

## DOWNSHIRE HILL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Committee Meeting, Sunday 17 December, 7pm

Present: Chairman Stephen Ainger, Bob Buhr, Mark Dennis Cristabel Dennis, Patricia Morison, Redding Thompson, Nicola Sinclair, Sophie Marple, Tony Gordon James], Andrew Neale, Nigel Steward

### 1. **Minutes** of last meeting were circulated

The chairman and other committee members updated the committee as to developments since 6 December meeting regarding Abacus School's proposed move to the Police Station.

### 2. **Size of proposed school.**

After considerable discussion, the committee unanimously decided that they did not want to see a school of 420 pupils, which is proposed. We would object on grounds of excessive size for the site. However, a single-entry school of 210 pupils might be tolerable.

Stephen confirmed that time was short if DH's objections are to be registered, which must be at the planning stage. To date, the school has not been forthcoming about the timetable.

Agreed, that Jonathan Kendall (Abacus) should be told the reasons why the committee had serious reservations.

- **Traffic.** It was agreed that increased traffic is the committee's principal objection to the school. It will probably exercise DH residents as a whole. Much of the discussion focused here.  
Use of DH by the emergency services is an important consideration. There have been two traffic fatalities in the street in the past eight years.
- **Communication with DH residents.** It was agreed a note should be circulated to all DH residents, whether or not members of DHRA. It will set out the issues. (Mark confirmed that around 90% of the street are now paid up members.) Sophie and Redding to draft note.

The note will propose an extraordinary general meeting. It will also solicit contributions to pay for the traffic survey. [**After the meeting;** Note circulated, 20 October.]

Traffic will be very seriously affected in surrounding streets, Pilgrims Lane, Thurlow Road, Keats Grove, Heathurst Road. Residents in those streets should also be circulated. [**After the meeting;** Note circulated, 20 October.]

### 3. **Abacus' consultation as to entry criteria**

Sophie, Nicky and Redding had analysed the School's consultation exercise establishing new criteria for entry eligibility. It was felt that the proposal was highly unsatisfactory as regards DH. The School was established to serve Belsize Park. Abacus proposes that only part of DH falls within the catchment area. Therefore the street will suffer the inconveniences of having the school as a neighbour, but parents will not be able to access the school. In that sense, it will not be a 'community

school'. Many children will be coming from sufficient far away to mean that inevitably they will come by car.

Committee members agreed the School must be asked to revise their admission criteria to include all of DH.

#### **4. Heath & Hampstead Society**

Nigel confirmed that the Heath & Hampstead Society was against any more schools. A forthcoming meeting would discuss the Abacus issue. David Milne, an expert on schools in Camden, will be involved.

5. **Traffic survey.** Andrew had had preliminary discussions with consultants. Time is short, so he will write a brief for the DHRA to consider. There have been two fatalities in the street in the past eight years.
  
6. **Timing.** Stephen underlined that time was short. Objections must be registered at the planning stage, which allows only 30 days from the date of the planning submission. To date, the school has not been forthcoming about its timetable. It was agreed that Jonathan Kendall (Abacus) should be told the reasons why the committee had serious reservations. Transparency is important.

The meeting ended at 8pm.