

THE FINCHLEY SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 28 JUNE 2018

ANNUAL REPORT

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This year has been my first in the role of Society Chairman and it has been an interesting and busy year. I have sat on a number of committees including Environment & Transport, Ad Hoc, Administration and the Executive Committee which I chair. I have learned many things including one requirement for the post is to have a dining room table around which ten people may comfortably sit!

My year began with our annual dinner, held as usual at the very pleasant clubhouse and surroundings of the South Herts Golf Club. Our guest of honour was Cllr David Longstaff who had just stepped down from his year as the Borough's mayor and entertained us with stories of his time when wearing the Mayoral chain.

Attending committee meetings has enabled me to see the enthusiasm of the various members who deal with a diverse and relevant range of issues. Each committee has presented its own report so I will not dwell on their activities but I would like to record my thanks to all those who regularly turn up to discuss and resolve matters and spend time visiting locations or researching matters which are under consideration. The Planning Committee, for instance, not only have their own meetings but a number of the members also attend the Council planning meetings and speak on the Society's behalf regarding planning applications.

But for many, the monthly meetings are the outward face of the Society; in September Andy Savage spoke on "The Railways of the Northern Heights". In October Mark King regaled us with what life was like in Finchley during the First World War. November saw the Jean Scott Memorial Lecture and we were delighted to entertain the writer Caitlin Davies who spoke about her book "The Ghost of Lilly Painter" set in East Finchley.

Our own Harriet Copperman and her former colleague David Oliviere gave a moving account in January about the early years of the North London Hospice. In February, one of the few Grade II* listed buildings in Finchley; "Hawthorn Dene" was the subject of a talk by Frank Kelsall, and in March we were visited by Robin Bishop from The Barnet Society who spoke on "Arks, whalebones and other developments, an introduction to the Barnet Society".

My thanks go to Harriet Copperman who organises and manages our meetings and outings with expertise and keeps us all running to time.

In a campaign to raise its profile and encourage new members, the Society has resumed its appearances at the various summer shows in the locality. Last year we were at Coppetts Wood Spring Festival, a community fair at Friary Park, the East Finchley Festival at Cherry Tree Wood and the fair held at in the grounds of Stephen's House. We also had a stall at the Martin School's Christmas Fair.

Supporting these events is important for their survival and a way of fostering community spirit within our part of the Borough. The Society always has a good stock of books on sale and many of these are offered at specially reduced prices and we plan to be at each fair again this summer.

For many who are unable to attend meetings, our bi-monthly newsletter provides an excellent way to keep in touch with events in Finchley and its environs. They are packed with local information, stories and photographs. In addition to the printed copy they are also available on our website. Each new edition features the winning photograph in our on-going competition which is open to members and their families. The rules can be found on the Society's website together with lots of other useful information.

My thanks go to Rosemary and David Coates for their work in producing the newsletter and to Stephen Yeo who is our webmaster and who keeps our website fresh and current.

A very important feature of our Society is to be found in the basement of Stephen's House in the form of our archives. Maintained by a very small team of volunteers led by Tony Roberts, the archives contain an amazing collection of photographs, letters, documents, maps and other paraphernalia all carefully catalogued, indexed and filed away. I have visited the archives a number of times and I am always impressed by the speed at which Tony is able to locate a particular item or photograph and over the years I know he has been able to resolve many enquiries concerning the history of the area.

The Finchley Society has been without a patron for some time so it was with great delight that we heard that our President, David Smith, had secured the consent of Joanna Lumley, star of stage, screen and television to take on that role. Because of her work and filming commitments it had been difficult to arrange a visit but these were finally overcome in March when she spent a day at Stephen's House where she met the Society's officers and posed for photographs by the statue to Spike Milligan. Later she opened the Visitors Centre.

In completing my report I will once again mention the name of someone who I have already thanked. Rosemary Coates is the very hard working secretary of the Society and I think it is not unreasonable to say that she has matters to deal with every day of every week. She has offered me considerable support and advice throughout the year and we are very fortunate in having the services of such a dedicated and capable volunteer.

I look forward (if elected) to another year as chairman of The Finchley Society.

