

# Trust Times

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Issue 03

YOUR HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB TRUST NEWSLETTER

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## Trust takes back Central Square

**We are pleased to announce that the Trust has now taken back control of Central Square from the London Borough of Barnet on a 999-year lease.**

The handover took place in June, and was the culmination of a years-long collaboration between the Trust and Barnet. Those present for the historic occasion included the Worshipful the Mayor of Barnet Councillor Alison Moore, along with Councillor Rohit Grover, representatives of the two churches on Central Square, and others from organisations who have

been involved at various stages of the negotiation process.

Also in attendance was Lucy Wiseman, wife of the late Richard Wiseman who served as the Trust's Chairman for two three-year terms, and whose passion for the handover was one of the driving forces behind it during his tenure as Chair.

The Trust's current Chair Raymond Taylor addressed the gathering, followed by a speech from the Mayor, and fellow HGS Trust trustee Richard Townley fellow Trust trustee Richard Townley. All acknowledged the historic significance of this return of the Square to the Trust's

care after half a century, and Barnet's stewardship of the open space over that time was also recognised.

A commemorative bench has been placed on the Square opposite our tennis courts, with Richard Townley and the Mayor cutting the ribbon to symbolically mark the handover from Barnet to the Trust.

Guests were treated to light refreshments in the Free Church, who kindly allowed us to use this space for the occasion, and it was a good opportunity for staff and trustees past and present to catch up and reflect on the significance of the day.

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Mayor of Barnet Alison Moore on the commemorative bench with trustee Richard Townley, whose tenacious enthusiasm over many years was key to getting the job done





# Trust takes back Central Square continued

Also present was ex-Trust Manager Nick Packard, who worked closely with Richard Wiseman and Richard Townley to oversee the earlier stages of the process, as well as landscape gardener Stephen Crisp, who designed the refurbished flowerbeds at Central Square some five years previously.

It was the success and universally positive feedback of this initial flowerbed project – a collaboration between the Trust, Barnet, the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association and North

Square Residents Association – which made the handover of the Square itself a more realistic prospect.

The transfer of Central Square marks a continuation of the Trust's stewardship of Hampstead Garden Suburb in our duty to preserve the character and amenity of this special place.

The Square will continue to be an open space provided and maintained for the benefit of all residents of and visitors to Hampstead Garden Suburb,

just as it was intended to be by the Suburb's founder, Dame Henrietta Barnett, who deliberately intended this highest point to be a focal point of her new community.

Central Square will also continue to be available to those neighbours who put it to such good use, including the pupils of the Henrietta Barnett School, and local organisations such as the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association and Proms at St Jude's.



From top left: Bench ribbon-cutting; speeches on Central Square; refreshments in the Free Church



# A brief history of Central Square

**As the highest point in the area, the land which forms Central Square was always destined to be a focal point and spiritual heart of the new community of Hampstead Garden Suburb.**

**D**ame Henrietta Barnett, the Suburb's founder, recalled in her memoirs the day she and some colleagues hiked through fields of long grass to the brow of this hill. It was at this high point that she proclaimed would be the location of the churches and The Institute.

With this brief in mind, the Suburb's planners Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin set to work sketching out proposed layouts of the area, and early plans reveal a treatment for Central Square with curved roads, shops and many more public buildings.

But it was the involvement of Sir Edwin Lutyens which made Central Square the formal and elegant space that it is today. The top of the hill was levelled off, giving a flat plateau on which to build the two churches and The Institute buildings (now Henrietta Barnett School), with intricately-designed gardens in the centre.

It was amongst these formal flower beds, neatly clipped trees and straight paths that a memorial to Henrietta Barnett was erected in July 1937, the monument itself also having been designed by Lutyens to commemorate the life of "the founder and inspirer of this Suburb."

As the years went on and the lime trees matured, care of the Square went to the local authority and it was maintained in this way for the second half of the 20th century. Over the past decade or so, new enthusiasm and funds were pooled by local residents and organisations, and a

refurbishment of the flower beds took place which drew upon the original Lutyens plans and breathed new life and colour to the area.

And now the latest chapter in Central Square's history is its handover from Barnet to the Trust. With a 999-year lease to look after, the Square's significance as the focal point of Henrietta Barnett's ambitious project is assured.



