



## **Chairman's Report 2020 AGM**

For the sake of brevity, personal credits are limited but huge thanks are due to all the Committee, Centre Manager and many others in the community who have contributed over the last year.

We welcome any questions or comments by email in advance of the AGM. There is only a limited opportunity at our Zoom meeting. Communication is also welcome afterwards

### **A. COVID-19**

1. This report must begin with the impact of COVID, which has challenged the whole community. It has dominated our attention, although many other aspects of HWA have continued to demand and receive "normal" attention.

2. HWA played its part in providing support to people: we set up our Corona Support WhatsApp to link volunteers with those needing help. We coordinated with other community groups providing support. We kept the open space available for exercise and, in the summer days, picnics - and always for dog walkers. Hadley Wood News published extra editions and promoted local walks and other initiatives.

3. All our main shared users of the Centre had to suspend their activities in March when lockdown started, and all hall hires were cancelled. As COVID rules changed, Tennis and PreSchool were able in steps to reopen, requiring close reading of the rules and cooperation. The understanding of open air rules was also a developing study. We are fortunate to have expertise among Trustees (Liz Snape and Rupert Mackay) and our special guide Gill Henley. We kept the office covered throughout.

4. Centre Upgrade was a major casualty. By Easter, the 2020 work details had been finalised and costed, and we were ready to contract with a builder. Faced with the collapse in Centre use and income, we decided to postpone the works until 2021. Very disappointing after all efforts by Helen Speroni, Dawn Wellings and others, but we could not risk spending a substantial part of our reserves amidst such uncertainty.

5. With few savings at the Centre and none for Grounds maintenance, a significant loss was predicted for the year. This was partly mitigated by successfully claiming a COVID business grant of £10,000. Tennis and PreSchool also paid their full fees despite their partial interruptions; Bridge contributed two months fees after their complete suspension.

6. With Lockdown2 upon us, now during colder months, we face continuing

challenges on the Centre use, financially and in the community. We shall do our best to meet those challenges.

7. We must also record our thanks for the huge part played by Londis and also Panini, Thymari and our other local shops and services. Our members found how valuable our discount scheme can be!

## **B. OBJECTIONS TO BARCHESTER PLANNING APPLICATION**

1. The depth of feeling against the Barchester Healthcare proposal (50 bed care home in Crescent East) has been remarkable and has turned into action with a high volume of objections, from the full range across Hadley Wood and from young to old, from long term residents to newcomers. Clearly the character of our residential locality and our conservation area are essential reasons to live here, and there is a spirit to resist such damaging proposals.

2. Protecting Hadley Wood against unsustainable and inappropriate development is a core objective of the Association. With many residents expressing strong opposition during the Consultation and gross breaches of planning policy identified by our Neighbour Planning Forum leaders, the Association decided itself to object and to lead a campaign to alert residents. This included information on planning issues being raised by residents, posters and leaflets and door knocking. Demonstrating the value of the Association has encouraged many to join us as members.

3. As reported by our HWAMAILS (for members only) and HWNews, we generated over 250 individual objections and helped organise several consultant reports (planning and heritage) and group representations. The individual objections reveal a very useful range of experience in healthcare and other relevant attributes. Our primary planning response was prepared by David Harbott (as Acting Chair of the NP Forum) with much detailed input from Steve de Vos. Lewis Temple prepared heritage response for a revived Hadley Wood Conservation Area Study Group (which has a formal status in planning decisions). There have been strong collective responses from St Paul's and HW Jewish Community, both neighbours of the proposed development. We have engaged support from our Councillors and other local community groups including The Enfield Society and CLARA (Cockfosters).

4. We expect a decision from Planning Officers during November which may be to recommend approval (in which case the application goes to the Planning Committee) or refusal (which Barchester may appeal). The threat will hang over us for some time yet. The Association will be alert to keep up necessary actions and keen to build on the community engagement.

