

MUSWELL HILL & FORTIS GREEN ASSOCIATION

MAY/JUNE 2013



A carbuncle on your doorstep?

OUR ASSOCIATION HAS BESTIRRED ITSELF to defend members and local residents from the risk of development next to their homes and back gardens that is intrusive and at odds with its context. Recent proposed changes in planning regulations governing such building works as extensions in back gardens or to the sides of properties have left many members fearful of reduced light or loss of privacy. The changes are designed to support economic growth and allow for some kinds of development without the necessity for planning permission, in order to free the planning system of unnecessary bureaucracy. It is unclear how this will affect our conservation areas since what constitutes 'permitted development' may change.

We have welcomed recent Parliamentary moves to rethink the proposals. The views expressed in our letter to local MP Lynne Featherstone are reproduced below:

'The relaxation is likely to lead to all sorts of neighbour disputes. It is, by definition, going to mean that extensions will be built which spread into gardens further than a council would previously have allowed. There is, therefore, the potential that they will cause greater overlooking/overshadowing type issues for neighbours and have an adverse impact on residential amenity generally for neighbouring properties. This is particularly true when the rules are interpreted as meaning one storey plus a glazed pitched roof with a patio and sitting out area extending the built upon area further into what had once been the garden.

'It is inevitable that ward councillors and probably MPs as well will get dragged into a lot of detailed and time consuming mediation situations which could have

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It's time to pay your subs

As your Association girds its loins ready for a new year of campaigns and projects, our coffers need replenishing to make it all possible. Your subs (and any donations you might care to make) are our only means of finance, so, please do your bit and pay promptly!

See the renewal slip on the back page for payment details.

Meetings to come

Wednesday 15 May, 8pm, Garden Room

Association social with buffet and AGM

Come and spend a cheerful evening with old and new friends. We will talk about our future at the AGM and then party while sharing some tasty food prepared by our favourite French chef, Jacqueline. She promises larger quantities of chocolate mousse this year following popular request!

North Bank, Pages Lane, is almost opposite Pages Hill. The 234 bus passes the door and buses 134, 43, 102 and 299 stop nearby.

Saturday 15 June, 2pm, Highgate Wood

A guided walk. Meet at the Lodge.

DIARIES AT THE READY! IT'S OUR MAY AGM

THE Annual General Meeting is on 15 May at 8pm in the Garden Room at North Bank, Pages Lane, N10 1PP. The agenda is as follows:

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the AGM on 16 May 2012
- 3 Chairman's Report
- 4 Treasurer's Report
- 5 Election of Officers
- 6 Election of Committee
- 7 Election of Independent Examiner
- 8 Any Other Business, including questions from members

Nominations for Officers to sit on the Committee should be sent to the Chairman, John Hajdu. They can also be put forward at the AGM itself.

The customary Association social with appetising refreshments will follow.



Saima's last membership column

Dear Member

Spring is here at last, a time of new beginnings.

After three years as Membership Secretary, I have decided to step down. Having young children, a full-time job and other commitments, it has been a bit tricky trying to balance everything. It has been an exciting journey, albeit short, and I have had the privilege to get to know so many of my neighbours in the process.

So, in the true spirit of spring, this may be the perfect time for you to become more involved with your Association! If you are interested in helping out in any capacity, then please do get in touch with our Chairman, John (his details are at the back of the Newsletter) – he would love to hear from you.

New members

This month our newest members include **Tammy Gelman** and **Professor Mike Levine** of Ringwood Avenue; **Gavin Millar** of Great Portland Street; **Ann** and **Brian Green** of Dukes Avenue; **Ruth Boswell** of Rosebery Road; **Susie Holden** of Outram Road; **Craig Boulton**, **Jennifer Ross** and **Sara Shaw** of Albert Road; **Sheri Waddell** of Victoria Road and **Geraldine Marks** and **David Lapes** of Queens Avenue. The warmest of welcomes goes to all. An especially sunny spring welcome goes to our new corporate members too. They are **Norman Bailey** of Storybookers Ltd and **Paul Shanley** of Prohibition Wines. We trust all our new members will enjoy being a part of our Association community and will get as involved as they can.

Thank you for your support. Please do remember the membership covers your entire household, so don't forget to let the Association have all names.

