

The Barnet Society

SUMMER 2026 | £2 (WHEN SOLD)

Labour crashes out in Barnet

Labour has suffered devastating losses in the local elections and the council now faces uncertainty, with no party in overall control, writes Nick Jones.

A dramatic backdrop at the RAF Museum at Hendon provided the setting for a marathon election count which has upended local politics as the Labour Party haemorrhaged seats and the Council slipped to no overall control.

Labour and the Conservatives finished with 31 seats each.

In another surprise a newly elected Green Party councillor ended up holding the balance of power, able to exercise a casting vote.

Labour lost ten seats to the Conservatives – a wounding setback after its success in the 2022 council elections when Labour took overall control of the council for the first time since the boroughs were created in 1965.

Some opinion polls had predicted that the Conservatives might regain control of Barnet but strong showings by the Greens and Reform divided the vote in many wards, putting paid to the two-party Labour/Conservative clashes of the past.

Wards in and around High Barnet were among those where Labour suffered defeats.

Conservative candidate **James Esses** topped the poll in the High Barnet ward just ahead of Labour Councillor **Emma Whysall**, who was re-elected.



“Labour lost ten seats to the Conservatives – a wounding setback after its success in the 2022 council elections”

votes. Labour’s **Anne Hutton** was returned for the second seat with 1,287 votes but she was only just ahead of the second candidate for the Greens, **George Ttoouli** on 1,194 votes.

In another of their target wards, three candidates for the Greens finished a close second to the three Labour candidates in Friern Barnet who succeeded in holding their seats, including **Barry Rawlings**, Labour leader of the council.

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Oliver Gough just failed in his attempt to secure the seat of retiring High Barnet Councillor **Paul Edwards** but was just ahead of Conservative candidate **Amberley Thay**.

The High Barnet count was declared by the council’s deputy returning officer Deborah Hinde.

In East Barnet, where the Conservatives also gained a seat, Labour Councillor **Edith David** was narrowly defeated.

East Barnet councillor **Simon Radford** topped the poll, with **David Allen** taking second place for the Conservatives and **Phil Cohen** holding his seat for Labour.

Labour Councillor **Ella Rose** lost in Whetstone, where the Conservatives made another gain.

Candidates for the Greens delivered one of the first shocks, topping the poll in Woodhouse – one of their target wards – taking a Labour seat and nearly adding a second Labour scalp.

Charli Thompson (Green) topped the poll with 1,331

AGM, 7pm, Thursday, June 11, Pennefather Hall, St Albans Road, Barnet EN5 4LA

Continued from page 1.

Although Councillor Rawlings – and the two other Labour candidates **Pauline Coakley Webb** and **Beverley Kotey** were re-elected – candidates for the Greens were only a couple of hundred votes behind them.

Former Friern Barnet Councillor **Linda Lusingu**, who had defected from Labour to the Greens, lost her seat finishing in fifth place.

Reform were the main challengers in the Tory strongholds of Edgware and Edgwarebury but although their candidates were ahead of the other parties, they trailed well behind Conservative candidates.

Reform drew the most votes in the north and west of the borough, whereas the vote for the Greens was strongest in the east of the borough, closer to inner London where there was an even greater surge in Green support.

In some wards Labour suffered devastating losses, losing all three seats in both the Childs Hill and Brunswick wards.

Con	31 (+12)
Lab	31 (-9)
Green	1
Reform	0 (-2)
Ind	0 (-1)

Conservatives were the biggest winners in the elections but narrowly missed out on taking control of the full Council. Members will have to meet to decide what positions will be taken by the various councillors, probably on May 19. The Green party, however, could be in a position to play king maker

Results

High Barnet (two seats): **James Esses** (Conservative) 1,558; Emma Whysall (Labour) 1,441; Oliver Gough (Labour) 1,417; Amberley Thay (Conservative) 1,372; Darius Hutchinson (Reform) 689; Rajesh Gulabivala (Reform) 631; Fanxi Liu (Green) 538; Charles Wicksteed (Green) 536; Andrew Jackson (Liberal Democrat) 497; Grant McKenna (Liberal Democrat) 357.

Barnet Vale (three seats): Sue Baker (Labour) 2,130; David Longstaff (Conservative) 2,024; Richard Barnes (Labour) 1,994; Elmina Homapour (Conservative) 1,805; Tom Smith (Conservative) 1,797; Mukesh Oza (Labour) 1,674; Mark Francis (Reform) 952; Mark Devey (Green) 887; Julian Teare (Reform) 868; Uri Mofsowitz (Reform) 857; Kevin Meehan (Green) 694; Matty Robins (Green) 683; Simon

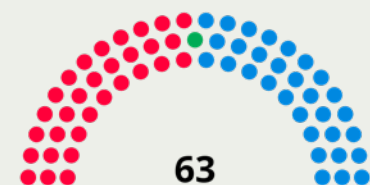
Cohen (Liberal Democrat) 504; Duncan MacDonald (Liberal Democrat) 292; Dave Keech (Liberal Democrat) 274.