## **C. TRUSTEES + COMMITTEE**

1. Trustees and Committee members have all continued throughout the year, which is a great help. There have been mostly regular monthly meetings, continuing through Zoom, and a lot of action in between. Our Centre Manager continued her

duties throughout evolving restrictions and adapted to new tasks, including financial administration.

2. We still need more people involved. Despite regular calls, we are still without a Secretary and a Membership Secretary, two key roles. We cover as best we can, but it is a strain.

3. We resolved formally to adopt Diversity and Environment Policies. We shall be refining the these as we develop action plans. Volunteers welcome to join these initiatives.

#### **D. FINANCES**

1. There is a separate report from the Treasurer on the 2019/20 results and 2020/21.

2. The improvements in financial management have been consolidated through the efforts of David Harbott, Julie Nedza and our Centre Manager.

3. We have moved our banking to Unity Trust Bank which provides several advantages, critically through online banking and better control of payment authorisations. We are clearing some legacy issues with NatWest before moving all our banking to Unity Trust. There is an arrangement between the banks to transfer standing orders and direct debits when we are ready.

4. We have exceptional challenges to meet as we have major income loss through COVID with little opportunity to replace this through Events, pressing needs to repair the Centre (preferably upgrade rather than patch), pressure to improve our facilities and overdue calls for attention around the Grounds. We have a cushion of cash reserves exceeding £50,000 so there is no immediate crisis but that is earmarked as cash to support Centre Upgrade works (as well as a contingency) and can quickly be eroded if use of the Centre does not resume by Easter.

5. Members must expect us to call for more financial support, and we shall have to use some of our reserves, but we shall be cautious.

#### **E. CENTRE + GROUNDS**

1. The COVID problems have dominated the year at the Centre but at least we have seen PreSchool back in operation under special cleaning rules and a welcome Summer Camp. Tennis came back strongly with popular play, new members and even use of the bar; Lockdown2 is a real setback. We are missing Bridge and Dance. Hall hire has been suspended without an end in sight. There is little saving from less Centre use.

2. We had to postpone the planned Centre Upgrade works, but the pressures to do at least some of the works increase - with more repairs needed on an immediate basis. We improved alarms and locks, and finally replaced the old red chairs (a fire hazard) with new easily stackable ones. Toilets and drains will have to be done in

2021 and other problems are emerging.

3. The Grounds are maintained but we have not been able to improve their condition. It was sad to see the necessary reduction (after the fall of a large branch) of the grandest old Hawthorn behind the Centre, much admired by Tree Council as well as PreSchool children and residents. The Grounds provided wonderful recreation space during lockdown, with lots of picnics and exercise. A welcome change came with Mount House School using the sports field for “summer sports” till half term; football will be played through to Easter and possibly cricket in the summer. A local family (Orsi) are in negotiation to hire the football pitches in the new year for an u13 league team and build up local players at different ages.

## **F. MEMBERSHIP**

1. Our solid database and membership management by Julie Nedza has shown through in better subscription collection, Gift Aid returns and delivery of membership packs, aided by Dawn Wellings and others.

2. Our efforts on several fronts are producing a good flow of new members, meeting our target by exceeding 100 during the year. We now have over 600. There is more to do: we still have less than half of households in Hadley Wood. We are reviving the Street Reps to help us link to members and recruit.

3. Sources of new members include parents of School and PreSchool (with diligent encouragement by our car park patrols), new Tennis members, mutual efforts with Hadley Wood Security, general encouragement of residents to support their Association by joining especially promoted by our planning efforts, and a significant number of new residents. We are providing a compelling set of reasons to become members.

## **G. HWA SECURITY COMMITTEE**

1. Dawn Wellings continues to lead this coordination committee in exemplary fashion, providing the forum for the three complementary groups to work together (Neighbourhood Watch, Security/MLB and police). We strongly encourage our members to join their street NHW and HWS (now full service across all of Hadley Wood).