Donations

Several members have added donations to their subscriptions and renewal subs. Thank you so much. We have no income apart from subs and donations and all the hard-working Committee members give up their time for no reward apart from the warm glow that comes of doing something useful for their local community. These donations, therefore, keep us going, financing our campaigns and projects.

Members' topic

Membership subs are due every May and here we are already! Members with standing orders need not worry as subs will be automatically paid but those friends and neighbours who pay by cash or cheque will need to send their £8 (or £20 for corporate members) to Jacqueline as soon as possible. See the membership renewal form on the back page.

Please do get in touch if you would like a standing order form or feel free to print one from the website at: <http://www.mhfga.1to1.org/standord.html>

Members who need to update their standing orders to the current rate of £8 can also use the same form. Please take the completed form to your bank or send it to Jacqueline if that is more convenient.

Don't forget our Facebook group. Leave a post at:

<http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/group.php?gid+56250985945>

Bulletin board

OUR AGM this May promises to be particularly interesting and not just because, as rumour has it, our French friend, Jacqueline, is planning some sumptuous culinary delights for us and has even held secret talks at a classified location to this effect.

There are several members standing for election to the Committee who have stepped forward in response to our pleas for assistance. Please ensure that you come along to meet them and support them with your votes.

CAN YOU HELP with organising our meetings? Please see Chairman John's letter on page 3 and note the slight tinge of desperation (or is it exasperation) in his tone. He would so appreciate a helping hand. Could it be yours? Please contact him for a chat.

WE ARE SEEKING members who currently receive their Newsletters in paper form, to volunteer for a trial period to try out the colourful e-Newsletters. We would like their feedback to share with other members to persuade more take-up of this speedy and environmentally friendly way of getting the Association news.

SPARE COPIES of this Newsletter are available to members who may wish to pass them on to neighbours or local friends for recruitment purposes. Please contact John Hajdu; his details are on the back page.

DO YOU HAVE any news items of interest to our members that you would like the Newsletter to publish? If so, the deadline for contributions to the July/August Newsletter is Sunday, 16 June.

OUR PO BOX address will no longer be in use so please do check this Newsletter for all up-to-date contact details.

Member of the month

This is the two year anniversary of the 'Member of the Month' section and our member of note on this occasion is Maurice Collins of Beech Drive.

Although a Londoner, he lived in Israel in the 50s and worked as a compositor for The Jerusalem Post. After returning to the UK he ran his own printing business and other companies. Maurice co-founded the charity Kith & Kids in 1969, which was set up to help families with disabled children to overcome social exclusion.

He was awarded an OBE for his work with children with learning disabilities in 2002 and developed an Open University course for students with disabilities.

In his spare time, Maurice is an ardent collector of inventions and weird contraptions including an 1850s hat measuring machine, a Victorian clockwork burglar alarm and an 1888 self-pouring teapot, to name but a few. Maurice's 'Weird Gadget Collection' earned him the Britain's Best Collector award in 2011 from BID TV.

The 'Member of the Month' section is your opportunity to nominate someone (or, indeed, yourself - why not?) to provide our readers with a sense of the interesting and varied community of which they are a part. Our nominee may have an interesting tale to tell, may have been busy engaging with local activities in different ways or perhaps may simply be someone about whom we would enjoy hearing.

Write to the Editor with your nomination and please do consider enclosing a photo as well.

Continued from front page

been avoided. The argument is also advanced that given that the weather patterns we now experience seem to include an increased occurrence of periods of very heavy rain, the risk of flash flooding caused by the excessive building over of land is greater due to the reduced opportunities for the rain to soak into the ground.

It is difficult to see how the relaxation will bring the economic benefits which the Chancellor anticipates: surely a householder will only build an extension if he or she is able to afford to do so. The fact that a larger (and therefore more expensive) extension can be built is largely academic to most people (that is, if the householder is not able to build a modest extension now due to the cost, then he or she will have even less ability or inclination to build a larger one).

Imaginary delays

Arguments have been put forward on the other perceived benefits for householders in not having to go through the planning system: yet the actual cost of applying for planning permission is very small compared to the overall cost of the project. Although the householder would have been required to submit drawings of the proposals with the planning application, these drawings would usually have been required anyway, for example, for the builders and other trades people.