East Barnet (three seats): Simon Radford (Labour) 1,856; David Allen (Conservative) 1,832; Phil Cohen (Labour) 1,828; Edith David (Labour) 1,745; Pavan Pavanakumar (Conservative) 1,616; Anila Skeja (Conservative) 1,589; Emma Matthews (Green) 981; Kari Khan (Reform) 921; Dima Ouda (Reform) 916; Ozen Halil (Green) 719; Kornelia Szostak (Green) 755; Roger Aitken (Liberal Democrat) 383; Petros Ioannou (Liberal Democrat) 294; Walter Buchgrabr (Liberal Democrat), 241.

Underhill (two seats): Zahra Beg (Labour) 1,233; Josh Tapper (Labour) 1,128; Lucy Milner (Reform) 829; Andrew Hutchings (Reform) 826; Reuben Ward (Conservative) 683; Gina Theodorou

(Independent) 619; Hugh Platt (Green) 595; Carl White (Green) 427; Stephen Barber (Liberal Democrat) 252; Sean Hooker (Liberal Democrat) 228; Riann Mehta (TUSC) 128; Donata Briamonte (Rejoin) 122.

Whetstone (two seats): Ezra Cohen (Labour) 1,292; Stephen Lewis (Conservative) 1,290; Kevin Ghateh (Conservative) 1,285; Ella Rose (Labour) 1,200; Adrian Kitching (Reform) 543; David Burns (Green) 535; Vaidehi Hedge (Green) 478; Martin Navias (Reform) 471; Luigi Bille (Liberal Democrat) 194; John MacRory (LD) 146; Richard Hewison (Rejoin 79)



There were a total of **312 candidates** for the **63 council seats** – a record number for Barnet which far exceeded the figure of 207 candidates in 2022.

The new council will meet for the first time on Tuesday 19 May when it will have to agree on the appointment of key roles and agree the future administration of the borough.

For the full results see Barnet Council website:

www.barnet.gov.uk/elections-and-voting/local-government-elections-thursday-7-may-2026/results



Hiranya de Alwis Jayasinghe with her three-year-old son Freddie

It's nothing more than child's play

Small children not cars are in control of the road outside their homes when a group of High Barnet parents take advantage of a temporary street closure to create a safe play space free of traffic.

The end of Calvert Road, which forms a short cul-de-sac, becomes a designated play space for the morning of the last Sunday of the month.

It has official recognition with a road closure notice installed by Barnet Council's highways department.

Encouraging children to start playing outdoors – an activity which has been in sad decline in recent years – is a passion for Hiranya de Alwis Jayasinghe who has a three-year-old son Freddie.

She discovered that several roads across the Borough of Barnet do already

close when residents apply for a play street closure, so she made her own application last summer and it proved an immediate success.

Parents around Calvert Road are hoping other neighbourhoods in High Barnet might join them so that children could have even more opportunities to play outside their homes in safety.

Sometimes up to a dozen small children from homes in surrounding roads such as Sebright, Puller and Alston join in the fun – a chance to ride up and down, chalk pictures on the road, or even blow bubbles.

“What children have lost in recent years is the freedom to play safely in the street outside their homes, the kind of encounter that was so commonplace years ago,” said Hiranya.



What the Dickens

The time when bad weather forced Charles Dickens to spend the night at the Red Lion in Barnet has been brought to life in the latest original production by the Blue Door Theatre Company.

Dickens, by then an old man with a walking stick, died six months later.

The thrust of the story line created by Barnet playwright Sarah Munford and her co-writer Claire Fisher is to encourage the audience to form their own view about Dickens and whether he had been misogynistic towards women.

Dickens (Chris Browning) was heading north when his coach was halted by a snowstorm.

He was welcomed to the Red Lion by the landlady Peggy (Naomi Richards) who catches her visitor by surprise – she was one of the many prostitutes taken off the streets of London with the author's help and who later made a success of her life.

The play had a successful run at the Bull Theatre.

The air has turned blue

A blue plaque has been installed outside a house in Calvert Road to draw attention to an ongoing dispute between residents and Barnet Council over the painting of double yellow line parking restrictions at the junction with Sebright Road.

Their complaint is that the council refused to listen to their concerns and has failed to respond to their argument that the restrictions are excessive and have created a dangerous corner by speeding up traffic.

Dr Chris Nightingale commissioned the plaque – highlighting the refrain “When Will They Ever Learn?” from a 1950s Pete Seeger's protest song – to remind Barnet Councillors that they



should engage with residents and take their concerns seriously. He says residents of Sebright and Calvert feel ignored and abandoned. Traffic speeds around their narrow streets of mainly small cottages and terraced homes have increased as a result of a double-yellow line restriction which they believe is longer than at other comparable road junctions.

A letter on behalf of the residents was sent to the council's chief executive, Cath Shaw, reminding her of Barnet's core values such as the undertaking by councillors to “actively listen, respond, collaborate and share ideas” with residents.

