



Below are the reports by the members of the Committee on the highlights of the work carried out in the past year.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2026 COMMITTEE REPORTS

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CONSERVATION OFFICER, CAAC, HON. SECRETARY

John Crompton

Conservation area planning applications

This has been another year of relatively low activity with the majority of applications being for modest domestic schemes . Several of the larger scale applications made in recent years either had permission refused (for example the application to build nine homes on the Grove Tennis Club site in Cascade Avenue on the Rookfield Estate where I am pleased to report that the refusal was upheld on appeal) or will have now lapsed as it is more than three years since permission was granted. As far as can be ascertained, the only large scale application yet to be determined is that for three houses on the Pure Gym car park adjacent to the Parkland Walk. This has attracted a considerable number of objections on a wide range of topics.

Town Centre

Two pieces of positive news: the public library in Queen Avenue has re-opened having been closed since June 2023 to facilitate a welcome update and new tenants have come forward to take over some of the vacant bank premises.

It has been a year of particular high turnover of units in the town centre, particularly in the hospitality sector. Keeping track of all the changes is not easy as premises in town centres can change use to virtually anything else without needing to obtain planning permission first: permission is only required if there is any change to the external appearance of the premises. It is always sad to see long established businesses having to close but we are fortunate that Muswell Hill still seems to be an attractive place for new businesses to locate and for people to visit. This is helped by things like the flower beds and the pocket park and other initiatives actively supported by the Association such as the planting of street trees.

Although not easy to prove for certain, I feel that the attractiveness of the town centre is part of the reason why the incidence of vacant shop premises remains lower than in many other locations.

Planning Policy

This year saw the long-anticipated publication of the draft of the new Haringey local plan which had been delayed in view of the far-reaching changes in national and London planning policies following the change in government in 2024. A detailed scrutiny of the draft plan was made by myself on behalf of the Committee and appropriate representations to the Council were made. As well as policies the draft plan contained details of the possible development at specific sites across the borough in ways which would be acceptable in principle to the Council. They were mainly to provide additional housing units which is perhaps understandable given the pressure which all Councils are under to increase the supply of housing units. There were about a dozen such proposals for Muswell Hill and the two which drew the most attention proposed the closure of both of the car parks in our town centre. An objection was made on the basis that the loss of so many parking places would be detrimental to the long term viability of the town centre and that it is felt that the present balance of modes of access to the town centre i.e. cars using car parks and on street parking, bus and walking is about right.

It is good to be able to report that there some more encouraging town centre policies elsewhere in the plan. For example acceptance of the need for good quality shopfronts and a policy to help discourage dead shopping frontages by not allowing residential accommodation to be provided at ground floor level.

Next steps in the local plan –

The Council is currently collating and analysing the comments received. It will then prepare and consult on a Proposed Submission Local Plan in the second half of this year. Following consultation, the plan together with any representations will be submitted for examination by an independent Planning Inspector before final adoption by the Council.

PLANNING

Nick Barr

My remit is to scrutinise planning applications concerning properties that are not in Conservation Areas however I review all applications in the relevant Wards and will always object where an application is made for front garden parking.

During the period 05/05/25 to 13/04/26 on behalf of the Association I have reviewed in the region of 367 applications in the Alexandra, Fortis Green and Muswell Hill Wards and submitted 4 objections.

This number of planning applications is substantially the same as the last three years however as Haringey now include such matters as tree works and permitted development notices in the same lists as full planning applications not all the viewed applications are substantive.

The majority of applications are for uncontentious domestic schemes. During the last twelve months there has been a dearth of larger applications, presumably reflecting lack of economic confidence due in part to geopolitical instability.

The following are examples of matters where the Association has made representations in the last year:

25 Coniston Road

An application for the formation of a vehicle crossover with driveway accessing from the front of the property was refused following an objection by the Association. The Applicant has taken the decision to appeal where the Associations objection will be taken into consideration.

37 Cranley Gardens

A similar application for the creation of a vehicular crossover and car parking space in the front garden was refused after an objection from the Association but allowed on Appeal.