*The Mayor of Barnet, Trust chair Raymond Taylor, and trustee Richard Townley under the Henrietta Barnett Memorial;  
Below: Central Square from above in 1929*



# Streamline on the Suburb

*The Trust's Architectural Support Officer Joe Mathieson reflects on a recent waking tour.*



In May I hosted a Twentieth Century Society walking tour of the northern part of Hampstead Garden Suburb. 'Streamline in the Suburb' was

its slightly mysterious

title, referring to the Streamline Moderne school that emerged in late 1920s France from the Art Deco movement. Streamline abounds on the Suburb but, spiritually separated by the A1, it plays second fiddle to the Arts and Crafts and Neo-Georgian idioms for which the neighbourhood is best known.

Much of the interwar development of the Suburb owes itself to the northward extension of the Northern Line, comfortably fitting into the trope of 'Metroland'. Begun as an advertising campaign for the Metropolitan Railway in the early 1900s, Metroland did not initially entail land so far east as Barnet, but the term

has come to express the cultural imagination of the interwar suburban middle class as a whole, based on its dream of a mortgaged semi-detached house with all mod cons, a garage for the motorcar, and quick access to the city.

We huddled under showering clouds at East Finchley tube station while I explained how by the early 1930s this vision had all but erased the earthy socialist roots of the Arts and Crafts Suburb as laid out by Unwin, Wade and Pentty. The figure responsible for the shift was the speculative builder, who built endless houses based on a Universal Plan drafted by an architect sidelined in the face of a commercialised housing boom. The speculative builder shaped dreams as he shaped streetscapes, but they were dreams of individual attainment – not, as was once the case, entire communities.

Historical narratives tend to explore urban modernism through the lens of the pioneer emigre architects, or instead the combined efforts of left-wing bureaucrats. The story of the private sector in fostering modernism is not a

glamorous one, but it is undeniable. The houses we looked at – on Howard Walk, Ludlow Way, Kingsley Close, among others – are in some sense modernist, but also modish and ephemeral. The dominant housing type we explored, the 'suntrap', was built over a period of only two years, from 1934-1936. These houses have acquired a patina of age and respectability since their inception and I was anxious to recruit the Society members to their cause. It was no longer raining.

We ended at a lesser known gem designed by G. G. Winbourne in 1935 at a cul-de-sac off Linden Lea. I pulled out a letter sent to me from someone resident on the street who had worked for Richard Rogers since the 1970s. Tying in the cultural innovation of the interwar era to the breathtaking achievements of the High Tech movement – which looked to those same modernist pioneers for inspiration – my summary worked as an elegy to the great late architect. As the sun peered from behind the clouds for the first time I read out the letter's last sentence: 'Lytton Close is simply glorious in the sunshine'.

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## Paris and Letchworth conferences

The Trust recently attended conferences in Paris and Letchworth on the future of garden cities, both to promote Hampstead Garden Suburb and the work of the Trust to an international audience and to understand the different ways garden cities, suburbs and "workers estates" are managed in Europe.

We learnt that Raymond Unwin had a greater influence on garden suburb development worldwide than Ebenezer Howard, largely because he promoted a visual language for planning and architecture that was adopted internationally. All over Europe and beyond are garden suburbs recognisably based on the Hampstead model. Hellerau near Dresden and Le Logis-Floreal in Belgium are good examples.

Recurring points of discussion included how best to adapt garden cities to a changing climate, how to upgrade the thermal performance of traditional houses and how to incorporate modern forms of energy generation while

retaining their character and sense of place. While there is no single solution to this issue, it was noted that garden cities are relatively well placed to deal with some aspects of climate change. They were typically designed to incorporate landscape features that contribute to urban cooling and sustainable drainage, and the trees, green spaces and allotments makes for a healthy lifestyle and promotes food production. Additionally, they often have a strong sense of community which encourages collective action.

Unsurprisingly, many garden cities across Europe are facing other similar challenges to those at Hampstead. Parking is a problem common to many places – perhaps not surprisingly for developments often built before mass car ownership – and many authorities face pressure to provide parking at the expense of green space like front gardens or town squares.

However, not all the concerns were familiar. Many garden cities in continental Europe are owned and managed by a

single social landlord allowing them to maintain the integrity of the estate and the community. However, some were worried that increasing privatisation and uncontrolled alterations by new homeowners was leading to unwelcome gentrification and a loss of original character. Many were interested to learn about schemes of management (at Hampstead and elsewhere) as an example which allows residents to buy their home while also ensuring the visual coherence of a garden city is maintained.