Mick Crick

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Administration Committee meets every two months in members' houses. The agenda has been growing over the year which reflects the wide-ranging topics the Society undertakes. The Terms of Reference of the Administration Committee is to monitor the systems set up in the Constitution to ensure the smooth running of the Society. We have recently been reviewing the "User Guides" for the newsletter distribution and 100 Club. This work continues.

Meetings: Harriet Copperman continues as our programme organiser despite some health problems and was herself a speaker at one of our two afternoon meetings. Harriet also organised a successful outing to the London Canal Museum in May.

Project: The Photographic Competition is in its second year with some exceptionally good submissions which have been included in the newsletter. The completed 2019 calendar will be on sale later this year.

Information Panels and Plaques: This project has continued throughout the year but due to delays and changes no panels have been installed. The three currently in hand are for Octavia Hill at the Green Man Community Centre; George Sanger, showman, at Park Farm Close, and Anthony Salvin, architect on East End Road.

Education: David Smith met Year 3 children at Martin School in May. We are aware that more needs to be done to engage with schools and we continue to pursue ways of doing so.

Publicity: Following the AGM in June, an ad hoc committee was set up to deal with the issues raised about promoting the Society through social media. This has since been renamed the Public Relations Committee and continues to meet. One of the immediate effects has been the more frequent use of *MailChimp* to draw the attention of members to meetings or matters which concern us not only as reminders of planned events but also for current happenings.

Annual Dinner: the Committee also arranged another successful dinner.

Newsletter: This continues to be produced six times a year by the energetic team of Rosemary and David Coates. Informative, interesting and never dull it is consistent in its professional appearance. Martin Summers and his delivery team are well organised despite having to reorganise postal rounds because of a reduction in the number of volunteers. (There is an opportunity here for members to exercise regularly and do a worthwhile job!). We do now deliver or email to many schools in our area.

Membership: There has been a slight drop in membership over the course of the year, mainly of Corporate members. The Public Relations Committee are discussing ways to encourage new members to join us. David Coates keeps the Committee up to date with membership affairs.

Fund Raising: Book sales are a source of income although this is the return on our expenditure on publishing in the first place. Guy Nevill makes sure that the outlets we use are kept supplied with books and that payments are received and reports directly to the Committee.

The 100 Club: This has had another good year with members taking up the full 100 shares so that over £600 has been raised to help pay the rent on the archive room at Avenue House.

Conclusion: I can do no better than repeat the comment I made last year. There are six meetings a year and umpteen email and phone calls between the meetings. You see the Swan gliding along but do not see the frantic paddling below the waterline.

Peter Marsh

REPORT OF THE ARCHIVES TEAM

Cataloguing: Having completed all the major catalogues for photos, slides, books, maps, artefacts and legal documents, the team has moved on to cataloguing the contents of the individual boxes and providing each item with a serial number for easy recovery.

Acquisitions: The archive continues to receive a sporadic trickle of photos, books and documents for the archives. One member of our team has spent all year sorting out papers donated by Bill Tyler. The lack of a filing system for correspondence has impeded the process. It is hoped that this task will be completed mid 2018.

Enquiries: The archives continue to get a slow stream of enquiries via the internet. Most are by members of the public requesting photos of places their ancestors lived or documentary evidence for them being there. I estimate we can help in just under half of the cases. The archives have also assisted Tricolor/Terapia with photos for their information panels on the Bothy; Frank Kelsall's research into Hawthorn Dene and provided Avenue/Stephens House with some material for the forthcoming information boards celebrating Spike Milligan's 100th birthday. We were also able to assist Linda Kane in identifying some early photos of East Finchley and in doing so gained some early photos for the archive. We helped Denise Ferguson with information about Sedgemere House and in return gained information about local resident Sam Woodiwiss, a noted breeder of Abyssinian Cats and Bulldogs as well as being the owner of the *Sedgemere Faith* believed to be the foundation female of the British Alpine Goat.

Digitisation: The archive team will be able to participate in whatever digitisation programme the Society eventually decides on.

Copyright: Much discussion has been held on the Society's position regarding the provision of our images to others in view of the complexity of copyright. We await the definitive advice of the trustees in this matter.

Margaret Cullen: The team was saddened by the loss of team member Margaret Cullen, who died at the end of 2017.

Tony Roberts

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

The following items are amongst the many issues we have discussed and acted upon.