The legend around the edge of the plaque could not be clearer in expressing the residents' frustration:

Bone, the pick of the crop

Barnet Market stalwart David Bone, who has been selling fruit and vegetables since he was seven, helping on his father's stall, has been awarded a 2026 Borough of Barnet Civic Award for Lifetime Achievement.

His award is recognition of 65 years of “unwavering commitment and dedication” to serving generations of Barnet residents through rain, snow and sunshine.

David, who now works with his own son Tyler, was praised for his legendary reliability among customers and fellow traders.

Other award winners included the late Christine Shields, Sheila Gallagher, and Hilary Harrison.

The 2026 civic awards ceremony was held at Hendon Town Hall where the Deputy Lieutenant for the

Borough of Barnet, Martin Russell, read the individual citations for the awards. David Bone's long connection with Barnet Market began in 1959 when his father Albert opened the first fruit and vegetable stall at what was then the Barnet cattle market.

Albert, who died in 2021 at the age of 95, was helped on the stall by his wife Joan, his son David, and his sisters Roma and Rachel.

David started a separate vegetable stall next to his parents' pitch when he left school, and he now assists his own son Tyler who runs the family business. “It's always been a family affair. My father's father, Albert Bone senior, used to help, and now my son Tyler runs the business. So that's four generations who have been serving customers in Barnet.”



Leaking lake

Steel piling has been used to strengthen the dam at the end of Jack's Lake in Monken Hadley Common after the retaining earth wall sprang a leak which was posing a danger to the long-term future of one of Barnet's most popular beauty spots.

Barnet Council provided a grant of £40,000 from community infrastructure money to pay for the work which will include the restoration of the edge of the dam. Steel piling was inserted to a depth of 3.5metres along a 25-metre-long section of the retaining wall and then backfilled with 36 tons of pudding clay to provide a permanent plug to stop further leaks.

Jack's Lake – created in around 1770 – is one of several ponds, all fed by local streams in Hadley Wood Golf Course and the common.

The retaining wall, which holds in Jack's Lake, runs beside the footpath from Monken Hadley to Cockfosters, where the overflow from the ponds joins Pymmes Brook.

Jack's Lake is now the preserve of the Hadley Angling and Preservation Society.



David Bone: first started out in 1959 on his father's stall



Blue plaque bucket list complete

Visiting East Barnet and a chance to admire an English Heritage blue plaque to the eminent philosopher Sir Karl Popper was quite an achievement for London Ambulance administrative officer David Sleep.

Stopping outside a house in a quiet residential street near Oakleigh Park, East Barnet, where Sir Karl lived, was mission accomplished for a great supporter of the blue plaques which honour the lives of famous people.

A mid-terrace house in Burlington Rise which proudly commemorates Sir Karl was the last on David's list to see in Greater London.

David has now visited a total of 1,028 blue plaques since being introduced to their significance three years ago on a walk in Clapham and Battersea organised by Dr Susan Skedd who is a blue plaque historian for English Heritage.

Susan, who is a member of the Barnet Society, and who is Director of Barnet Medieval Festival and who organises history walks in and around High Barnet, said she was delighted to join David for the moment he was able to tick off the last of the blue plaques on his list.



Over the Rainbow

Barnet Mayor Cllr Danny Rich reopens the centre

After several years of uncertainty about its long-term future, the Rainbow Centre – a much-used community hub for Underhill and the Dollis Valley estate – has finally celebrated its re-opening in refurbished premises provided by Barnet Council

A weekly foodbank, free lunches and activities for children in school holidays, and highly popular mixed martial arts classes for youngsters and adults are just some of the centre's activities.

At the official re-opening, the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Danny Rich, was full of praise for the centre's initiatives.

He was delighted that the council had managed to provide a refurbished home

for the centre at the former Priory Grove Scout hut, off Westcombe Drive, next to the Ark Pioneer Academy, and that the move had gone so well.

"As an authority of 63 councillors we realise, we only achieve anything when we work with our residents, which is why as your landlords, we want to extend a big 'thank you' for all you are achieving for the community."

Because of delays to the completion of the regeneration of the Dollis Valley estate, the Rainbow Centre was kept waiting to be rehoused and there was added grief for the volunteers when a proposed move to the former cricket pavilion in Barnet Lane fell through.



Mays Lane blow

Barnet Council's attempt to halt the go ahead for a travellers' caravan site on a field in Green Belt land off Mays Lane has failed in the High Court to the disappointment of a local residents' group.

Gina Theodorou, chair of the Quinta Village Green Residents' Association, said that despite the setback they were determined to continue their fight to protect the Green Belt along Mays Lane.

Failure by the council to secure a full judicial review of a planning inspector's decision in favour of the travellers site means that work installing hard standing can now go ahead in a two-acre paddock – see above – which was previously used for grazing horses.

Space has been approved for two static caravans, two mobile homes and two day rooms to be occupied by two traveller families.

The application was made by brothers Patrick and J Casey.