These conferences were a helpful way of focusing on the practical changes that Hampstead Garden Suburb will undergo in the coming decades and assessing how the Trust can best implement and encourage them. An exchange of ideas can only be helpful. One follow-up will be a visit to the Suburb from a specialist building services engineer who gave a paper to the Letchworth conference. He will advise us on retrofitting early C20 houses for energy saving and generation. The results will be made known to residents.



# News in Brief



## Tennis courts

With tennis fever once again hitting the Suburb, our courts on Central Square have been very busy over the past few months. As always, please consider your fellow players when making bookings and cancel them if you are unable to play, to allow others to use your slot.

As a reminder, our courts are only for the use of Suburb residents and their guests, only for the playing of tennis, and not for professional coaching. If you have any concerns, please drop the office a line at [mail@hgstrust.org](mailto:mail@hgstrust.org) or call 0208 455 1066.

## Tree and hedge work

With trees and hedges in full leaf, now is a great time to consider any work that needs doing over the winter months to maintain their healthy growth.

Hedge clipping can be done without consent, but any tree work in the Suburb requires the prior written consent of the Trust, and this can be obtained by having a visit from our arboricultural consultant Tony George. Ring the office to make an appointment. For advice on dealing with box tree caterpillars please contact [luke@hgstrust.org](mailto:luke@hgstrust.org).



## Bournville visit

Following last winter's Members' lecture, delivered by George Cadbury of the Bournville Village Trust (BVT), Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust staff recently visited the BVT to learn more about their day-to-day operations in taking care of another important example of a planned settlement.

Maintaining these links with related organisations is a crucial part of our job as custodians of the Suburb, and sharing our knowledge and expertise with other similar groups ensures the futures of these special places.

## Proms heritage walks

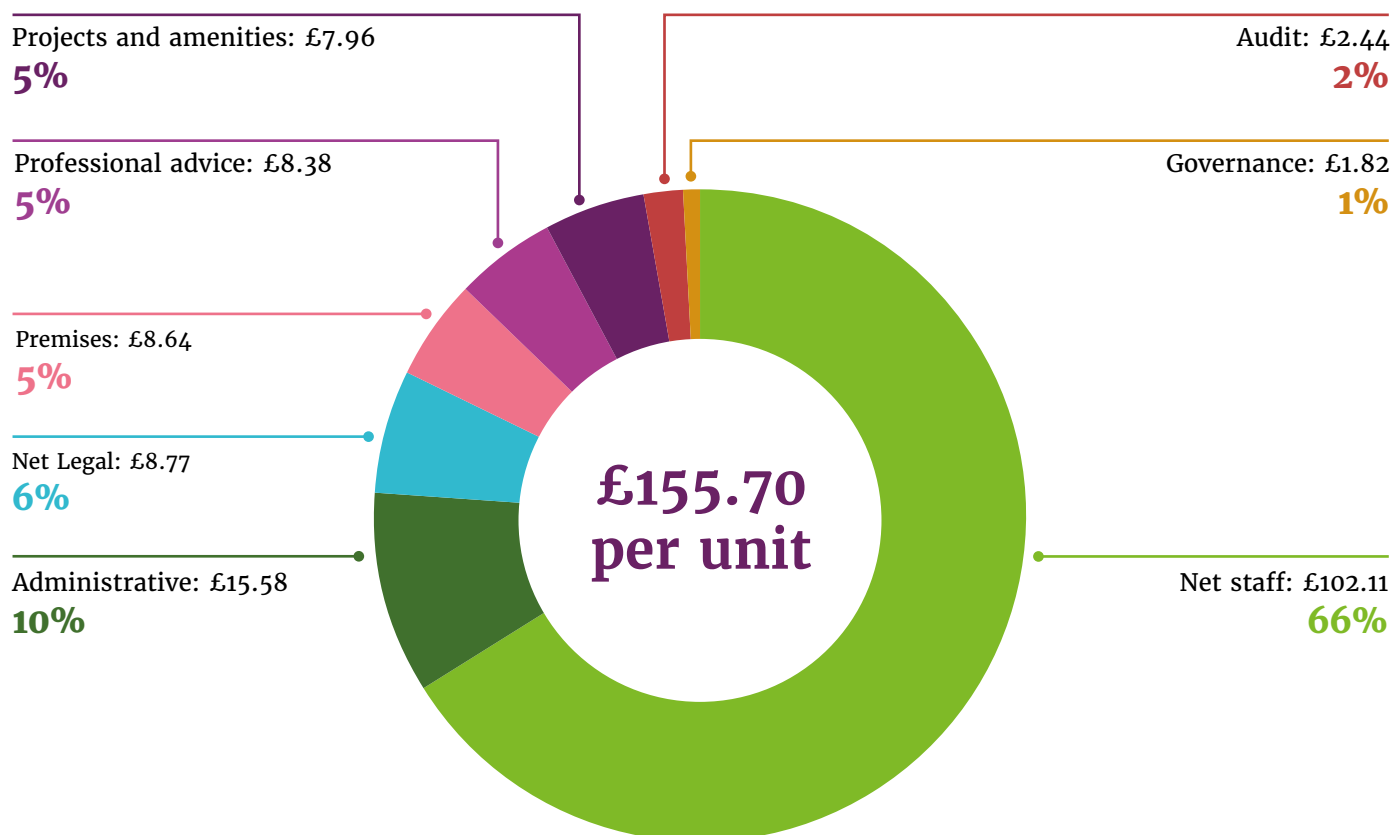
This summer's Proms at St Jude's was a great success and we were pleased to be involved in giving our time and sharing our knowledge of the Suburb by leading a few heritage walks.