360 Alexandra Park Road

This application for the creation of new driveway for EV parking and associated reposition of lamp post and removal of one parking space from CPZ with double yellow lines was surprisingly granted consent in September.

13 Bedford Road

The proposal to demolish the existing building and create a new mixed-use development up to five storeys high with commercial uses at ground level, 12 self-contained flats and basement plant room was lodged in September 2023. In the Associations' view the scheme is over large and unsympathetic to the surrounding area. With over fifty comments filed, including an objection from the Association, no decision has yet been posted although an undated Planning Committee Report uploaded in July last year recommended approval subject to conditions.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND GREEN SPACES

Brian Livingston

Flowerboxes around the Broadway and Cattle Trough opposite the Library

As usual the Association has funded the new plants for the flowerboxes and the cattle trough to brighten up the Broadway. During the last year we had some glorious geraniums which flowered into the late Autumn, however the geraniums did not survive the winter and new geraniums will be planted in May.

Colney Hatch Lane Beds

The beds are well established and so we just need to undertake pruning, weeding etc as and when required – thank you Georgia for helping with this work. We continue to receive positive comments from members of the public passing by

Haringey Parks Department

Unfortunately, the past year has seen a worsening of the service carried out by the Parks department and our planted areas have suffered as a result. The Parks department is also not good at responding to our concerns in a timely manner. With the help of Cllr Cathy Brennan we were finally able to meet with the Parks Manager in early February 2026 and walk around Muswell Hill. We were promised an improvement plan to bring things back on track, but this plan is still outstanding.

Pocket Park (opposite Village Green)

I am sure everyone has noticed the huge improvement which has been made to the Pocket Park. For this we must thank our member Christine Cunliffe who has arranged all the ground improvement works, new planting, water butts, and tree works to provide more light into the park. The Association made a donation of £500 but the majority of the costs have been borne by Christine. Christine also regularly visits the park to clear up rubbish and carry out weeding, watering etc. A big thank you is owed to Christine for her generosity and dedication.

The paving in the park is very uneven in areas and we have raised this with the Council but disappointingly nothing has been done about this to date.

MHFGA 75th Anniversary – New Tree on the Bus Station Roundabout

Three years ago the Council agreed to our request to plant a new signature tree on the roundabout to celebrate the Association's 75th Anniversary. The Council trees department attempted to plant the tree but then realised they would

need to liaise with TFL to get access for their truck onto the bus stand area. After further chasing we heard back from the Trees manager, but with another problem – the bus stand is leased by TFL and so TFL is responsible for the land not Haringey Council. TFL then rejected the tree planting citing concerns with the sight lines for the buses. With the help of our local councillors we are now trying to arrange a meeting with TFL.

New Trees in the Broadway

At last year's AGM I reported that our crowdfunding campaign had raised money for 40 new trees. 27 of the 40 trees were planted before the end of November 2025, and the remaining 13 trees were planted in February 2026. The Council is responsible for watering the trees but unfortunately they struggle to get round often enough because they do not have a sufficient number of water bowsers. Many thanks to our members Louise, Minty and Jennie (Cachao Toys) who have helped deliver this project.

Veolia and Street Rubbish

I have kept in regular contact with the Veolia "Village Manager" for Muswell Hill to resolve any issues with the street bins and street sweeping. One new problem area has been near the Cranley Gate to Highgate Woods where temporary bins were provided for the residents while the new housing at 100 Woodside Avenue was under construction. This soon became a fly tipping hotspot but thanks to regular reporting to Veolia by some local residents this was brought under control.

Potholes, graffiti removal, blocked road gullies, damaged street furniture, open Virgin Media cabinets, damaged paving, faulty streetlights, fly posting and the like

I continue to report any issues to Haringey using the "Love Clean Streets" App. The reporting system works well, and confirmation emails are sent out by the Council. Graffiti is cleared up quickly, but other work can take longer if undertaken by the Council's contractors. I have noticed a recent improvement in the number of potholes repaired which is good to see.

