Marcos Scriven and Paul Burnham Chair of Potters Bar Soc. There were 49 members present

1.0 Approval of Minutes of 78th AGM (13th July '23)

These are published in the Summer Newsletter (**Page 11**) and Frances Wilson asked for them to be approved. Jenny Remfry said there was an error in Chair's and Treasurer's Report saying we held a fund raising dinner at 'Menage' it should read 'Melange'. The Minutes were approved subject to this correction.

2.0 Approval of 79th Annual Reports

Frances Wilson said the Chair's, Planning & Environment, Membership Reports and Annual Accounts are all published in the Summer Newsletter (**Pages 8-10**). Everyone has been given the opportunity to raise questions before the meeting and the purpose of the AGM is to ask members to approve the actions we have taken over the past year.

1. Chair's Report

Frances said we had examined many development proposals over the year some we objected to and others we supported. We had expected to be campaigning against the proposal to redevelop the Spires but, since BYM was declared bankrupt, it has gone quiet; however, we are expecting there will be another proposal in the future.

Another area of concern is the Government's proposal to build on the Grey Belt, which could include golf courses, car parks and other neglected sites. There are already proposals for major developments on the Green Belt in Hertsmere, including Potters Bar and Enfield, which will have an impact on Barnet. We have submitted our objections but we need to be vigilant and work closely with our neighbouring Boroughs to protect the Green Belt.

Members attention was drawn to the paragraph about improving our IT. The database was built many years ago and has had so many additions and alterations it is no longer fit for purpose. Similarly, the website on which Nick Jones provides so many articles is creaking at the seams. We sent out a request for help to our members and Marcos Scriven, a webmaster, responded and is currently working on the database that holds all our membership information. He is hoping to solve the website difficulties when the database is completed.

The Chair's Report was approved with no objections.

2.2 Planning & Environment

Robin Bishop said it had been a busy year having reviewed 102 Planning applications, commenting on 26. We supported 4 and objected to 13. The main developments were the Victoria Quarter, which was approved despite the poor design, Whalebones was also approved but has to be signed off by the Mayor of London. We supported the schemes for Barnet Homes in Moxon Mews and Whittings Road but objected to 96 flats proposed at 49 Moxon Street, which are 7 storeys high, but were neutral about Fortune House next door, which is only 6 storeys high and not as harmful to the Green Belt.

Robin Bishop drew members' attention to the Government's target of building more houses. We accept the need for more housing but it must be in keeping with the surrounding suburban area. He said the station development of 294 flats on blocks of 6 or 7 storeys is an example where it would not be appropriate. The Government is also intent on building on 'Grey Belt' this is low-quality or neglected GB land for housebuilding. Barnet has several areas which have been neglected for years whether on purpose or not but they will become prime development sites. Dan Tomlinson MP Chipping Barnet has promised to keep the Green Belt and we have to hold him to this.

The Planning & Environment Report was approved with no objections.

2.3 Membership Report

Kim Ambridge, Membership Secretary said at 31st March, there were 509 memberships comprising 734 members. This is virtually the same as the previous year which is disappointing as we had aimed to increase them by 50. There were 13 membership cancellations due to the member passing away, moving or resigning and 22 members did not respond to emails to pay the fee. Kim said we correspond with members by email far more than we did in the past, so requested members provide us with email addresses where possible. She also suggested that members share their newsletters with a friend or neighbour to encourage them to join.

Kim said she was resigning as Membership Secretary after 3 years but felt she was passing the role on in a better position as the database was much improved which makes it easier and quicker.

The Membership Report was approved with no objections.

3.0 Approval of Treasurer's Report and Accounts year ended 31st March '24

Derek Epstein, Treasurer, presented the report published on **Page 10** of the Newsletter. It showed that the year had been relatively quiet for the Society financially. The only significant fund-raising was the London Festival of Architecture walks organised by Robin Bishop with Jenny Remfry and Frances Wilson. Ticket sales totalled £303 and a £481 grant from LBB funded £264 of printing costs and donations of £225 to local charities visited left about £300 surplus to the Society.

A fund raising dinner was held in May but the figures will be carried forward to the 2024-25 accounts. Last year having spent £3,000 on legal fees trying to prevent the demolition of 33 Lyonsdown Road and raising £1,200 to mitigate

the costs the year finished with a shortfall of £365, however, this year there is a surplus of £2,212, which raised the Society's reserves to £9,150.

The accounts have been independently examined and passed by Jim Nelhams.