The arguments about delays caused by having to go through the planning system are also largely imaginary – if someone is going to carry out a big multi-disciplinary project like building an extension then this will involve several lead-in times of which the planning process is only one.

Pinkham Way saga rolls on

Susie Holden, new MHFGA member and our representative on the Pinkham Way Alliance committee, gives us the following update.

The Pinkham Way story could well go on for a long time. Barnet Council is still determined to move its entire fleet of dustcarts and cleansing vehicles out of Mill Hill (Barnet) and onto Pinkham Way (Haringey).

Also the North London Waste Authority still wants to put a waste processing/handling facility on the site. If built, that could open the door to a **much bigger** plant further down the line. So we've won a few battles, thanks to the fantastic energy and determination of the local community - all of us - but the war continues.

Your support

This means we have to keep raising awareness as well as funds. Funds are now needed to pay for a full ecological survey of the Pinkham Way site.

To help achieve this, we hold regular fundraising events. The next one is 'Café Cabaret – A Jukebox Musical' and will take place on Sunday 19 May at 7pm in the Freehold Community Centre, 9 Alexandra Road, N10 2EY. The show is set in the golden age of 20th century café society and will feature hits by Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Tom Lehrer and Stephen Sondheim. Tickets are £10 and only for over 18s. Refreshments will be available during the interval. All the money raised will go to the Pinkham Way Alliance campaign.

Newsletters

Go to www.pinkhamwayalliance.com to find out more about the work of the Alliance and how you can help. You can sign up here to receive regular e-newsletters and can also download posters and flyers from the site.

A letter from our Chairman

Dear Member

It has taken three goes and over a year to find a planning officer and we are delighted, at last, to be able to welcome Nick Barr who has agreed to stand for this post at the AGM.

In addition, I have been finding speakers and arranging members' meetings for 15 years, and have so far organised over 80 talks. It is time for somebody else to take over.

Unfortunately, we now have another vacancy as our Membership Secretary has had to resign due to pressure of work. We also need help with our stall at the Muswell Hill Festival and with our Colney Hatch Lane beds project – these are not Committee roles.

None of these jobs is difficult or daunting, and they would offer you a chance to support our members, in some cases, take part in the work of the Committee and plan the road ahead for the good of our Association.

If we cannot attract new Committee members urgently, the Committee, and therefore the Association, will not be able to function properly and you, the members, will in consequence suffer. We are all busy people, but these jobs can be very rewarding and will fit in with whatever time you have to give. They are vital to the survival of our Association that has grown and flourished over so many years. I look forward to meeting you at the AGM to discuss where you could fit in.

Best wishes, John

Corporate members offer more

OUR SPECIAL CORPORATE MEMBERS' scheme bringing you a special offer in each issue of your Newsletter, has been revived. Keep an eye out for appealing offers that will save you money on local goods and services.

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Communal air-raid shelter in Hollybank shrubbery

The Hollybank Action Group is opposing the development of the Hollybank site. Garages, a cottage and a copse as well as a WW2 shelter are currently sited here. Member Helen Finch tells us more about the shelter.

AN IMPORTANT PART of Britain's wartime heritage lies hidden on the 'Hollybank garages and cottage site' off Muswell Hill. A WW2 communal Air-Raid Shelter, some five metres long and 1.5 metres wide, was built below trees and shrubbery near to the rear gardens of Cranmore Way. [Image] Electricity and gas services were provided to the shelter, and benches (now gone) lined the walls which could have accommodated about 20 people.

Dr Gabriel Moshenska from UCL 'Archaeology of Air-Raid Shelters project' commented that "On a national scale, air-raid shelters are one of the most neglected aspects of our heritage yet they are important to understand and preserve". Features of the structure, including the obvious rigour of its construction, and good condition, suggest that it may have been built before the start of the war rather than during the war itself.

Bomb blast

It is not currently known who the shelter was built for but its size and position suggest that it may have been designed for occupants of Hollybank flats, a block of six flats on Muswell Hill at the entrance to the garage site. The shelter is within easy reach of the flats though sufficiently far away to offer protection from a bomb blast affecting them.

Do you or any of your family members have memories of this Air-Raid Shelter?