A refusal by the council to grant approval led to a lengthy planning inquiry last year when the inspector decided that the "very special circumstances" of the two families outweighed any harm to the Green Belt.

This ruling was challenged by the council that in fact only four or five children would live on the site.

After a two-hour hearing – which Ms Theodorou attended – the High Court accepted that while there was a factual error in the inspector's decision it did not materially affect the outcome of whether to allow the site on Green Belt land. Development could now proceed.

Puddenecks keep up good work

For almost 60 years, Barnet's Puddenecks Club has been hosting events including a meal and entertainment for elderly residents.

As one of the town's oldest charities, the club was established by a group of volunteers whose mission has been to hold events which help senior citizens overcome the loneliness of being home alone.

Monthly supper evenings in the winter months are followed by barbeques in the summer and there is a chance to keep fit at weekly exercise classes.

Like so many other community groups the Puddenecks are keen to recruit additional volunteers and helpers and especially car drivers who can assist with transporting elderly guests and fundraising.

Club secretary Roger Moore said they knew the popularity of hosting a monthly evening meal demonstrated the importance of not forgetting the elderly.

Volunteers collect each of those attending an event directly from their homes and then

drive them back again at the end of the evening. "So many of the elderly, especially widows and those living alone don't like going out on their own in the evening and our aim is to take the edge off that loneliness," said Mr Moore.

Club members and volunteers are maintaining a contribution to the community which started in 1958 when a group of Sunday lunchtime drinkers got together in the now demolished Swan and Two Necks public house in High Road, Whetstone.

They decided to meet once a month for a steak and kidney pudding and then hold a meeting to decide how best to help older people in Barnet – hence their name, Puddenecks.

"We pride ourselves on making sure that any elderly resident we invite out is picked up at their home and then returned safely," said Mr Moore. "It is quite an exercise collecting 75 or so senior citizens from their homes but we know how much it is appreciated."

Expanded Medieval Festival a sure sign that Barnet's firmly on re-enacting map

After record participation and attendance last year, Barnet Medieval Festival is returning to its new site at the Lewis of London Ice Cream Farm, in Galley Lane, Barnet, over the weekend of Saturday and Sunday, June 6 and 7.

New attractions this year will include mounted knights in combat, a falconry display and for the first time a fancy-dress competition for younger visitors.

Open to all children, the competition will be judged in the festival arena at 2pm on both days with prizes awarded for the most historical and creative costumes.

The highlight each day will be re-enactments of the Second Battle of St Albans 1461 (at 12 noon) and the Battle of Barnet 1471 (at 4pm).

Last year's festival attracted a record

participation among military re-enactors and medieval traders, recognition that it is fast becoming a premier event in the calendar of Wars of the Roses celebrations.

Tickets can be bought at the gate or in advance from the online shop before June 5: www.barnet-medieval-festival-committee.sumupstore.com

There will be free car parking onsite in Galley Lane, including disabled parking and taxi drop-off and a free shuttle bus that will run regularly from behind the The Spires in Stapylton Road.

Full information: www.barnetmedievalfestival.org Enquiries: barnetmedievalfestival@gmail.com



Commemorating the 555th anniversary of the Battle of Barnet

BARNET MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

6th & 7th June 2026
10.30am - 5pm

Battle Re-enactments
Mounted Knights
Cannon Firing & Archery
Living History & Music
Falconry
Children's Activities
Medieval Market
Food & Drink

Entry:
FREE for Children under 12
£5 for Children (12 to 17)
£10 for Adults

Lewis of London Ice Cream Farm
Fold Farm, Galley Lane, Barnet EN5 4RA

FREE Parking and Shuttle bus from Barnet
www.barnetmedievalfestival.org

WARSALES OF THE ROSES
Barnet Medieval Festival

June Medieval Festival commemorates the 555th anniversary of the Battle of Barnet and will include a host of new attractions, including mounted knights in combat. Opposite page, (Right, top) Hilary Harrison and Mike Noronha of Barnet Museum and (below) Rev Francesco Aresco leads a remembrance service for the men of 1471

Banner recognition sought

Barnet High Street has become a showcase for Battle of Barnet banners, a heritage asset that might get international recognition

Painting and caring for the heraldic banners that are displayed each summer is an ongoing responsibility of volunteers at Barnet Museum and they believe their work is an historic legacy for the town.

An application has been made by the museum to see if the craft of making and maintaining replicas of these medieval banners can be recognised by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage – a practice which is part of the cultural

identity of a community.

Unlike tangible heritage, such as monuments or artefacts, an intangible heritage is passed down from generation to generation and is continuously being recreated.

Almost a decade ago Barnet Museum took inspiration from the town of Tewkesbury which has been celebrating the 1471 Battle of Tewkesbury for the last 50 years with re-enactments, a medieval festival and a display of heraldic banners.

Volunteers at Barnet Museum followed their example and started researching the history of the coats of arms of royalty and noblemen whose troops fought in the Battle of Barnet on April 14, 1471, the month before the Battle of Tewkesbury on May 4, 1471.

