

Downshire Hill Residents Association Annual General Meeting

Freemasons Arms

Sunday 30 June 2024

Present: DH committee: Andrew Neale (chair), Mark Dennis (treasurer), Linda Parsonage (membership), Sally Minto (communications), Patricia Morison (secretary), Patrick O'Connor, Teddy Bourne, Sophie Marple, Redding Thompson

DH residents - approximately 35 attended.

Councillor Linda Chung attended at the DHRA's invitation. The committee is very grateful to her for her helpful contributions.

Traffic matters

Patrick O'Connor reported for the traffic sub-committee. The Hampstead Traffic Partnership has formed, representing DH and a wide network of surrounding streets. Camden Council awarded £30k seed-corn funding to research improvements: PJA traffic consultants appointed. Residents are invited to submit their comments on traffic issues via Mark and Patrick. Residents have previously contributed to a DH traffic survey, which will need revisiting in due course.

Excessive speed is the prime concern. The street signage is inadequate, a new 20mph is desirable and/or road markings, but the Council has not so far responded.

There is a potential risk that if parking is further reduced, it might encourage yet further traffic.

Linda Chung has regular meetings with the Royal Free Hospital with regard to the steady increase in the overall volume of traffic.

Street Refuse

The seemingly intractable problem of rubbish bags outside number 3DH has somewhat abated lately. However, it remains a frequent and disgusting eyesore. Foxes hunting for food waste is part of this complex problem, caused by tenants having no facility for rubbish disposal in the rental properties.

It was suggested that there should be a trial of an on-pavement waste container of the type used in the Regent's Park and other royal parks. This option needs further research with suggestions to be put to the council. Notwithstanding daily collections, mismatched timing results in refuse being left overnight.

Rubbish at the other end of the street is a problem, with waste matter being left or thrown into gardens. Residents were reminded to use the Clean Streets App to report rubbish.

Planning Matters

1. Former Hampstead Police Station. The proposed redevelopment plans had been broadly welcomed except for the substantial terrace proposed at the 2nd-floor level. This is not acceptable to neighboring properties (due to noise, overlooking, light pollution). Andrew has written to the applicant, but no improvement to the design has resulted.
2. The section house next door to the police station has been sold. An application had been submitted then withdrawn.
3. Stables building behind. The application for the annexe at 53/54 Hampstead Hill Mansions, has been controversial on grounds of light pollution etc. and objections have been raised by several neighbours. An appeal regarding solar slates on the main building was successful.
4. 14a Keats Grove. Numerous residents had submitted objections to the proposed development which contravenes the principle of the protected open space (P.O.S.) protecting green open space which is so important in this locality.
5. 73 South End Green. Andrew will object to the development on behalf of DHRA, as another inappropriate intrusion into open space.
6. 15 Downshire Hill, renovation. Residents had objected to the unsatisfactory work being carried out to a listed building. An enforcement notice was served and work ceased. An application was made for retrospective planning permission. It appears that the absent owner was unaware of the responsibility required to work on listed buildings, and had unwisely relied on the builders.

Security issues

Sally reported that mobile phone snatching has reached epidemic proportions in Hampstead, with attacks being carried out in Downshire Hill. Thieves particularly aim to snatch iPhones which are actually in use, because it can prove highly lucrative in gaining access to bank accounts etc.. Related 'shoulder surfing' is also rife. [Sally has posted detailed advice on the DH WhatsApp which residents are encouraged to consult.]

Car theft has apparently reduced this year. The police recommend steering wheel locks as a deterrent by the police.

Fairs on East Heath fairground

It was pointed out that fairs of various kinds have become more common and are held over longer periods, particularly the Christmas Fair which is fairly new. Noise, unsightliness and rubbish are associated problems. Linda Chung offered to raise the matter with the Corporation of London.

South End Green 'Streeterly'

The Streeterly is felt to be an improvement to the area. Local shopkeepers contributed payment for York stone for the attractive extended pavement. Licensing issues still need to be resolved, so that the number of tables outside is tolerable and does not encroach of Keats Grove.

Linda Chung reported on the serious risk of flooding in South End Green, which a sustainability group is actively reviewing.

Residents are encouraged to report road water-leaks quickly to Thames Water.

After the meeting

Residents enjoyed a convivial light supper which Mark had arranged with the Free Masons.