

The Committee, jointly chaired by Elspeth Clements and Liz Morris (ably supported by the members of the Committee, with their wide range of expertise) has, as always, been fully occupied with a wide range of matters.

The **Archway Campus** issue remains unclear, following Islington's refusal and the Mayor of London's call-in for his own decision. Local groups conditionally support the developer's alternative proposal, unaccountably dropped by them for their 27-storey tower block, as going a long way to addressing the local community's concerns. It would deliver 184 new homes, including 82 affordable, while ensuring that the scale and character of the development remain in harmony with the surrounding area. It is a much more sensitive and sensible approach that still delivers large numbers of new homes. Key elements are no high-rise tower; retention of one of the historic hospital buildings; new low-rise affordable homes; creation of green space for residents; and sustainability, by using existing structures and a masterplan.

Following Islington's strong refusal of the controversial scheme in March, the Mayor of London has now called in the application; alarmingly, he has a track record of approving schemes in the face of strong local opposition, particularly those involving tall buildings. The public hearing will probably be in late 2025. The GLA is being urged to listen to the community and support the alternative low rise plan, and local residents emphasise that they want to see the site developed with new homes including a good provision of affordable housing. The developer's figure of 51% affordable housing is achieved by excluding the student housing, by the provision of large number of 1 bed and studio units and counting units rather than bedspaces. Of the affordable housing to be provided, it is clear that this does not meet either housing policy or local need either as percentage of total or mix. In terms of mix, including the student housing, 76% of the site is being developed as studio or 1 bed units when there is a demonstrable need for family units on this site. The high number of small units increases the percentage figures of affordable housing when calculated by this method rather than bed spaces. The high number of small units inflates the perceived amount of affordable housing being provided rather than reflecting the number of bedspaces being provided. 100% of intermediate housing offered is studio or one bedroom and is Discounted Market Rents rather than London Living Rents. Finally, the affordable housing is poorly designed with too many single aspect flats with poor outlook and which result in overlooking internally on the site and into neighbouring properties

Flat A, 23 Hampstead Lane. Appeal against a refusal to grant planning permission for a detached timber outbuilding in the rear garden dismissed on grounds of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed outbuilding would extend across the entire width of the garden occupying a significant proportion of the garden area. It would appear as an incongruous addition as it would not relate well to the main house, would dominate the appearance of the garden area, erode the open character of the rear gardens of neighbouring properties and undermine their relationship to one another. Whilst it would only be visible in private views, this would not diminish its adverse effects.

The **Highgate School Development Proposals:** the last we heard from the school is that they will resubmit the plans in the autumn. The School has agreed to set up community workshops on traffic, sustainability and community use of school facilities; these will not be discussing planning issues but are designed to work with the community on these issues.

We are disappointed with the proposals for the **Mallinson Centre**, with its poor and incoherent design. Looking at the existing and proposed plans, there is little additional space provided through the new atrium. It appears completely unnecessary, but our concerns have been consistently ignored in the workshops. However, the ridiculous attenuation tank, to be dug into The Orchard, remains, its shape merely being altered to miss key trees. However, the combined effect of the tank and the new basement works of the Mallinson Centre will, we believe, cause significant ecological damage. The hedgerow around The Orchard, containing several Veteran Oaks, is an important historic feature, being the last pre-development hedgerow in Highgate, traceable on the 1869 Ordnance Survey Map, and we fear it will not survive the removal of much of its water table on both sides. Alternative and more sustainable water attenuation measures are available and we will press the school to reconsider.

However, the proposals for an artificial pitch on the **Far Field** have been replaced by improved drainage proposals.

Despite our urging amendments to the **Science Block** extension proposals, the architect made no changes. We consider them poorly designed and conceived and are working with the School on significant modifications.

The Society and local residents remain unhappy with the current proposals for **Dyne House** – both the large rear extension with its deep basement and the proposed refurbishment of the Southwood Lane facade (the latter also being opposed by the Twentieth Century Society) - and believe that it should remain as is. However no amendments have been made.

It is proposed to convert **40 Highgate West Hill**, previously used as consulting rooms back to a house. While in itself unexceptionable, the proposals for the front courtyard will have a harmful impact on the access and outlook of the three other houses on the site, in particular access for emergency services.

We have objected to a new large 3 bedroom house to the rear of **225 Archway Road**, a sensitively-restored listed Victorian villa. This is the latest in a series of similar applications refused on grounds of site cramming and impact on neighbours. The latest application sinks and moves it to address these concerns but has created other problems. It will be buried some 1.5 storeys into the ground, involving excavating 4.5m for a subterranean home, giving very poor amenity for the residents. The site has a number of trees providing a valuable screening function and a considerable amount of their root zone will be removed by the excavations. The Basement Impact Assessment gives insufficient information and seems to be taken mostly from a geotechnical report prepared in 2011 by a practice which no longer exists. There are major concerns regarding the impact on water flow and hydrology of the area, which is crossed by tributaries of the old Cholmeley Brook, which itself flows into the Moselle and hence to the river Lea.

