

Report of the Environment and Transport Committee 2018-19

Here are some of the issues we have discussed and acted upon this year:

Barnet Footpaths Rights of Way Group: There is positive news from the footpaths group. Roger Chapman has been working with Libby Martin of the 'Ramblers' on footpath issues across Barnet. This has so far turned out to be more productive than they had hoped for. They met with Jamie Blake, the Director of Environment for Barnet Council, and following that they made suggestions for Barnet to include in their draft Local Implementation plan (a bid document to the Mayor for funding over three years) and most of what they asked for has found its way into the draft L.I.P. which is now out for public consultation. The Director of Environment for Barnet is receptive to considering inclusion of a "Rights of Way Improvement Plan" in the L.I.P. which would meet most of our aims in respect of getting footpaths onto the definitive map if it is followed through. They are encouraging all local bodies interested in footpaths to support what Barnet has included in its draft LIP so far and to ask for inclusion of the "Rights of Way Improvement Plan" as well.

Pedestrian Environment: Barnet Council has drawn up a Draft Barnet Domestic Crossover Policy, this is the first time that Barnet has had a policy on the matter. As is evident in the Finchley area all the information regarding applying for a crossover and creating in-curtilage parking is in 'Guidance Notes' only so these are often flouted resulting in degradation of the street environment paving over complete front gardens, vehicles projecting over the pavement destruction of verges and paving. This policy relaxes the requirements for space but intends that residents sign up to their agreed arrangement which in theory has to be adhered to. Future contraventions will require the public to alert the council as routine inspections by Highways Officers are rare. Apparently, there will not be retrospective action on existing arrangements that do not comply.

Road surfaces: We would encourage all members to report potholes on the Council web-site. Although the council carries out repairs as quickly as possible, they are unable to keep up with the state of roads in Finchley which continue to deteriorate and could take decades to rectify. But at least if we report the potholes and defects, we can feel we are being useful to some degree.

Victoria Park: A report from Brian Plen, chair of the Friends of Victoria Park:- The Master Plan for development of the park has been approved by the Council and the programme of carrying out the second option is now being planned in detail and will come back for budgetary approval by the relevant sub-committee. Because of government-imposed austerity the park is no longer locked at night and the rusty litterbins will have to await replacement in phase one of the Capital Fund redevelopment. The Friends of Victoria Park continue their vigils, litter-picks and soon an online Tree-trail. Our hope to re-green the Sensory Garden has been dashed as all our bulbs were trampled by children.

Cherry Tree Wood: The re-formed Friends of Cherry Tree Wood held their AGM in January with Roger Chapman as chair which was a very positive meeting. An activity programme has been drawn up which includes preparing a bid for bins, benches, flower beds and paths, options for the Pavilion site following demolition, activities studying the flora & fauna of the wood and looking further ahead to

proposals for the tennis courts, café, toilets and playground refurbishment. The new website is friendsofcherrytreewood.home.blog

North Finchley SPD: We still await the results of the 2017 Barnet consultation on the Supplementary Planning Document. In early 2018 Barnet Council proposed the setting up of a monitoring board the 'North Finchley Partnership Board' and they agreed that The Finchley Society would be represented. We have heard nothing since and there seems to be a considerable delay in progressing this. We are especially interested to learn how traffic management is to be proposed in detail as the success or otherwise of North Finchley hinges on getting this right.

London Green Belt Council: Stephen Cooper is representing The Finchley Society on the London Green Belt Council. Although the LGBC dealings are appropriate for London as a whole, the area covered by The Finchley Society has only two small pockets of land which come within the green belt.

2019/2020: We endeavour to attend appropriate council committee meetings and keep in touch with relevant agenda items. We would like one or two new members to join us on the committee.

Derek Warren: Derek, a long serving member of the Environment & Transport Committee, has retired from the committee and we thank him for all his work and with his special interest in the natural environment.

Peter Hale
Chairman