The application to UNESCO for a listing of intangible cultural heritage is now being made in conjunction with Wars of the Roses enthusiasts at Tewkesbury.

One of the first heraldic banners to be reproduced in Barnet was that of King Henry VI.

All told the museum volunteers have now researched and painted 106 banners.



Remembering the fallen of 1471

Historic prayers and verses added a moving tribute to the men who lost their lives in the 1471 Battle of Barnet when wreaths were laid to mark the 555th anniversary.

A special service of commemoration was researched and devised by the recently appointed rector of Monken Hadley parish church, the Reverend Francesco Aresco.

He read from texts which he said would have been known by the men who fought in the battle, most of whom left no name and who were buried in unknown graves in the vicinity of Hadley Highstone.

Rev Aresco said the service was a moment to stand at the Highstone and remember their dying before God:

“These men who woke that morning, laced their boots, felt the fog on their faces, and did not come home.”

Whatever divided the Lancastrians and Yorkists on the battlefield, the ground



around them received those who died without distinction and “has held them these five hundred and fifty-five years” since the day of the battle, 14 April 1471.

Dr Susan Skedd, director of the annual Barnet Medieval Festival, led the wreath laying. Her wreath – made from recycled flowers by Ursula Stone of the Flower Bank in New Barnet – included red and white roses and carnations “perfectly arranged” to reflect the colours of the Lancastrians and Yorkists.

2026 AGM – NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of The Barnet Society will be held on Thursday 11th June 2026, 7pm at Pennefather Hall, Christ Church, St Albans Road, Barnet, EN5 4LA

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of 80th AGM 19th June 2025
2. Approval of Annual Reports (as published)
3. Election of Independent Examiner
4. Election of Officers and Committee
5. Proposal to Incorporate: The Society shall be called "The Barnet Society, a company limited by guarantee, headed by a nominated director to fulfil the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 **(Proposed change to Constitution in italics)**
6. Any Other Business

Officers and Committee

President	Elected	Until
Aubrey Rose	2008	N/A
Vice Presidents		
Dr Jenny Remfry	2016	N/A
Hon. Independent Examiner		
Chris Feldman	2024	2025
Committee Members 2026		
John Hay - Chair	2024	2027
Eamonn Rafferty – Vice Chairman	2022	2028
Frances Wilson (Acting) – Hon. Secretary	2024	2027
Andreas Tjirkali – Hon. Treasurer	2024	2027
Anthony Mak Fan – Membership Sec	2024	2028
Robin Bishop – P & E Lead	2022	2028
Susan Skedd – Minutes Sec	2024	2027
Simon Watson (Web Officer - outgoing)	2022	xx
Nick Jones	2024	2027
Simon Radford	2022	2028
Mahender Khari	2022	2028
Christine Klein	2022	2028

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.

Membership

As of 30th April, there were 468 memberships comprising 637 members. This is a decrease in membership in the past year, where 509 memberships comprising of 734 members was recorded.

We have migrated our membership database to a new system, MemberMojo. Also, last year we increased the membership fee from £8 to £10 for individual and £12 to £15 for family. There were 196 automatic renewals, 33 renewals by standing order or cheque and a total of 26 new member applications.

Chair's Annual Report

The past year has been busy behind the scenes once again with much activity surrounding High Barnet Station and the proposed redevelopment, which I have to report to those of you who don't know, if any, was rejected by the Council's Planning Committee, a major win for us and for those who objected, at least for now. A lot of time has been spent on opposing this horrendous over development. The proposed high rise blocks, some of up to 11 storeys would have potentially ruined the skyline as well as putting immense strain on local amenities and services and local infrastructure.

There will be more changes for the Society to come over the next year where we are looking to become an incorporated organisation to secure our long-term future. Something that needs serious consideration for our survival for at least the next 80 years. The proposal is to launch as a Company Limited by Guarantee which will protect committee members from personal liability and make wanting to get involved in the running of the Society more attractive, especially to younger members, and will hopefully encourage new blood and ideas. At some point in the perhaps not too distant future, some very long standing committee members may wish to take more of a 'back seat' and with no successors in the pipeline, this could jeopardise the whole future of the Society through lack of willing bodies to carry on our excellent work and highly regarded and respected local status with our local government and other organisations.

This past year, our new website has garnered much praise for its new design and more modern appearance and continuing quality of news content provided, in the main, by our highly acclaimed in-house Journalist and story writer Nick Jones. Since the launch in late March 2025 the site has been generating an amazing number of daily visitors. We are receiving around 800 'hits' per day, just over 5,000 per week, which for a local news reporting and local events programme site is astounding.

Robin Bishop also contributes vital news on planning and developments in the area and also works tirelessly with his team unseen in the background. Immense gratitude and thanks to all the committee members for what they are doing to keep the 'show on the road'.