Redundant Phone Boxes

We continue to campaign for the removal of the phone box outside Waitrose which is a real eyesore.

Muswell Hill Christmas Tree

In recent years the Christmas tree was organised by the Muswell Hill Business Group but this year they were unable to do so. Cllrs Pippa Connor and Cathy Brennan then asked MHFGA to step in and act as the local community lead to liaise with the Council. A very successful event was held around the Christmas tree on 7th December, the lights were turned on and Carols sung by the choir and residents.

TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

Christopher White

Meaningful progress in some areas, particularly in influencing School Streets proposals and initiating enforcement on scooter idling. However, important challenges remain, especially around communication with residents and managing delivery vehicle infrastructure. Continued engagement with the Council and local stakeholders will be essential to securing further improvements.

Parking and Resident Communication

There is a lack of timely communication from Haringey Council to residents regarding parking suspensions, with residents inadvertently caught out and fined when suspensions are enacted at short notice and without adequate notification.

To address this, we submitted a proposal to the Council's parking suspension team recommending the introduction of an **opt-in email and/or text notification system** for residents.

Such a system would:

- Provide advance warning of upcoming suspensions
- Reduce inconvenience and the risk of penalties
- Improve transparency and trust in local parking management

This proposal has also been reinforced through discussions with local councillors, and further engagement will continue to press for its adoption.

School Streets Programme

Haringey Council proposed the creation of new School Streets in Muswell Hill that would see the closure during school starting and finishing times of Collingwood Avenue, Creighton Avenue, Dukes Avenue, Elms Avenue, Grand Avenue, Muswell Avenue, and Pages Lane.

The Association submitted a robust, evidence-led response to the Council's consultation, opposing the proposals on the basis that there was seemingly no problem that they were trying to solve, and the large volume of traffic having to find alternative routes would paralyse traffic throughout Muswell Hill. Several of the proposals were subsequently dropped.

Delivery Scooter Enforcement and Infrastructure

Some progress has been made in addressing issues related to delivery scooters, particularly:

- **Increased enforcement** against scooters left idling while parked

However, a key outstanding issue remains unresolved:

- There is **no agreed solution yet for a dedicated off-Broadway space** for delivery scooters

This continues to be a priority, as the current situation contributes to congestion, noise, and air quality concerns. Ongoing efforts will focus on encouraging the Council to identify and implement a suitable designated area.

Representations on Transport Forum

The Association attended the Haringey Transport Forum along with council officers and representatives of TfL and the bus companies. Transport-related elements of the new draft local plan were presented. There was an agenda item on Lime/Forest bikes and along with several other representatives we called for more low-tech options to report dumped/obstructive bikes, and for providers to do more to educate users on what comprises safe and legal cycling.

CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ALEXANDRA PALACE & NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Duncan Neill

It has been another active and successful year for Alexandra Palace and Park, with continued strength in its events programme, progress on major projects, and ongoing challenges around funding.

Events and Cultural Programme

The Palace and Park have again hosted a wide range of high-profile and community events, maintaining their position as one of London's most important cultural venues.

The World Darts Championship continues to be a major highlight and has now been secured at Alexandra Palace until at least 2031, reinforcing its global significance.

Summer events were particularly strong, with large outdoor concerts and the Kaleidoscope Festival attracting significant crowds and positive feedback. The 2026 programme has already been announced, with a strong line-up expected to draw similar attendance.

Indoor events have also performed well, with concerts, theatre productions, and exhibitions continuing to attract diverse audiences. Highlights included major music performances, theatre runs such as Sunny Afternoon, and the return of events like the Fresh Art Fair with increased visitor numbers.

New Attractions and Visitor Experience

A significant development this year has been the opening of “Summit: Alexandra Palace Rooftop Adventure” in February 2026. The attraction received extensive media coverage and saw strong demand from launch, quickly becoming a major addition to the visitor offer.

Visitor facilities have also improved. The Boating Lake Café has been fully refurbished and reopened, providing a much-enhanced experience for park users. Earlier work at the lake included structural repairs, improved lighting, and upgraded facilities.