As long anticipated, **Broadbent Yard** is now on the market, and the package includes the large woodland site between the Yard and the Harington Scheme, which we have endeavoured for decades to ensure is protected. It is designated as a site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation, lies within the protected Highgate Bowl area, and even the estate agent's brochure seems to intimate that because of its ecological importance, permission to develop is unlikely. However we remain concerned that a determined developer will endeavour to "prove" that it has little ecological value and should be developed for luxury housing. Our repeated efforts to meet Haringey's Ecology Officer to discuss how best to ensure its protection have so far met with silence, as have our efforts to meet the estate agent. Clearly the future of the woodland must be secured.

6a Grange Road is now the subject of yet another of a long series of selfishly overlarge developments on this constrained site for a three-storey, five-bedroom house with enormous basement replacing the now-demolished modest house. Besides being a significant overdevelopment, it will have a significant impact on neighbours, and particularly on water flow across the site, and we have submitted another strong objection.

New proposals for 11 family houses on the former **Newstead Retirement Home** are smaller than the original permitted development for a block of flats, and the basement has been removed, but the development is actually much denser - an increase from 156 to 294 habitable rooms per hectare. Neighbours are concerned about the future of the mature trees screening them from the development, and we continue to seek modifications.

An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for the existing use of **293 Archway Road** as eight self-contained flats has, very correctly, been refused by Haringey. These are all below 50% of the minimum size specified in London Plan and Haringey Design Standards, and we are pressing for enforcement action to be taken.

Haringey seem determined to press ahead with their own proposal for a block of 16 flats and 2 houses on the site of the American Car Wash in the middle of the **Wellington Gyratory roundabout**. We have concerns about the quality of the housing, the very poor design at the gateway to the Conservation Area, impact on neighbours and, in particular, pollution levels and pedestrian safety issues for the residents (Transport for London will not commit to a pedestrian crossing as it will affect traffic flows) and have made a detailed objection.

While proposals for two semi-detached 3-storey houses at **12 Great North Road** are smaller than the previous one which we criticised strongly, the design is uninspired and we hope Haringey will require a better-considered design.

Aided by several members of the Planning Committee, Co-Chairs Liz Morris and Elspeth Clements have put together an excellent and detailed Society response to **Camden's Draft Local Plan Consultation**. While this has some strong policies which we support and many, in particular on meeting housing needs, others need reconsidering. At 20 pages, I will not even attempt a synopsis in our limited space allocation, but you can see the full document on the Planning section of the Society's website, and we do hope you will take the time to look at it and note the huge amount of work the Planning Committee has put into it.

Transport for London propose a **20 m.p.h. limit on Archway Road** covering the whole length from the south near Holloway Road to the junction with Bakers Lane which forms part of the gyratory at the north end. The reduced speed limits are part of the mayor's objectives to reduce accidents and are due to be implemented from early 2026. Residents who wish to comment may do so at <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/lowering-speed-limits> where there is also more background on the broader 20 m.p.h policy. While we strongly support Archway Road residents' aspiration for a 20 m.p.h. limit north of the Archway bridge, there may be fewer benefits from restrictions on the dual carriageway section south of the bridge.

Good news on the issue of **parking of Mobile Homes and vans along Hampstead Lane and Bishopswood Road**. Haringey's Enforcement Team have visited all the caravans. For those without registration plates and not attached to vehicles, they have issued 7-day warning notices requesting their removal. If they are not moved within that timeframe, they will proceed with enforcement action. They identified individuals living in some of the caravans, and this has been referred to the Antisocial Behaviour Team, who state that they may pursue a warrant through the court. We understand Haringey's plan to reduce long-term parking in Hampstead Lane and Bishopswood Road will be to extend the CPZ. However Haringey proposes to defer action on this until after the local elections in May 2026

The care and well-being of Trees remains an equally impact part of our work.

An application to fell a Veteran Oak at **17 Denewood Road** appeared to be a repeat of an earlier one, to which we objected and which was refused. Whereas the first asserted that it was 95% dead, this states that it is now dead. If it is, we would not object to a major reduction to make it safe. However, it is well-known that dead veteran oaks are one of the most important habitats for rare fungi and wood-boring invertebrates. Given the tree's location within a series of large gardens which form an important ecological corridor, we have asked that the tree should not be felled, but that as much as practicable of the stump should be preserved for its ecological value. We also objected once again to the proposal to replace it with a Dawn Redwood, we reasserted our view that it would not be an "appropriate replacement" and has little ecological value. The oak is identifiable as one of the hedgerow oaks on the 1869 Ordnance Survey map, and any replacement should be of a semi-mature Oak. Our concerns have been listened to, and while Haringey have permitted the total removal of the dead tree, they have required it to be replaced with a semi-mature Oak.