As I embark on my third year as Chair, my ambition is to complete the updating of the Society infrastructure. As I've said, incorporating the Society is paramount, but getting our Instagram revived and active again would be the icing on a very fruitful and fulfilling cake. Most committee terms, in general are set to three years and I want my final year to focus on attracting younger people to take an interest in our local area and historic past, so that future generations can enjoy what we have, and are enjoying now. I hope by the end of the coming term of office in 2027, there will be a stronger and more stable Barnet Society to take forward into the future for everyone.

John Hay
Chair

EXISTENTIAL THREATS

ROBIN BISHOP writes: This year we've faced two of the greatest threats to the character of Chipping Barnet in my 13 years as Planning & Environment Lead: the planning application for 283 flats at High Barnet Place on the station car park and a surge of proposals to build on the Green Belt.

The High Barnet Place application is unacceptable for many reasons, especially its excessive height (up to 11 storeys) – in flagrant breach of Barnet's Local Plan, only adopted by the Council last year. In response we submitted a 63-page critique in collaboration with Barnet Residents Association, one of over 800 objections to the scheme. Gratifyingly, the Council refused the application by 8 votes to 1.

That wasn't the end of the story, however. The application was called in by the Mayor of London and will be determined at a public hearing on 27 May. We've written expressing concern about the conflict of interest (the Mayor controlling Transport for London, commissioning the design and standing to gain from its approval) and made a representation to the hearing.

They would set a worrying precedent for the future of The Spires and its carparks, including the former Marketplace. The companies owning them have gone into administration making their future, including any redevelopment, a matter we and the Council – which owns the freehold of The Spires – must watch closely.

Our other major concern has been development in the Green Belt. Last year the government introduced the concept of Grey Belt – neglected or low-quality parts of the Green Belt – into planning law. Many sites, especially in and around Arkley, could be argued to fall into this category. As we foresaw, speculative developers are proposing new housing on them and stand to make massive, unearned windfall profits if approved.

Particularly alarming is a plan for up to



Particularly alarming is a plan for up to 300 homes on the former Arkley Manor Farm
Picture: ITV

300 homes on the former Arkley Manor Farm. If that and its adjoining 'Grey' sites are developed, the Green Belt separating Barnet from Borehamwood will disappear.

A similar criticism applies to the government's and Enfield Council's plans to build on Green Belt land between our boroughs, including a new town at Crews Hill and Chase Park of 21,000 homes. We've also objected to 900 homes on fields between the M25 & Potters Bar, which Hertsmere has refused but which has gone to appeal.

What could save Arkley is the commitment in Barnet's Local Plan to create 'a new Regional Park within designated Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land in the Brent Valley and Barnet Plateau Green Grid Area...".

Two years ago we were among 1,304 objectors to two travellers' pitches on Green Belt land off Mays Lane, and the Council refused the application. Last year the travellers went to appeal and won. The Council sought a judicial review, but has unfortunately lost its case. (See Page 5)

This year the Council refused an application for a new stadium for Barnet Football Club on Barnet Playing Fields. We were neutral. The Club decided not to appeal against the decision.

Just outside the Green Belt, we objected to an application to build a mansion in Christchurch Lane spinney. We worked with the developer to secure some improvements, but the submission left

us with concerns. The application was refused but the developer has appealed. The Council has, however, updated its Tree Preservation Order for the site to strengthen protection of the woodland.

No.63 High Street (the former Post Office) is on the market. It's locally listed, so the main façade should be safe, but there's scope for redevelopment of the long site behind it.

We objected to the unauthorised replacement of the traditional shopfront of No.190 High Street (Wilkinsons Chemist), which was refused by the planners. We await the outcome of an appeal.

We've looked at only 18 planning applications this year compared with an average of over 100 in each of the previous seven years. We supported two and objected to only three. With the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee we've commented on 54 applications and a number of enforcement cases.

Thank you to members who have sent comments on the cases mentioned, and to Guy Braithwaite, Simon Kaufman, Dave McCormick, Nick Saul and Katy Staton for their specialist expertise – and especially for their contributions to our High Barnet Place submission.

The Society has also benefited from intel from the Federation of Residents Associations of Barnet, London Forum and London Green Belt Council.

I'm having to taper down my own input for family reasons. Would anyone else like to help with this vital work?