Although it lies within the Rookfield CA, the entire site including the cottage, 32 garages and the air-raid shelter is potentially under threat of demolition. If you would like information about this or would like to receive updates regarding any potential future development please contact the Hollybank Action Group which seeks to save the site. Helen Finch's email is helen.finch@btconnect.com

St Luke's Hospital site is soon to be developed

THE PLANNING APPLICATION for the development of the St Luke's Hospital site into 173 residential units was submitted to Haringey Council by Hanover in mid-January 2013.

If you would like to view the planning application a hard copy is available in Muswell Hill Library in Queens Avenue. The application can also be viewed on the Haringey website and if you wish you may comment on the proposals on line.

Your comments

If you are not familiar with this process visit www.haringey.gov.uk and click on 'Planning Applications' which is listed in the 'straight to' box on the right hand side of the home page. You then need to click on 'Major Applications' under 'View Planning Applications' which will take you to a list of applications. The St Luke's application is the second one in the list. Its reference number is HGY/2013/0061. Click on this to go to the planning application documents where you will also find a link to leave your comments.

Snippets corner

* Local police have sent out a warning about courier fraud. The average age of those being targeted is 70 years.

The victims are telephoned by someone claiming to be from an authority - usually the police, bank or Serious Fraud Office. They hear that their bank account has been compromised and their card must be collected. The victim is instructed to hang up and call the police/bank/Serious Fraud Office on a genuine number to check that they are who they say they are. The victim dials the new number but the fraudster does not disconnect so, unknown to the victim, they are still speaking to the suspect or a co-conspirator.

The fraudster then convinces the victim to reveal their PIN, usually by typing it in on their keypad. The fraudster is able to tell which keys have been pressed and then sends a courier or taxi driver to the victim's house to collect his/her bank card, which he/she has been told to put into an envelope. The card is delivered to a co-conspirator and is used, with the PIN, to empty the victim's bank account.

The police advise you to please remember:

- Police and banks will never ask for your PIN or bank card
- Never give your PIN or bank card to anyone
- If you are contacted by someone who asks for your PIN or bank card, hang up
- Use a different line to report it to police on 101 or allow at least five minutes for the line to automatically clear. Call 999 if the crime is in action.

* Our noticeboard near the Odeon roundabout, after being vandalised, has now been restored by Jack Whitehead and Bill Jago who form, additionally, the members of our anti-graffiti

patrol. Jack reports that after some cleaning treatment he found a white powder residue on the noticeboard the following day. A passer-by spontaneously joined in the cleaning up with the aid of her tissues. It's good to know we are making a positive impression on the Broadway.

* The Alexandra Park Library (SAPL) group had its AGM in February and re-elected the previous committee plus a couple of new members. It was accompanied by a quiz on the history and services of the library. The membership fee is £4. Forms are available in Alexandra Park Library.

SAPL's next event is a play reading on Monday 13 May. The Victorian melodrama Maria Marten and the Red Barn will be featured. The signing-up sheet is available in the library.

* The Ham and High Broadway newspaper is available in an interactive digital format on screen. Access Muswell Hill and Crouch End news for free. Here is the link with apologies for its length:

<http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/Launch.aspx?PBID=e27f61c6-e56b-41f5-aceb-1fbdd3dbef12>

* The Wickes mystery continues. The shop was due to open in March on the site of the Blockbusters next to Sainsbury's and has undergone refurbishment. However, most recently, workers were seen removing stock.

The Committee agrees that in spite of everything Wickes should be congratulated on restoring the arches on their new shopfront. We also welcome the coming of a really useful shop to the Broadway.

* The new W7 stop on the Broadway roundabout has now been made permanent after an extended trial period. The stop is to be trialled for the 144 bus service in the autumn.

Our first Association concert is big and brassy

OUR MARCH MEETING was an MHFGA first with North London Brass, our friendly local band, giving us a new kind of event – a musical one. A varied programme of light classics and evergreen hits was welcomed by an enthusiastic audience as just the thing to brighten a March evening still in the depths of a lingering winter.

Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines (Goodwin) and excerpts from the English Folk Suite (Vaughan Williams) formed part of the first half of the concert while, after the interval, such melodies were played as The Floral Dance, O Sole Mio, Can't Take my Eyes off You and the James Bond theme. For Madness fans, Baggy Trousers was also featured.