Park and Environment

The Park remains heavily used, with significant pressures on infrastructure and maintenance. Measures have been taken to manage environmental impacts, including waste management, water-level interventions during hot weather, and biodiversity-friendly practices such as adjusted mowing regimes.

Winter maintenance has included tree works, path repairs, and general upkeep, supported by ongoing volunteer contributions.

Heritage, Conservation and Sustainability

Conservation of the historic Palace buildings remains a key priority. Work this year has included masonry repairs in East Court and continued investment in heritage-appropriate restoration techniques.

There has also been progress on sustainability initiatives. Funding has been secured for secondary glazing in parts of the estate, and proposals for solar panels at the Boathouse are expected to contribute to future energy generation.

Strategic Development

Looking ahead, several major projects are in development. Plans are progressing for a replacement Panorama Room and a proposed Creative Campus, both subject to funding and planning approval.

A draft Strategic Plan for 2025–2035 is also being developed, setting out priorities including improved visitor facilities, enhanced accessibility, environmental sustainability, and expanded creative and educational programmes.

Ongoing Challenges

Despite these successes, significant financial challenges remain. Rising costs, a substantial backlog of maintenance work, and a difficult trading environment for hospitality services continue to put pressure on resources.

As a charity supported by Haringey Council, securing external funding and developing sustainable income streams remain critical priorities for the future.

Association Representation

The Association continues to be represented on key governance bodies, including the Board of Trustees, the Consultative Committee, and the Statutory Advisory Committee.

During the year, Duncan Neill was reappointed to the Board of Trustees and took on the role of Chair of the Consultative Committee. John Crompton is our representative on the Statutory Advisory Committee. Members are encouraged to raise any issues or ideas via Duncan or John.

MHGFA Newsletter

The Newsletter has continued to be edited by Duncan Neill, and six issues were published in the year. All members receive an electronic copy by email, and several printed copies are distributed to local shops and businesses. We thank all contributors to the newsletter and anyone interested in writing a piece, whether it's about an event, a local organisation, or anything of local interest, to get in touch.

EVENTS

Della Deme

March 2025 - Guided Walk with Sally

A spring guided walk led by Sally took members through some of Muswell Hill's most characterful streets and green spaces. A relaxed, sociable outing that drew warm feedback from those who joined.

Thursday 1 May 2025 - The Mystery at Rake Hall (Maureen Paton)

Author and journalist Maureen Paton joined us at the Muswell Hill Methodist Church, 8–9pm, to talk about her book *The Mystery at Rake Hall*. An engaging evening combining local interest with a touch of intrigue.

Thursday 15 May 2025 - Annual General Meeting

The Association's AGM was held at the United Reformed Church, with committee reports, a review of the year's activities and the formal business of the membership. A good turnout and lively discussion.

July 2025 - Summer Litter Pick

Members rolled up their sleeves for a community litter pick around the neighbourhood, working alongside fellow residents to keep our streets and green spaces tidy. A simple, satisfying way to give back.

Wednesday 17 September 2025 - Curious Muswell with Andrew Whitehead

Historian, lecturer and former BBC journalist Andrew Whitehead presented his new book *Curious Muswell* at the Birchwood Centre at 7pm, hosted jointly with the Hornsey Historical Society. A packed room, plenty of local stories, and a really enjoyable collaboration between the two societies.

Early October 2025 - Muswell Hill Open Studios

MHGFA helped promote the Muswell Hill Open Studios weekend, connecting members with local artists opening their workspaces to the public. A lovely way to discover the creative talent on our doorstep.

November 2025 - Early Christmas Drinks

An informal early-Christmas drinks gathering for members - a chance to catch up, meet committee members, and toast the season together ahead of the December rush.

December 2025 - Muswell Hill Christmas Tree Light Switch-On & Carols

MHGFA stepped in as the community lead for Muswell Hill's Christmas Tree event, working with Haringey Council and local councillors to make sure the tree, the switch-on and the carols all went ahead. A real community moment, and a genuine team effort.