Barnet Society Accounts to 31 Mar 2026

OPERATING STATEMENT TO 31 MAR 2026

	1 Apr '25- 31 Mar '26	Apr '24 - Mar '25
INCOME		
Membership Fees: minimum	6,055.99	5,349.57
overpayments	850.81	383.74
On-line donations	57.66	81.06
Gifts & Donation: members	158.90	0.00
Gifts & Donation: non-members	0.00	0.00
Activities & Fund Raising Events	2,110.39	541.91
Newsletter sales	0.00	105.00
Books sales	0.00	0.00
Bank Interest Earned	56.60	140.89
Other Income	0.00	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	9,290.35	6,602.17
EXPENSE		
Events		
AGM	309.13	299.03
Christmas Stall	45.00	61.45
Other Events	1,540.00	59.35
Insurance	97.50	87.00
Total Events	1,991.63	506.83
Newsletters		
Design	1,631.75	1,320.00
Printing	2,038.00	2,133.00
Postage & Stationery	346.00	306.60
Total Newsletter	4,015.75	3,759.60
Donations & Contributions		
Donations & Contributions	0.00	0.00
Total Donations & Contribs	0.00	0.00
Computers and Internet		
IT support/ software	14.39	1,600.00
Website admin	325.00	0.00
Total Computers and Internet	339.39	1,600.00
Other Expenses		
Membership admin	104.00	85.95
Membership Expenses	98.60	175.00
Other printing	0.00	0.00
Gifts & Flowers	15.00	0.00
Dues & Subscriptions	406.89	234.39
Bank and PayPal Fees	284.32	93.60
Legal fees	0.00	1,380.00
Total Other Expenses	908.81	1,968.94
TOTAL EXPENSE	7,255.58	7,835.37
SURPLUS/ (SHORTFALL)	2,034.77	(1,233.20)

BALANCE SHEET TO 31 MARCH 2026

	1 Apr '25- 31 Mar '26	Apr '24 - Mar '25
CURRENT ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Pre-paid expenses	0.00	0.00
Cash at bank and in hand		
HSBC - Deposit Account	4,421.74	5,149.44
HSBC - Current Account	798.46	455.74
PayPal	4,731.84	2,627.09
Total Cash at Bank and in hand	9,952.04	8,232.27
Total Current Assets	9,952.04	8,232.27
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Advance Receipts	0.00	-315.00
Total Current Assets	0.00	-315.00
NET ASSETS	9,952.04	7,917.27
CAPITAL AND RESERVES		
Movement		
Opening balance	7,917.27	9,150.47
Surplus / Shortfall for the period	2,034.77	-1,233.20
Closing balance	9,952.04	7,917.27
Comprising		
May Finnerty Memoriam Reserve	1,000.00	1,000.00
General Reserves	8,952.04	6,917.27
TOTAL Capital and Reserves	9,952.04	7,917.27

COMMENTARY

Membership fees have shown a modest increase this year due to most members moving to the new fee structure for individuals and family.

The presentation of event income and expenditure has been shown in its entirety in this year accounts following advise from the independent auditor whereas last year just the profit for the annual dinner was shown in the accounts under income thereby explaining the increases under 'Activities & Fund Raising Events' and expenditure for 'Other Events'.

Overall expenditure has decreased this year as there were no major investments in IT or legal fees as per previous years. The biggest increase in terms of expenditure relate to 'Website Admin' which will be an annual cost and 'Dues & Subscriptions' following the purchase of a Copyright license.

Please note that from next year 'Membership Fees Minimum and Overpayments' will be amalgamated into one line item in the annual accounts for presentation purposes.

Andreas Tjirkalli Hon Treasurer

Minutes of the 80th Annual General Meeting

Pennefather Hall, St Albans Road, Barnet, 19th June 2025

John Hay (Chair) thanked everyone for coming to our 80th AGM and said we had marked the year with a celebratory dinner at Villaggio in Church Passage, which had been attended by many members sitting in this room. John Hay then introduced the members of the Committee and said apologies has been received from Mr & Mrs Kobish, Susan Skedd, Simon Radford, Simon Watson & Marcos Scriven. There were 34 members present.

John Hay introduced Jenny Remfry (Vice President) who said Aubrey Rose our President was here in spirit if not in person as he is 98 years of age but he follows our progress and continues to support us. She is the only Vice President as Robin Marson resigned a few years ago.

1.0 Approval of Minutes of 79th AGM (11th July 2024)

These are published in the Summer Newsletter (**Page 11**) and John Hay asked for them to be approved. These were approved

2.0 Officer's Reports

2.1 Chair & Membership Report

John Hay said the Membership Secretary Kim Ambridge resigned in December and since then we have built a new Membership Database. Ways of communicating have changed dramatically in the past 80 years and our systems were unable to cope. The database is now using software linked through to Membermojo, which means members can manage their own record directly with new members joining entering their details and reminders will be sent electronically, making it much easier to administer. **Anthony Mak-Fan** has agreed to take on the Membership Secretary role and will be trained on the database. It is recognised that many existing members are not on the internet and arrangements will be made to accommodate them.

John thanked Simon Watson and Marcos Scriven for everything they've done to help get our IT into the modern era.

Our website was equally outdated, having been installed 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 it was launched the last week of March'25 .

We currently have 473 memberships totalling 556 members.

2.2 Planning & Environment Report

Robin Bishop did not recap on the report on Page 9 of the Newsletter, which identifies the development proposals in the area and our responses but drew members attention to the two applications which were going before the Planning Committee this month which is the proposal to build 300 flats on the High Barnet Station car park and the proposal to build a new stadium for Barnet Football Club on Barnet Playing Fields sited on the Green Belt. He promised to keep members informed of their progress.