Janice Telfer, Noah's Ark Children's Hospice Community Fundraiser attended the concert along with fundraising volunteer Pauline Treen. Their collection on behalf of the charity raised £314.96.

Speaking of the charity Janice said, 'Opportunities to have fun are really important for all families but particularly families struggling to support a child who is undergoing stressful treatment or suffering from a life-limiting condition.

At Noah's Ark we aim to offer families support where it is most needed through initiatives like our Play Scheme, Siblings Support Programme, Family Support Volunteer Service, Family Days and Specialist Carers.

The money raised from this event will go towards these services. We are really grateful to Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association for supporting us and to all the musicians



Members of North London Brass after our concert with John Hajdu third from the right

involved in this event for giving their time and their amazing talents to help raise awareness and much needed funds for Noah's Ark'.

If you would like to know more about the hospice and how it supports families in North London, visit www.noahsarkhospice.org.uk. If you would like to get involved, please call Janice Telfer in Community Fundraising on 020 8449 8877 or email her on jtelfer@noahsarkhospice.org.uk

See the letter by Martin Stogden, Director of North London Brass and Four Hills Music, on page 6.

Can this Act help our community?

'People are the experts on their own problems and the solutions to them.'

This is the idea behind the Sustainable Communities Act, in law since 2007, which aims to give people the chance to put together their own ideas for changes that will help their community, writes Committee member, Chris Barker, who attended a recent meeting organised by Local Works, a national group campaigning to implement it.

Any individual, or group, such as a residents' association, can initiate ideas. The procedure is that they write to a councillor (or perhaps many councillors) with proposals - a sample letter is available from the Local Works website www.localworks.org.

If councillors persuade the council to take up ideas, local people can then decide which ones to take forward. Ideas are then forwarded to the government which is obliged to negotiate with an independent body, of which Local Works is a member, and decide about implementation. The government cannot just reject the idea but is obliged to give detailed reasons.

Issues which might be raised could include re-designating betting shops to enable local councils to reject new applications if they think there are already too many in an area; restricting the right of residents to pave over front gardens and create crossovers and imposing a levy on supermarkets to assist small retailers.

Eden's Tree of Knowledge bears fruit

THERE IS A NEW PROGRAMME of adult education to be run by Eden Primary in Creighton Avenue over four evenings in June. The aim behind this project, called 'Tree of Knowledge', is to make the school a centre of learning and involvement for the whole local community. Anyone can take part, and as well as providing an interesting and informative range of courses, it will also get people into the school to see how it is developing.

The 'Tree of Knowledge' evenings will take place on Wednesdays 5, 12, 19 and 26 June from 8–10pm and will cost £35 for all four evenings or £10 for just one. Refreshments are included in the price and prepared by the in-house chef. The sessions are as follows:

- *Art course for adults—Laura Fox*
- *Making an Israeli feast in 4 stages—Gavin Presman*
- *Secrets of a professional photographer—John Rogers*
- *Modern Hebrew for beginners—Nurit Rubin*
- *German cinema of the 1920s—Peter Kessler*
- *Music, art and literature of the Holocaust—Shirli Gilbert*
- *Understanding back pain & how to manage it—Jane Bloom*
- *Shul services for Jewish agnostics—Elkan Presman*
- *North London's lost railway history—Darren Beach*
- *Exploring London's cemeteries—Darren Beach*
- *The Jew in the modern world—Trudy Gold*

For full details of all the courses and presenters, and to book your place, visit www.edenprimary.org.uk/tree-of-knowledge.

MEMBERS' LETTERS



Big and brassy

Martyn Stogden, Director of North London Brass, posted the following on our Association Facebook page:

Thank you, John Hajdu and the Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association for having helped to organise our North London Brass Muswell Hill Concert on 13 March in support of Noah's Ark Children's Hospice. Our band very much enjoyed playing for the Association. We are looking forward to future occasions playing for the community in N10 as awareness about our project grows.

We have been based at MH Methodist Church in Pages Lane since 2011, our membership includes local people of all ages and experience. We teach beginners and we help people get back into music making.

