

Report of the Environment and Transport Committee 2014–15

Under the chairmanship of Mike Gee the Committee was very active in 2014. The 'Finchley in Bloom' competition was a great success – it attracted 53 entries. With good press coverage, it drew attention both to the Society and, more importantly, to the value of gardens at the front of houses instead of the sterile expanses of concrete or brick that are becoming more and more prevalent. Mike Gee continued his successful programme of walks and related slide shows, particularly “Visions of a Garden City” which explored the Hampstead Garden Suburb and “Greenways from Friern to Osidge”, that followed a slide show at Osidge Library. Derek Warren contributed notes on wildlife to the Newsletter.

The Committee continued to monitor changes happening to or proposed for the green spaces of Finchley, especially the environmental aspects of the way in which the Avenue House Estate Trust proposes to develop the Stephens House and Gardens estate. Other green spaces being watched over included Briarfield, Victoria Park (including funding tree planting), Swan Lane, Princes Park and Tillingham Way, where the Committee had a success when it got dangerous razor wire removed from fencing bordering the open space adjacent to the Dollis Brook bridge.

On the transport front, the Committee continued the lobbying for a bus service to serve the new Finchley Memorial Hospital, following a survey it carried out in April in conjunction with the Friends of Finchley Memorial Hospital and its presentation to the Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee; it is hoped that all the effort of the Society and many others will eventually bear fruit. Peter Hale also initiated work on the pedestrian environment with a pilot in East Finchley that highlighted a number of issues for pedestrians that are not confined to one part of our area. We believe there should be a change in perception of the Pedestrian Environment, with higher standards recognised and expected.

The Committee is in need of new blood so, if you feel that you can contribute to this important section of the Society, please do come forward. Although much of the work of the Planning Committee has an environmental aspect, as do many of the things the Society publicises in its newsletter and discusses at its meetings, it would be most unfortunate if a large amenity society did not have a thriving section dedicated to environmental and transport matters.