2.3 Approval of Treasurer's Report and Accounts year ended 31st March'25

Andreas Tjirkalli, Treasurer, presented the report published on Page 10 of the Newsletter. It showed the main expenditure was on updating the website and seeking legal guidance on our terms to ensure we have a website that meets all the current legislative requirements. These costs totalled £2,980 and were mostly funded from our reserves. The key fundraising activity was the dinner at Le Rose which raised over £500. At the close of the financial year 2024/2025 there was a deficit of £1,233, reducing the Society's Capital Reserves to £7,917.

The accounts have been independently examined and passed by Chris Feldman who volunteered to take on the role at the 79th AGM. Andreas thanked Chris and Kim Ambridge the former Membership Secretary for their help in his first year as Treasurer. The accounts were approved with no objections.

2.4 Approval of 80th Annual Reports

John Hay said the Chair's, Planning & Environment, Membership Reports and Annual Accounts are all published in the Summer Newsletters (Pages 8-11). The purpose of the AGM is to ask members to approve the actions taken over the past year. The approval of the reports was proposed by Eamonn Rafferty and seconded by Andreas Tjirkalli and approved by the members.

3.0 Election of Independent Examiner 2025-26

Andreas Tjirkalli said Chris Feldman was happy to continue in the post and asked for this to be approved. It was approved unanimously.

4.0 Election of Officers and Committee

John Hay is willing to continue as Chair but Simon Watson and Marcos Scriven

have resigned, which means we really need a member to volunteer and help with our IT. Kim Ambridge stepped down as Membership Secretary but will continue on the Committee. Anthony Mak-Fan has agreed to replace her.

4.1 Members standing down but willing to be re-elected.

Eamonn Rafferty to continue as Vice Chair, Robin Bishop to continue as Lead on Planning & Environment. Christine Klein, Mahender, Cllr Simon Radford are also happy to be re-elected.

This was approved with no objections.

5.0 Company Limited by Guarantee

John Hay said the Barnet Society is 80 years old and like many organisations set up then is an unincorporated association. Society has become a lot more litigious since then as we could be taken to court so we need to protect our members. A recent example of this was a copyright issue which was discovered by AI and resulted in requests for breaches of copyright. We need to ensure members are not personally liable so are planning to become a Company Limited by Guarantee which could act as an umbrella organisation to include other societies such as BRA. Mahender Khari is an expert in this area and will assist with setting it up together with a lawyer to provide legal advice. We will keep members informed of our progress and ensure we address your concerns and meet your approval.

6.0 Subscriptions

We propose raising the subscription for all members from September 2025. Two years ago we raised them from £8 to £10 for single membership and £12 to £15 for family membership but this did not apply to those who paid by Standing Order. We would like to standardise this and raise the fees to £10 and £15 for all. It needs to be ratified by the Members. Proposed by Jenny Remfry and seconded by Jim Nelhams and agreed unanimously.

7.0 Any Other Business

Jim Nelhams asked what the £1,000 May Finnerty Memorial Reserve shown in the accounts was intended for. Eamonn Rafferty said it was a donation for a member of his family so the Barnet Society could do something worthwhile in Barnet in her memory and added that the donation was not irrevocable and was subject to approval by the donor.

Barnet Press' role in 1926 strike

Such was the success and respect for Barnet's former weekly newspaper, The Barnet Press, that a century ago it published an emergency edition on sale each evening in central London during the 1926 General Strike **writes Nick Jones**

Historians describe the strike as the greatest act of working-class solidarity in British history.

Local newspapers around the country, which were non-unionised, seized the opportunity to print more copies as the national newspapers had been forced to suspend most publications.

The Barnet Press, first published by George Cowing in 1859, was a family-owned weekly newspaper which defended its political independence and whose workers were not trade union members.

The editor wanted to ensure that the public were informed about the strike.

A reporter was assigned to listen to BBC news bulletins and then write up news stories for a special daily edition as the Cowing family was anxious to inform readers about the "serious pass to which this country has been reduced".

A 5 o'clock National Emergency Edition was printed for sale in central London.

The BBC – or British Broadcasting Company as it was then known – had only recently been established and had become a rival source of news to the newspapers.

John Reith, then the managing director of the BBC, was said by historians to have "prudently self-censored" the BBC's output so as not alarm ministers fearing that government might requisition the service.

A selection of front-page headlines from The Barnet Press gave an indication as to why the Cowing family had not recognised the print unions: "Prime Minister stands firm", "Rioting at Edinburgh", "Motor cars attacked", "Government to protect non strikers".

It was not until the Second World War that printers at the Barnet Press joined a trade union, the National Graphical Association.

Publication of The Barnet Press was halted by industrial action in November 1977 because of work to rule.

A front-page statement on an emergency edition explained that had happened:

"The Barnet Press group management very much regret that for the first time since the paper was first published 118 years ago, we have been unable to produce normal edition of the Barnet and Potters Bar Press."

Trustees for the Cowing estate sold The Barnet Press in the 1990s. It continued publication under new ownership in Hendon until its final closure in August 2017.



Read all about it: Above, a copy of the 'Strike' Edition. (Top and centre) The offices of The Barnet Press in the High Street.

Courtesy of Barnet Museum

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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