Simon, James and Paul spoke on a variety of subjects across the history of the Suburb – but don't worry if you missed out; we will be running a summary of each of these walks in future issues of Trust Times.



# The Scheme of Management Charge 2021/2022

*Here's how the actual cost of running the Scheme of Management in the last financial period is broken down per unit.*



## What is the Management Charge?

Under the Scheme of Management for the Suburb, approved by the High Court in 1974 and amended in 1983, all current owners of enfranchised properties are required to pay an annual Management Charge “to ensure the maintenance and preservation of the character and amenities of the Hampstead Garden Suburb” (to quote the Scheme).

The Management Charge is made up of two sums; the estimated cost of the present year's Scheme of Management, and a rebate or excess comprising the difference between last year's estimated budget and actual costs of the Scheme incurred in that year. Because the funds in the Scheme of Management can only be used for this purpose, any excess belongs to Charge payers and must be returned to them.

The estimated Management Charge for this present year 2022/23 is £214.28, less a rebate of £51.28 for last year. **This gives a payable charge of £163 per property, compared with £168 in 2021/22.** The chargeable year runs from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

## Why is the Charge lower than last year?

As both the estimated budget and actual expenditure are subject to the circumstances of their respective years, the sum actually payable can vary significantly between years.

The Trust therefore tries to smooth the difference between years through careful budgeting. Despite increasing inflationary pressures and the continuing need to budget conservatively

against legal challenges and other unpredictable expenditure, the increase in the Scheme budget over the previous year has been held to 3.4%, below the current level of inflation.

Cautious spending and operational savings in 2021/22 resulted in a higher rebate than the previous year: the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 also reduced expenditure slightly. This is however a combination of circumstances particular to 2021/22, and future years' Charges will not necessarily reflect this level of rebate.

## What does the Management Charge pay for?

The Management Charge pays for the cost of operating the Scheme of Management in any one year.

These costs include:

- Regulating changes to the built and green environments of the Suburb;
- Advising property owners and their agents on maintenance and permissible alterations;
- Developing relevant policies and guidance;
- Enforcing Scheme controls, if necessary through legal action;
- Maintaining communal areas under its ownership;
- Providing specialist advice on trees and hedges and
- Covering the Trust's own costs for managing the Scheme.

As noted above, Charge payers only pay for what is actually spent.

# The Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust Annual General Meeting

**T**his year's Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust AGM will be held on **Wednesday 21 September** at the Henrietta Barnett School's main hall. Doors will open at 7.30pm and the meeting will begin at 8pm sharp.

The meeting is open to all residents, but to be eligible to vote you must be a full Member of the Trust. If you are unsure if you are already a Member of the Trust please check with the Trust Office.

Contact details and information on how to join the Trust are on the back page.

This AGM will be in-person only. After two years of unusual AGMs, with one purely as an online stream, and last year's hybrid setup from Fellowship House, we are pleased to be returning to our usual venue, and we looking forward to seeing you at this once-a-year opportunity to hear direct from and ask questions of trustees.