North Finchley Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document: Within the response sent by The Finchley Society, proposals for traffic and transport are considered to be fundamental in the success of the future of the town centre. While noting the consultation responses, the Barnet Council Policy & Resources Committee have agreed to the adoption of the draft supplementary planning document and to establish a North Finchley Partnership Board comprising of local stakeholders including community associations.

Draft Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document: We also responded to this consultation, our comments being taken into consideration when the final version was adopted by Barnet Council.

Parks and open spaces: At Victoria Park, money raised from the sale of the park keeper's lodge is ring-fenced for capital spending on the Park. Landscaping Design Service Groundwork are now consulting with park users in order to draw up a master plan for the park. The Friends of Victoria Park have also produced a wish list of development ideas. A Farmers Market has planning permission to take place at the Ballards Lane entrance to the park.

Cherry Tree Wood: the pavilion stands as a forlorn wreck despite a report being drawn up in September 2016 by Capita recommending demolition. The time has come when this seems the only option.

Footpaths Rights of Way group: When we see a 'public footpath' sign we think that this must be a right of way but in order to have this protective status the path must be recorded as such on the council's definitive list and map. As you will know from the item in a previous newsletter a footpaths 'Rights of Way' group has been formed to record all footpaths in the Borough. Libby Martin, secretary of Barnet Ramblers, and Roger Chapman of The Finchley Society are working with representatives of community groups around Barnet borough in order to meet the deadline date of December 2025 for claims using historical evidence.

We will have to make sure that footpaths included on Barnet Council's 'List of streets maintainable at public expense' are included as rights of way and that other routes not covered on this list are similarly recorded and all are added to the Definitive Map.

The urban alleyways of Finchley need to be recorded as rights of way so as to safeguard their status for the future. The Rights of Way group approach to Barnet Council has been effective in providing additional highways information, and confirmed that they do not have a regularly used procedure for handling Rights of Way claims. The group has done historical map checks of the Borough, identifying historic routes. Members of the group and others have submitted suggested routes currently in use but not properly recorded, leading to a long list to investigate. The group will be putting in a few sample claims to help establish procedures and see how Barnet council respond.

Road and pavements: On Barnet Council Residents Survey over the last five years, top of the list of dissatisfaction has been the condition of roads and pavements. Barnet Highways have a 'Network Recovery Planned Maintenance Programme' in which they are attempting to catch up on many years of lack of maintenance of roads and pavements. In order to get lengths of road and pavement included in the maintenance programme the request must go through local councillors.

Problems such as potholes and broken paving should be notified to the council by the 'report a problem' facility on the Barnet council website. A useful facility for raising environmental and transport matters is by sending items to the Finchley & Golders Green Forum which guarantees a response from the council and which may lead to matters being taken up and acted upon.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members to the committee, Stephen Cooper as secretary and Brenda Barrett.

Peter Hale

PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Planning Committee has been stable in the past year. Peter Pickering continues as Chairman and Avra Archer as Secretary, and every other month Pat Dunnill makes us welcome in her home which is centrally placed for our meetings.

We have developed close relations with the Friern Barnet and Whetstone Residents Association, and David Thompson from them is contributing to our work. We have had responses to our appeals for more members, and Brenda Barrett has already joined us.

Objective: Our objective is to preserve the local, heritage, and conservation character of Finchley and Friern Barnet, and to support local people in efforts to resist inappropriate development. We are still vigilant to prevent the loss of family houses to flats in the quintessentially suburban areas of Finchley. But the pressure for development in our area has continued unremittingly during the year as the population of London continues growing; the new London Plan which is in the process of approval will almost certainly require there to be more homes in our borough than were hitherto planned.

Procedure: We have monitors for each ward - Mary Hogben for East Finchley, Avra Archer for Church End, Sheila Shannon for West Finchley and Jacques Astruc for Woodhouse, while Peter Pickering looks at that part of Totteridge ward that is within the old borough of Finchley. Other members of the Society keep us informed. We are represented on the Conservation Area Advisory Committee for the four conservation areas in Finchley.

We receive by email from the Planning Department of Barnet Council a list of planning and tree works applications each week, and the monitors study them. Comments are submitted on behalf of the Society by email, letter or direct comment on the Barnet website, and may be followed up with a speaking appearance before the Council committee and by representations to an Inspector if there is an appeal.