There is a similar application at **Guildens Development site, Courtenay Avenue** to reduce and monolith two dead oaks. Again, we would welcome their retention as standing monoliths, to retain their ecological value as a dead wood habitat. However, the site, currently derelict, appears to be partially wooded and part of a larger belt of woodland occupying part of the back gardens of the east side of Courtenay Avenue. We have therefore asked to meet Haringey's Tree Officer on site to assess the extent, condition and potential of this woodland belt.

We objected strongly to an application fell a protected Hornbeam at **41 Lanchester Road** on the grounds that it "is an inappropriate species for its location, being too large for the small garden and in close proximity to the house...[and] envelops the garden in shade for most of the year." We contested that it is "an inappropriate species for its location." Indeed, it was present long before the house was built, in 1974/75 and was specifically retained in the development. Importantly, it is possibly a relict coppiced ancient hornbeam, originally within a larger Highgate Wood, it is not claimed that it is causing any structural problems to the house, and a tree causing shading is not a valid Planning reason for felling. We therefore considered that the solution would be an appropriate level of pruning. As a result, a new application has been made to prune it. We have asked Haringey to specify exactly the work to be done, because ancient hornbeams which have not been pruned or coppiced for many decades react adversely to excessive pruning.

As part of their efforts to update their Byzantine financing procedures, the City of London has initiated a **Natural Environment Charity Review**. It is not widely realised that all the City's 11,000 acres Open Spaces are held under eight individual charities, with the City as trustee. The review is not about cutting funding and the City has committed to continue to preserve and protect these spaces. Facing increasing costs,

the changes aim to enable the charities to generate more funds.

The review focuses solely on the structures and funding. They recognise that some of the charities have more potential to generate income than others, and while they will explore new ways to raise income, the open spaces remain protected under legislation, there are no plans for large-scale commercial events, and the priority remains protecting nature, preserving the character of each site, and enabling public access.

The Review aims to ensure long-term sustainability by refining their funding models and giving them greater flexibility to operate, generate income, build reserves, invest in conservation, and enhance services. The City emphasise that it is not a cost-cutting exercise, but about giving the charities more flexibility to generate income and build reserves. No changes are planned to daily operations.

The City will remain the sole trustee of these charities, and if a charity cannot raise enough money, the City Corporation will act as the financial backstop. The charities are moving from a deficit-funded model, where the Corporation pays agreed net costs not covered by other income, to a grant-funded model, where the charities are allocated an annual grant by the Corporation. This will enable them to build financial reserves, to carry forward funds (which they could not do in the past), and generate additional income. Transitioning to a grant funding model aims to allow retention of raised funds, rather than having to hand back the money at the end of the year.

From April 2025, Epping Forest and West Ham Park will move to the new model. From April 2026, the remaining charities will follow: Hampstead Heath, Queen's Park and Highgate Wood, Ashted Common, Burnham Beeches and Stoke Common, Coulsdon and Other Commons, and West Wickham Common and Spring Park Wood. Consultation with key stakeholders, including the Society as members of the Hampstead Heath and Highgate Wood Consultative Committees, will be a priority throughout the process. A fundraising consultant has been appointed, and we have already had useful meetings at which to air our views. The Community view is that the City should maintain core funding, and that any fundraising should be for specific projects. We also suggested that something should be done to address the issue of developers of nearby sites seeking to benefit from proximity to the Heath and Highgate Wood without contributing to them. It was also felt that, until the City can alter their image of having unlimited resources, and make clearer the fact that their open spaces are charities, fundraising will be difficult. Initial indications are that reasonable allocations of capital funds will be made for the Heath and Highgate Wood over the next five years – some £9 million. An obvious approach should be to approach the wealthy individuals living on large plots around the Heath. It has also been emphasised that the City still need to produce a public statement about the changes.

Together with other local groups we continue to be closely involved in the management of **Hampstead Heath**. Concern has been expressed about the extending patches of bramble, which, while a valuable habitat for birds, is being allowed to spread too much, and work planned for September. The issue of pond pollution with flea treatment chemicals from dog swimming is a major one and a seminar for vets is being held in the autumn to urge the use of alternative treatments. On 14th June an illegal a-party of some 500 fans commemorating George Michael was held on the West Heath, which needed a Metropolitan Police presence. A new Sergeant has been appointed to head the Heath Constabulary.