Charity

We are happy to support community events and play local engagements - please check our band diary on our website for existing commitments and (regardless of how busy we already look) please do ask if you think Muswell Hill brass band could add something to your event and we will do our best to help. We love putting on concerts at local churches and performance venues and we raise lots of money for charity this way - so don't hold back!

Full details about our Muswell Hill brass band and about our other community music project in North London can be found on our website at www.fourhillsmusic.co.uk

You can contact me on 020.8366.0657, on email at martyn.stogden@yahoo.co.uk or you can Facebook message me.

Martyn Stogden

Director

North London Brass & Four Hills Music

www.fourhillsmusic.co.uk

(North London Brass: we're big, we're brassy and we're in your borough!)

Glorious gardens

Last autumn as my husband, Earl Hyde, dragged huge sheets of wood into our sodden garden, I assumed he was about to construct an ark. Members of our Association would have been welcomed aboard!

Many of you attended the garden party we hosted for the Centenary of

our Horticultural Society on one of the few pleasant summer days. We were not so lucky with our National Gardens Scheme (NGS) openings!

Throughout the horrendously wet summer of 2012, stalwart souls bravely explored private gardens open for charity. Despite numbers being down, the NGS distributed £2,600 to nursing, caring and garden charities, including £150 to the Alzheimers Society, our guest charity. This year we will be supporting Parkinsons.

In her Jubilee year, the Queen was presented with a plaque at Sandringham, one of our founder gardens, opening every year since 1927, whatever the weather.

Prince Charles, our Patron, offered these words of encouragement: 'The sense of wellbeing that comes from spending time in a garden, the rewards of taking a loved one on such a visit, or the feeling of involvement in one's local community as you admire a neighbour's garden together, are clearly all of great importance to NGS visitors. They will not be deterred by a spot of rain!'

So we embark on a new season with high hopes and new initiatives.

The NGS and the prestigious Society of Garden Designers, have joined forces to shine the spotlight on professionally designed gardens and we are delighted that two members' gardens will open for the first time in East Finchley, adding to the wonderful variety on offer.

Cigarettes

I spend most of my time communing with mud and nature. When I venture out, I am astounded at the sight of commuters compulsively communing with their phones which I described in 2000, as the 'cigarettes of the 21st century' in a letter published in the Telegraph. However, now that the NGS Yellow Book, with details of nearly 4000 gardens to visit is available with our FREE iOS app, I have softened my attitude.

I, too, may sit on the tube viewing galleries of spectacular gardens, looking up dates, times and directions, encouraging my friends to follow on twitter and facebook before returning to my garden to plant and propagate (my personal addictions) in time for our first opening in April when visitors

will discover just what Earl has constructed with all those huge bits of wood. Happily he has found time to bake. His delicious cakes will be NO surprise. We open again on Sunday 23 June from 2 to 6.30pm.

Susan Bennett

5 St Regis Close

Parking worries in Muswell Hill

Research over 2 decades, in Europe and more recently in several places in the UK, has always shown that shopkeepers hugely overestimate the proportion of their shoppers who come by car, and that their perceptions of what most shoppers really want on their high street are also highly distorted.

Below, I suggest some policies that would do far more for all shoppers as well as for shopkeepers. In this case, as always, there is no such thing as a FREE lunch!

Research has shown that 'free' parking will neither help shopkeepers, nor the vast majority of shoppers and other people in high streets.

Oppressed minority

Parking is not a central concern for more than a small minority of shoppers. The thing that deters most shoppers - who are pedestrians or bus users - is the domination of their shopping streets by fast, polluting traffic that confines them to narrow pavements and makes crossing the road difficult. Well cared-for UK motorists protest as though they were an oppressed minority.

A policy worth pushing Government and Haringey to adopt is to reduce speeds in all those busy roads where there are many pedestrians, such as Muswell Hill Broadway.

Reduce speeds initially to 20mph, and ultimately lower as is common in Europe. Some neighbouring boroughs have introduced default 20mph limits.

Shopkeepers believe that about twice as many of their customers come by car as actually do. Research has always demonstrated this and shows that car-users tend to be *drive-through* shoppers; pedestrians and bus-users visit several shops, but car-users are far more likely to visit one single shop.

(continued on page 7)

WANTED!

Your Editor wants your letters for this page. Post, email or phone them through and make your voice heard! Newsletter office contact details are on the back page.