Enforcement We press for enforcement when planning rules have been broken - developers may, without planning permission, demolish or convert existing properties and applicant may, instead of doing that for which they have permission, ignore it and build something different. The Council's Enforcement Team are not very robust in getting these breaches rectified – presumably because of the time and cost involved, and the opportunity the developer has of succeeding in an appeal. In the scheme of things the planning department believes the breaches which we have drawn attention to be relatively small. However, in our view such breaches affect the integrity of the area and send out the wrong message to residents and potential developers.

Front Gardens: Barnet Council say in their local plan "Gardens make a significant contribution to local character. They provide the natural element of residential character contributing towards biodiversity, tranquillity, sense of space and enhancement of the setting of buildings." We do so agree, and wish only that the Council would prevent the apparently inexorable loss of front gardens to hardstandings, with the consequent dropped kerbs, which lose some 20 feet of the road, and exacerbate on-street parking by depriving other residents from using that section of the road. A recent case in Brent Way has shown how toothless planning is.

Cases: During 2017/18, the Committee has had reported to it well over a hundred cases. After two refusals and one dismissed appeal a reasonable proposal for Brookdene on Holden Road has been approved; work has not yet started. Permissions have now been given for the congregation of St Barnabas Church to move to the High Road and the present building is to be converted into flats. Two proposals for the redevelopment of the site of Finchley Police station have now been turned down; it is to be hoped that something acceptable will take their place.

East Finchley: The consideration of the application for development of the GLH site opposite the tube station carried on into its second year culminating in a third appearance before the Planning Committee, who despite the continued and fierce objection, granted approval with a long list of Conditions. We shall now need to check all the applications related to the conditions to ensure the developer keeps to the 'approved documents'. The former Alexandra Pub, now Oasis Restaurant and

Shisha Bar, was denied a retrospective application and also at appeal. The restaurant continues to trade, highlighting the lack of Enforcement in the Borough.

North Finchley Supplementary Planning Guidance: This took up much time in the autumn of 2017. The Council produced a draft which was in some respects visionary, but which included several objectionable ideas (including the loss of 'St Kilda's') and the consultation undertaken was inadequate. We and the Friern Barnet and Whetstone Residents' Association arranged a well-attended public meeting and made very detailed comments. The Council took notice of what we and others said, and a distinctly improved version was approved in February. There is still much to be done, including sorting out the traffic - the idea of making the High Road at Tally Ho Corner two-way may not be practicable.

Barnet Local Plan: The Council is beginning the process of preparing a replacement for the current 2012 Local plan. It will have to be in conformity with the London Plan. We expect to be involved in its preparation in 2018/9.

Peter Pickering

COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND APPOINTEES

Executive Committee

Chair: Mick Crick
Vice Chair: Lynn Bresler
President: David Smith
Vice President: Peter Pickering
Vice President: Peter Marsh
Hon. Treasurer: Peter Donhue
Hon. Secretary: Rosemary Coates
Harriet Copperman OBE
Tony Kirkham

Administration Committee

Chair: Peter Marsh
Secretary: Rosemary Coates
David Smith
Harriet Copperman OBE
David Coates
Mick Crick
Minute Taker: Lynn Bresler

Environment and Transport Committee

Chair: Peter Hale
Secretary: Stephen Cooper
Derek Warren
Peter Pickering
Brian Plen
Tony Sarchet
Gardi Vaswani
Brenda Barrett

Planning Committee

Chair: Peter Pickering
Secretary: Avra Ploumi-Archer
Mary Hogben
Jacques Astruc
Sheila Shannon
Pat Dunnill
Brenda Barrett

Appointees Ex-Committee

Archives Manager	Tony Roberts	Membership Secretary	David Coates
Distribution Manager:	Martin Summers	Web Site Manager:	Stephen Yeo
Insurance Adviser:	Stephen Ross	Web Site Manager:	Stephen Yeo
Book Sales Co-ordinator:	Guy Nevill	Programme Secretary:	Harriet Copperman OBE
Local History Secretary;	Martin Ellman	Newsletter Editors:	Rosemary and David Coates
Media Co-ordinator:	Mick Crick	Equipment officer	Mick Crick
Legal Advisor:	Tony Kirkham	Education Secretary:	Lynne Ashley
Minute Secretary (Executive Committee)	Lynn Bresler		