The City submitted a very strong objection to the Archway Campus development, on ground of impact on the Heath. They are also watching the proposed Vorley Road development, near the Archway scheme, and the big Bacton Tower high-rise scheme south of Mansfield Road (see <https://bactontowersaction.org> for the residents' campaign against it) which will also affect views from the Heath and add increased visitor pressure. They also continue to press the owner of "Harry's land", formerly part of the Athlone House Gardens, who bought it speculatively but now realises that development is prohibited by covenants. The owners remain unresponsive and Camden will be approached to take action on the Japanese Knotweed spreading across the site, and to look at the possibility of compulsory purchase.

Public behaviour can remain a problem. Some 20 swimmers decided to swim in the Bird Sanctuary pond, closed to public as a nature reserve. Having no understanding of what they were doing, they drove the Pen Swan and her cygnets off their rafts. The male swan came to drive off the swimmer on the raft, but the swan's raft was destroyed. In another incident, the female was hooked in her beak by a fishhook; in her frenzy she tossed a cygnet into the air. The Rangers came to help but the cob got there first and somehow got the hook out.

The City have issued a press release inviting applications to run the five cafés in Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, and Queen's Park. Criteria include café concept, menu and food offer, environmental management, community and social value, management approach, experience and references, as well as the overall strength of the business plan. Currently all operators are trading under short-term tenancies at will. Already a local group has launched a campaign objection to what is proposed, but it seems premature to comment until we see the results of the tendering process, and, not least understand the views of the current tenants themselves.

Kenwood House has a new House Manager, and in May I attended a walk round the estate led by Head Gardener, Crissy Mulrain, who has a team of two gardeners - a third position is currently frozen due to English Heritage funding constraint – aided by 25 Kenwood Volunteers and, on one day a week, Heath Hands.

The ending of Summer rock and pop concerts in 2022 greatly increased summer access and reduced damage and recovery times for the grassed areas, and new outdoor events have focussed on the Christmas season, which also has less impact on natural habitats.

In West Meadow are two experimental plots to restore wildflower-rich meadow. The focus is on encouraging wildflowers already present, particularly Red Bartsia, which is rare in London and helps wildflower recovery by being parasitic on competing grasses. A new stand of Alder Buckthorn has encouraged Brimstone butterflies. Beside the Sphagnum Bog, a spectacular patch of Lily of the Valley is thriving; the perfume was almost overwhelming. The Bog is being managed for Sphagnum moss and uncommon wildflowers and ferns, and to maintain nesting habitat for uncommon birds like Whitethroat. West Meadow has seen Buzzards, Sparrow Hawks and Kestrels.

Holly can grow into dense stands blocking light to the woodland floor, and preventing growth of new oaks and ground flora; this is being drastically thinned. The Chubb Shelter and the Heath and Hampstead Society will mount a set of their seasonal biodiversity boards on the wall. An interesting feature was a veteran oak which has long supported a large colony of wild bees. Also to be welcomed will be a Kenwood Veteran Tree walk around the Estate.

The London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies has made a strong submission to a recent Government consultation aiming to speed planning by severely restricting the right of local communities to involvement in the planning system. It shows that the current Government, in their gadarene rush to speed up planning, has as little grasp of the real problems as the previous one; both seem only to have listed to developers who blame all their problems on the planning system (even though 93% of application are permitted), and on “Nimbys” like us (when though many amenity societies seem to be able to deploy more expertise and experience than many local authorities). For their full document, see

<https://www.londonforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Response-to-Planning-Committee-Reform-consultation.pdf>

and we recommend that you bookmark their very useful website for insights into planning issues affecting London. In summary, their main concerns are:

- The proposals, that only developments of a certain size can be considered by planning committees, with the rest left to officers, and the community having no right to ask applications to be considered by Planning Committee, is an attack on local democracy and will severely restrict public engagement in planning. If a resident approaches a councillor about a planning application in Tier A, they will have to respond that they cannot help in any way. Trust in local government and local democracy will be significantly damaged.
- Any planning application, however small, that could adversely affect the community, or however many objections by residents, will not be able to be considered by a planning committee, unless they are “contentious” or contrary to the development plan. What to build and where should be shaped by local communities and reflect their views.
- Dictating that smaller applications “**must** be delegated in **all** cases” is a ban on the powers of planning committees to determine some applications, regardless of local circumstances. Local authorities must retain the power to take an application to its planning committee.
- They call it “shameful: that there is no mention of conservation areas in the proposals.
- In areas of high land values where developers “play the system”, developments may be controversial and may well need to be decided by a planning committee.

- It is unacceptable to require that all applications for lawful development certificates should be determined solely by officers. Where a planning application *should* have been made, planning committee must be able to consider it.

They do, however, strongly support the proposed mandatory training requirement for members of planning committees; in our experience, some members can be woefully unqualified for the role.