MEMBERS' LETTERS

CONTINUED



The proportion of shoppers who live within walking distance has also been underestimated. One explanation for this misconception may be that car traffic is so dominant in shopping areas.

Research has found that *walking* is the most important mode for people getting to district centres, *bus* for major centres and *tube* for central London. In all centres, walking has increased over the recent decade.

Another finding was that walkers and cyclists shop many times a week, public transport users many fewer times, and car-users by far the most rarely. Also, while car-users spent the most *per visit*, walkers spent 65% more than them *per month* and bus-users 25% more.

Other research has emphasised that the most important factors in attracting shoppers and visitors to town centres were a good mix of shops and services and a good quality environment.

Pedestrianisation is the kind of long term target we should pursue here as shoppers prize it highly.

There is no such thing as FREE parking as council tax payers' money provides, maintains and enforces the controlled 'free' parking operated by councils, whether on-street or off-street. Supermarket 'free' parking is paid for through the price of goods, by all customers, not just car-users. An act of parliament is needed to introduce fair car-park charges at all supermarkets.

'Free' parking leads to an increase in traffic. So, as well as its money cost, there is the cost born by all shoppers who are eventually on foot. And 'Too much traffic' is one of shoppers' commonest complaints.

David Rennie

Sustainable Haringey Transport Group

(Editor's note: David's letter has been edited for reasons of space. The original version contains further arguments and quotes all research sources.)

Local well-being

The original letter from a Dukes Avenue resident has certainly started something. As another Dukes Avenue resident I agree with John Crompton's letter in the February edition - the main remit of the Association has always primarily about the environment. But that does not always have to apply to flower beds.

Dukes Avenue, itself, has become,

physically, safer than when we first came to live here. It used to be a rat-run of cars and heavy vehicles cutting through to Colney Hatch lane. Cars are now slowed down by the 20mph limit, aided by the humps, and there is a ban on heavy vehicles entering the area except for access.

These conditions were as a result of canvassing by the smaller local Alexandra Residents' Association, and supported by MHFGA. There is even a zebra crossing near the primary school. That did not exist when my daughter (now 42) went there - only an intermittent lollipop lady.

Also, all those years ago, Grove Avenue cut across Dukes Avenue and into Alexandra Park. The existing path under the bridge was a road. Again the closure was as a result of canvassing by the Alexandra Residents' Association and supported by MHFGA.

I would argue that these physical changes contribute to people's feeling of well-being. MHFGA is not equipped to deal with personal and social problems. As, already pointed out, it does give space for the notices of other organisations.

Monica Myers

Dukes Avenue

Polite efficiency

I am sorry to hear that Nicola di Palma has found Haringey Council officers 'useless' since moving into the area. Her letter does not give examples of how they have failed to help her.

For my part, I regularly send requests, queries or complaints to Street Lighting, Refuse Collection, Street Enforcement and Neighbourhood Action and the Parks department. My communications are always dealt with politely and efficiently. We live in a borough where great demands are made on the council staff. I am grateful for the standards they manage to maintain.

I'm supplying my name too.

Barbara Goldstein

Fordington Road

More stirring stuff wanted

I couldn't resist writing in to say how much I enjoyed the recent string of letters sparked off by 'Name Supplied of Dukes Avenue'. Please could we have more stirring stuff like this? The more controversial the better is what I

say! 'Name Supplied' sounds like he/she might have plenty more to say. Can you tempt him/her to write in with another controversial view?

Anyway, I am putting my money where my mouth is so here is my own controversial view and I really hope it starts a trend.

I think that people join groups like this one to salve their consciences about being selfish and insular. They can then sit around not doing anything for anyone but show off to their neighbours about how 'involved' they are.

I'll be a 'name supplied' as well', I think, as then I can sit around spouting words with no repercussions! 'Such fun' as that television character says.

Name supplied

Collingwood Avenue

Super council

Several letters in your February issue complain about the poor state of the Muswell Hill area and the uselessness of the council. This isn't my impression at all.

Regarding traffic chaos and pollution, you only have to look at photos from the 1960s and 1970s to see how little traffic there was then: present day traffic problems are due to the ever increasing number of vehicles rather than the fault of the council.

