

Chair's Report to Annual General Meeting 2014

Our 15th year over and we have, again been busy, quietly doing what we are here to do – be at the centre of our community and stand up for Hornsey Park.

As always, we owe particular thanks to The Grace Baptist Church for the use of their hall. Thanks must also go to this year's Committee – Co Chair Ryan, Polly, Dorothy, Olga, Ben, Clement, Paul, Debbie, Sibel, Ivor, Don and Roger. And thank you to all who have helped arrangements run smoothly, attended other meetings on our behalf and all who have supported the Association over the past year.

Over the past year, we have worked on a great many issues affecting our area.

Demolition of the Gas Holders and Redevelopment of the Heartlands

We lobbied hard for improvements and better community engagement when National Grid reapplied for Outline planning permission last November. Notice was taken of our concerns in the eventual permission but, more importantly, we have established robust community engagement with National Grid and the demolition contractor to help ensure works are undertaken as considerately as possible, addressing the community's concerns in the process. We hope this dialogue will continue when the development partner charged with constructing the new homes is appointed. PMRA has been instrumental in establishing the Residents and Businesses Liaison Group: our thanks go to John for leading on this.

Community Gardening

Now in its fifth year, community gardening is perhaps the most visible contribution we make to our area. With local artist Carmel, we completed a second mural in our proposed gallery of murals for Martins Walk and installed a planter made of old pallets and soil planted with sedum, all with funding from the Mayor for London. We know our efforts are appreciated by residents and visitors alike. Every corner of our area now has its own patch of community garden. Particular thanks to regulars John, Joan, Clare, Don, Mary, Noreen and Michael and to Michael Thompson of The Mall and Yogamatters, for their support.

Dumped Rubbish, Bad Landlords and anti-social behaviour

It's a perennial problem, not helped by officers of the council who should be doing more to take action against those responsible for dumping rubbish, urinating in public areas and street drinking. Veolia add to the problem by leaving their own rubbish bags piled up around the area. The forecourt behind no.1 The Avenue has, finally been cleared after six months of lobbying. We will continue to press the council to live up to its promises and apply the resources it has to resolve problems that reflect so badly on our area.

Buses and traffic in Hornsey Park Road

Our calls for buses to use the spine road continue to fall on deaf ears (council officers and our councillors, London Buses and TfL alike). We now have the added threat from Alexandra Palace increasing the number of times it closes the park road and expects traffic to divert via Hornsey Park Road: meanwhile, we have had traffic diverted from the High Road and Colney Hatch Lane. We have called on the council to stand by its promise that traffic would use the new spine road. 5 years after opening, the council is still refusing to honour that promise – indeed, it is making matters worse, resulting in increasing levels of pollution, vibration, noise and congestion – all conditions known to

be bad for our health. We should repeat our direct action when we stopped traffic and asked drivers to use the new road.

Alexandra Road and the late running High Road road works

The council completely ignored our calls for traffic calming and environmental improvements at the High Road end of Alexandra Road: it seems intent on removing the traffic lights whilst not restricting the heavy vehicles that cause so much vibration and damage to our homes. We must continue our efforts to get the council to stop treating Alexandra Road as a gutter to the High Road. While the council did its best to kill off our plans for a pocket park here, the potential and interest in making one remains.

Pocket Park for Hornsey Park Road

We live in an area deficient of community open space, something the council has been unwilling to address, despite it being policy to do so. So we have stepped in and are proposing a Pocket Park behind the lime trees in Hornsey Park Road. The space meets the Mayor for London's requirements a pocket park. We have started conversations with the council and let our hopes be known to the landowner, National Grid. The loss of the space around the lime trees and over development of Heartlands is the most important challenge we have faced. For the sake of our community and future generations, we mustn't let pass the opportunity to preserve the open space and create a small community park.

Neighbourhood Watch

Through Ryan, we continue to support the Neighbourhood Watch. The Watch is a regular part of our meetings and we encourage everyone to support it.

Web Site for Hornsey Park, Notice Board and Leaflets

We have an excellent web site: thanks to Clement for managing it and to all who have contributed to it. It gets many visits and is an important place to voice our concerns and galvanise action. Thank you also to Polly and John for looking after the Notice Board and to all who help with leafleting every house in our area whenever we have meetings – something we do to ensure everyone in our community has the opportunity to be involved.

Other bits and pieces

We have continued to work with other residents associations, local businesses and the Mall Corporation. Sadly, the Wood Green Action Group finally collapsed: conceived as a collaboration with the council to see council resources and planning opportunities pooled with the resources of the community, it had nothing to show after most of a year's effort.

We have continued to press the council to improvements beneath Hornsey Railway Bridge and come up plans to better share the space between traffic, pedestrians and cyclists, using money given by Network Rail. The council has promised to consult us on a scheme it is putting together - we will press for the much needed safer connection.

In May, we held a Hustings for the 2014 Local Elections. The well attended meeting gave everyone the chance to hear and ask questions of candidates from the three major parties.

We continue to respond to consultations run by the council and attempt to engage with them in the planning of our area. Sadly, there is an established pattern of behaviour on their part where consultations are largely a 'box ticking' exercise for a plan they already have and our calls for engagement are acknowledged before being completely forgotten.

Again, we didn't manage to have an annual Spring Clean, a summer party or the suggested community 'boot sale' or 'exchange' – we will try again in the year ahead. However, we had a very successful 'Winter Drinks and Cake' event at the end of November and in December we returned to St Mark's Church Hall for our traditional Christmas Quiz night with the Noel Park North Residents Association and friends.

We have written to the council or attended meetings on many other issues affecting our area and used our meetings, the web site and Notice Board to keep everyone up to date.

In Conclusion

Thank you to all who have supported PMRA and joined in over the past year. Please do help again and make the association stronger and more relevant to our area. We look forward to working together in 2015, to help make our area one we are proud to call home.

Marcus Ballard and Ryan King, Co-Chairs, for PMRA

PMRA - YOUR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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18th November 2014

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