They were approved with no objections.

Derek officially retired at the previous AGM but carried on until Andreas Tjirkalli took over from 1st April ensuring a smooth handover. This needs to be ratified.

Andreas Tjirkalli was proposed as Hon. Treasurer by Robin Bishop and seconded by Frances Wilson and approved by the members

4.0 Election of Independent Examiner 2024 -25

Jim Nelhams has been checking our accounts for many years but has now resigned as he has taken on many other activities. Frances thanked him for all he had done over the years and asked if another member would be prepared to take on the voluntary role.

5.0 Officers & Committee Members

Frances Wilson introduced Jenny Remfry (Vice President) to say a few words on behalf of Aubrey Rose (President) who had sent his apologies.

Jenny said she had spoken to Aubrey that morning and he wished to thank the Society for the good work it continued to do on behalf of the people of Barnet. She also said that Aubrey wanted it on record that he thanked Theresa Villiers our MP for 19 years until she lost her seat the previous week. She has been very supportive over the years protecting the Green Belt, making a stand in opposing some of the developments such as Whalebones and Victoria Quarter and trying to ensure the local community had a voice when new developments were proposed. She was an excellent constituency MP

5.0 Election of on the Committee

Chair – Frances said she was standing down as she preferred to work behind the scenes but she was pleased to say John Hay has agreed to take over.

Therefore John Hay was proposed by Andreas Tjirkalli and seconded by Susan Skedd and approved by members.

John Hay Chair said he had been Membership Secretary for about 3 years and Hon Sec for 3 years and was looking forward to his new role. It means however that we are looking for a new Hon Sec and asked for volunteers - there was no response.

The Membership Secretary role is also vacant and again there were no volunteers so agreed we would send an email to all members advertising both roles.

Marcos Scriven volunteered to be our Webmaster and has redesigned our database so was co-opted in March but needed to be ratified. He was proposed by Kim Ambridge and seconded by Eamonn Rafferty and approved by members.

Members standing down but willing to be re-elected: Susan Skedd and Nick Jones – this was approved, with no objections.

6.0 Any other business – There was none

Swifts make early arrival

Record hot weather in late April coincided with the earliest reported sightings of swifts who are considered by far High Barnet's most popular avian visitors each summer, writes Nick Jones.

Veteran swift watcher Angela Morris saw four flying above Kings Road at 11.55am on Monday 28 April – her first April sighting in the forty years she has been recording their arrival in her diary.

“Usually, the swifts get here sometime in the first week of May. My earliest ever sighting was May 1 and the latest May 14, so it was a real surprise to have a late April sighting.”

Members of Barnet Swifts Group have also been reporting the swifts' early arrival.

Peter Lyons saw four circling above Manor Road late in the day on 28 April and other sightings were recorded over the following days – Robin Bishop saw several flying above Fitzjohn Avenue and Susan Skedd said she was awoken by their squealing above Leicester Road, New Barnet.

Even more encouraging for swift enthusiasts was the news that as many as six pairs have been seen visiting sites on a house in Granville Road which offers an array of nesting places including boxes and spaces under the eaves, another surprise so early in the season.

In view of the continuing interest in



Veteran swift watcher
Angela Morris



encouraging the provision of nesting boxes for swifts,

David Martens, who founded the Barnet Swifts Group, says that north and east facing aspects are best to avoid the hot summer sun.

Playing recordings of swift calls, particularly early in the morning or an hour before sunset, can boost the chance of attracting swifts to a nesting box.

David, who is now a member of the Welwyn Hatfield Swift Group, says swift news from around the locality can be seen by following the Facebook link to the Hertfordshire Swift Group.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/g/15BRMoRadK/>

Angela Morris said her interest in swifts

dates to when her family moved to Kings Road in the 1950s and she started noting their arrival in her diary.

“I was so relieved to see them back again this year. I heard their screaming first and then saw them flying down Kings Road.

“Years ago, there were many more arriving each summer and they used to nest under the eaves of the Edwardian houses on the north side of Kings Road. Unfortunately, many of their nesting places have gone when people insulated their lofts and sealed off the eaves.

“Usually, I see them first at around 7.30pm in the evening, so to have a morning sighting on April 28 suggested to me they probably arrived the day before.

“The parent swifts tend to head off back to Africa at the end of July, but the new young birds take a time surveying the local scene, but they are off too by mid-August.”

Join the Barnet Society and help carry on its work

Annual subscriptions for new joiners are £10 for an individual or £15 for a family.

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