In recent years the street cleaning and waste and recycling collection services have all improved. Lots more litter bins were installed in the early 2000s, main streets are now swept twice a day and side streets twice a week. Of course some people still throw rubbish around but that can't be blamed on the council.

Efficient

As the secretary of my local residents' association, I find it very easy to report problems to the council and invariably get a prompt response and usually remedial action.

The easiest way to report things is via 'report it' on the council website: <http://www.haringey.gov.uk/report-it> but you can email: frontline@haringey.gov.uk or phone 020 8489 0000.

Because of my involvement in various community groups across the borough, I have frequent dealings with officers in planning, conservation, traffic, parks, education, waste and recycling and I find them efficient and helpful. Of course their powers and their funds are limited and they are not going to be able to please all of the people all of the time.

Joyce Rosser

Redston Road

MUSWELL HILL & FORTIS GREEN ASSOCIATION

(affiliated to the Haringey Federation of Residents' Associations)

OTHER PEOPLE'S EVENTS

ALEXANDRA PALACE ORGAN CONCERTS: there will be a concert on WEDNESDAY 29 MAY. It will be given by Colin Walsh, Organist Laureate of Lincoln Cathedral. Admission is by programme at the door. Visit www.alypallyorgan.org.uk for more information.

Become a Friend of the Alexandra Palace Organ Appeal for £15 pa and receive regular mailings. Write to The Treasurer, 41 Vanderbilt Road, London, SW18 3BG with your contact details and cheque or PO.

FRIENDS OF QUEEN'S WOOD: on SUNDAYS 26 MAY and 30 JUNE working groups will meet from 10.30am to 12 noon. Tools are provided but bring protective gloves and, if possible, a mobile phone to keep in touch with the working party leader. Meet at The Lodge. On SUNDAY 23 JUNE there is a River Moselle walk organised by Haringey Friends of Parks Forum starting at Queen's Wood Lodge and following the course of the Moselle to the River Lea. It will finish around 3.30pm.

Ring Lucy Roots on 8883 8875 for more information or visit the Friends' website. The address is www.fqw.org.uk/events/

MUSWELL HILL FRIENDS OF THE EARTH: the group meets at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of every month at the Friends' Meeting House, Church Crescent, N10 3NE. For more details contact Tim Root on tim@timroot.net or call him on 8340 7764 or 07726 793265.

NATIONAL GARDENS SCHEME: details of local open gardens are below. All dates are Sundays.

9 MAY- 15 and 28 Princes Avenue Gardens, 2-6pm. Adults £3.50, children free.

26 MAY - 58 Summerlee Avenue, N2, 2-7pm. Adults £3, children free.

2 JUNE - 26 Ringwood Avenue N2, 2-5pm

9 JUNE - 66 Abbots Gardens N2, 2-5.30pm

16 JUNE - 60 Church Crescent, 2-6pm; 11 Park Avenue North N8, 11-5pm;

22 Trinity Rd N2, 2-5pm; 79 Church Lane N2, 2-6pm

23 JUNE - 5 Cecil Rd N10, 2-5.30pm; 5 St Regis Close, Alexandra Park Road, 2-6.30pm; The Rose Garden at Golf Course Allotments N11, 1-5.30pm

NORTH LONDON HOSPICE CONCERT: there will be an evening of songs from stage and screen (Lion King, Les Mis, The Beatles, Oliver) on SATURDAY 8 JUNE at 7.30pm at St James' Church, Muswell Hill. The Three Valleys Male Voice Choir will perform. All proceeds will go to the Hospice. Tickets are £15, £12 concessions and £5 for children under 16. They can be obtained from Peter Kraushar (020 8883 4736), from the Hospice shops in Muswell Hill and East Finchley or from the bookshop at St James Church

OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

I/we wish to renew membership of the Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Association and enclose my/our subscription, £8.00 (household) and £ donation (optional). If you would like to pay by standing order, please tick the box and print out the standing order form on our website.

Name/s (please include all household members over 18 who wish to join):	
Address:	Email address:
Postcode:	Phone no:
May we email you your bi-monthly Newsletter?	

Send your completed form and subs to Jacqueline Servat, 52 Queens Avenue, N10 3NU

Visit our website: www.mhfga.1to1.org

WORKING FOR A CLEANER, GREENER, SAFER ENVIRONMENT