## **H. PLANNING + LOCAL AFFAIRS + COUNCILLORS**

1. The Association, and the Neighbourhood Planning Forum Committee, are in favour of development as long as it is sustainable and fits the special character of our residential village. The widespread investment in new houses and flats and in improvements demonstrates that Hadley Wood is an attractive and thriving place to live. Our primary planning task is to support the NPF through to a completed Neighbourhood Plan with its positive policies. (See report.)

2. There is a high volume of planning applications, many more than in past decades.

Unfortunately some of these damage the local character, as well as the loss of amenity for neighbours and the nuisance of construction. The Association has to decide when to provide support to neighbour objections, which can be invidious, or even take the initiative itself. It is hard to define the threshold, but the Barchester proposal was clearly well above it as a major development affecting more than just immediate neighbours with widespread opposition (see report above). We welcome debate on this threshold, but we have had the benefit of practical input from the twenty members of our Planning Group administered by David Sumners. We are reviving the Hadley Wood Conservation Area Study Group. We encourage members to ask us for planning guidance, whilst always looking after their own interests and calling upon Councillors when needed.

3. Our efforts can make a difference. There were striking successes at the Planning Committee in August saving the precious trees along Monken Mead from further back land development in Waggon Road, invoking environmental climate change overturning Officer recommendations.

4. Local Affairs and planning raise a range of important issues and involvement with a wide circle of people and organisations. This is interesting and rewarding, but very time consuming. We owe a huge debt to David Harbott now with great input from Steve de Vos. There is an increasing area of involvement, building networks to support us when needed and to give support (for example Save Cockfosters from the station car park development). The flood of new planning initiatives (including the Jenrick proposals, housing need assessments, Green Belt threats, Enfield's new Environment Forum...) is hard to manage and respond to consultations with short time limits, but we cover them.

## **I. EVENTS**

Sadly a very short section this year, as COVID has precluded any physical events. As HWA, we still need to find people to lead and manage internet events and we admire the activities of Bridge and Tennis.

## **J. SHARED USERS**

This section is dominated by COVID (see above) but the resilience of our shared users is shown in their reports (attached). We are looking forward to Mount House School and a new football club joining our shared users with a welcome revival of sport on the Bartrams Lane field.

## **K. COMMUNITY**

This year we cannot demonstrate and promote our ties with other community groups in person as at last year's AGM, but those relationships have continued to strengthen. Covid Support and Barchester in their very different ways have benefitted from cooperation, and the ever stronger Security Committee group proves the value of complementary organisations.

## **L. HADLEY WOOD NEWS + WEBSITE**

1. HWN plays an important part in HWA service to residents under the evergreen editorship of Rod Armstrong who balances the more interesting human stories and John Leatherdale photos with the earnest and endless pressures to include the serious news from HWA, on planning, security and trains. We produced extra editions during Lockdown1 which revealed the enterprise of youth as well as information on local walks.

2. Rod has a keen eye for the need to balance the books, developing a loyal band of advertisers as well as contributors. Thanks to all those who support us in this way. Rod succeeded yet again to break even, except for the extra edition when we included those loyal adverts without charge.

3. The website has continued to host our key materials and those of other groups, with vital support from Gill Henley. We are due a revamp and are very keen to recruit someone who can manage or even do an upgrade.

## **M. THIS YEAR 2020/21**

The Trustees and Committee will continue to keep the Association on an upward path supported by increasing numbers of members. These are exceptionally challenging times across COVID, finances, Centre upgrade requirements and planning threats but we shall find ways to manage our way through. We believe that residents value a strong Association even more at such times.

There is a lot more this report could cover, but this is already long.

Comments and questions welcome, for the AGM or afterwards. Involvement in any activities, current or potential, welcome. Contributions to our Fireworks Appeal, welcome.

Thank you.

Robert Wilson  
Chairman, HWA

## **HADLEY WOOD ASSOCIATION**

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