Sunday 8 March 2026 - Spring Litter Pick

A family-friendly litter pick run jointly with the Friends of Parkland Walk. Buggies and toddlers welcome - a relaxed morning of community spring cleaning along the Parkland Walk and surrounding streets.

Thursday 12 March 2026 - Spring Cleaning Expert Advice with Rebecca Roberts

Decluttering and home-organisation specialist Rebecca Roberts joined us at Pages Lane, 8–9pm, for a practical session on getting homes spring-ready. Well-timed, well-attended, and full of useful takeaways.

Thursday 23 April 2026 - Get Your Garden Summer-Ready with Brian Berry

A gardening evening with Brian Berry of Berry's Gardens, hosted at Muswell Hill Methodist Church at 8pm. Practical advice on preparing your garden for summer, whatever its size or style.

Saturday 2 May 2026 - Haringey Greyhounds Ice Hockey Game

Free tickets for MHFGA members to watch the Haringey Greyhounds at the Alexandra Palace Ice Rink, generously offered by the rink and the club. A great family outing and a chance to support a local team.

Monday 18 May 2026 - Annual General Meeting

The 2026 AGM, where members will hear committee reports, vote on association business, and look ahead to the year to come. All members welcome.

MEMBERSHIP

Heather Hampson

Current membership

We currently have 692 members, of these: 453 household members, 48 Corporate, 10 Honorary Life, 1 Press, 6 Honorary (mostly our councillors and MP), 7 pending.

I joined as Membership Secretary at the last AGM. As there was a clear up to be done on the database, I took over in September. Since then, I've been getting my head round the membership.

There's a continuous number of emails from members and non-members contacting me via the Membership email. Members want help with problems in Muswell Hill, and we certainly try and help.

There have been some initiatives to increase the membership:

- Quite a number of new members come via seeing our social media - thanks to Zoe
- Leafletting at the Christmas Tree switch on, leaflet drops in estate agents and direct leafletting through doors.
- We have a stall at East Finchley Festival to drum of new members
- Now I'm concentrating on corporate members

SOCIAL MEDIA

Zoe Norfolk

Facebook and Instagram

Our social media presence continues to grow steadily across platforms, strengthening both our reach and engagement within the local community.

On **Facebook**, we now have **3,263 followers**. Zoe regularly posts timely updates about changes and developments in Muswell Hill as they happen. This has positioned our page as a trusted source of local news, allowing followers to stay informed first-hand. As a result, we have seen increased engagement and a strong sense of community trust. We also use the platform to give regular shout-outs to our corporate members, helping to raise their profile within the community and support local businesses.

On **Instagram**, we have **2,607 followers**. In addition, Zoe frequently shares content to her personal account, which has over 9,500 followers and achieves very high engagement. This cross-promotion has been instrumental in driving new followers to our account and expanding our overall audience. As on Facebook, we highlight our corporate members through posts and mentions, further increasing their visibility.

Overall, our consistent, relevant, and locally focused content, alongside active promotion of our corporate members, continues to support audience growth and engagement across both platforms.

Notice board

We have been keeping it up to date with posters that are given and keeping our visibility on it about how to join etc.

New logo

Zoe has been working with a graphic designer to produce a new logo for the association. There will be a banner format for print and general usage, and a square format for social media. We plan to reveal the logo at the AGM in May 2026.

WEBSITE

Alex Vincenti

The Muswell Hill & Fortis Green Website is now 25 years old and has grown from the original four pages to more than 80 pages and about 250 posts. This year, the History section has been expanded to include the profiles of the Muswell Hill personalities celebrated by Green Plaques. The profiles had been published in the Association's Newsletter over a period of three years.

In the period between 1st May 2025 and 30 April 2026, the website www.mhafga.org has had 7,700 visitors, fifty per cent more than the previous year.

Most visitors came to read the local news stories and the committee reports on conservation, the environment, planning and the Alexandra Palace and Park. There's also been considerable interest in the website archive of images and videos of old Muswell Hill.