Notices of the AGM, along with this year's annual report and accounts, have gone out to Trust Members in the post. If you've not received yours, or you want to check your Membership status, please email [mail@hgstrust.org](mailto:mail@hgstrust.org)

Please remember that Membership of the Trust is not automatic, and is separate from payment of the Management Charge, or the Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association.

## Richard Wiseman remembered



*Richard Wiseman, Chair of the Trust from 2013-2019*

**T**he sad death of Richard Wiseman recently has reminded us in the Trust office of his tremendous contribution to the protection of the Suburb during his six years as Chairman. Richard was elected as a trustee for two terms of office between 2013 and 2019. On his initial appointment, the other trustees were determined that he should immediately take the chair, so convinced

were they that he was the right person to steer the Trust. He did not disappoint.

Richard would pop into the office at least once a week with words of encouragement, observations and humorous stories. He was usually keen to share tales of his travels, or of what he had just read or just seen. We enjoyed his regular visits, his offers of

sound advice and his obvious interest in all aspects of our work. He took the time to talk to everyone.

As well as being a lovely man to work with, he did so much for the Trust, leading it through difficult times with authority and intelligence. His was a quiet determination. He enjoyed standing up to bullies and tyrants (there were a few) and he knew that, if the Suburb was to survive as a meaningful and attractive place to live, the Trust would have to use the full extent of its legal powers occasionally to protect its position.

During his time as chair he was also keen to rebuild the Trust's reserves, strengthening its ability to advance its aims in the long term and enabling it to better perform its charitable role in offering grants to Suburb organisations. During his time, the Trust also built up its estate management role – the care of green spaces and private roads. This lead ultimately to the Trust taking over the management of Central Square from Barnet – something Richard was particularly enthusiastic about.

We will remember Richard as an inspirational chair, a friend to the Suburb and a warm, wise and humorous man.

## Trust Membership

Do you want to become a Member of the Trust, or check your current Membership status?

See the back page for more information.



# FAQs

## How does the Trust enforce the Scheme of Management?

When the Scheme of Management was approved by the High Court in 1974, it was envisaged that non-compliance would be a rarity, and that any “breach” would be put right by the owner after written notice from the Trust – or failing that, by the Trust themselves at the owner’s expense!

Times change, and the ever-increasing value of property has occasioned a greater degree of challenge in recent years, whether through more applications for large-scale alterations, work undertaken without consent, or poor-quality workmanship on site. The Trust must therefore strike a reasonable and justifiable balance between too much and too little enforcement, when applying the generalised terms of the Scheme to specific instances.

In all cases, the Trust seeks to enforce the Scheme through discussion and negotiation with residents and their agents – before and during the application stage, and then by periodic inspections and advice during construction. Indeed, Final Consent is only issued after the completed work is inspected and approved, to ensure it complies with the approved drawings.

However, the legal constitution of the Scheme means that its rights and powers of management lie ultimately with the

courts. When all other routes have been exhausted, enforcement can only be effected through litigation.

The Trust is not an enthusiastic litigant. Legal action is expensive for all parties, regardless of who wins; and it takes a disproportionate amount of Trust staff time that could be better used to assist residents and manage the Trust’s many other obligations. Provision for litigation also inflates the Trust’s annual budget, and much of the irrecoverable costs on cases brought under the Scheme must be passed onto freeholders through the management charge.

The Trust therefore goes to law mainly when there is an important principle at stake, and its decisions are usually upheld. Whatever the outcome, however, such case law provides important guidance on interpreting the Scheme of Management in future decisions.

The effects of enforcement are often not immediately obvious, especially where the former appearance of a property is restored, or an undesirable change prevented. Visible or not, however, defending the principles on which the Suburb was founded is vital if we are to avoid the progressive erosion of its unique character and the value of its properties – the very reason most residents choose to live here.

## Trust Membership

Membership of the Trust is an optional additional benefit of being a resident of Hampstead Garden Suburb. It is entirely voluntary, unlike the necessity to pay the management charge or ground rent on your Suburb property, and indeed is open to all those resident on the Suburb, whether they own their property or not.

Membership is free and allows Members to be kept more up to date with the Trust’s activities, and to receive invitations to events such as our popular Winter Lecture. Full Members also vote in any election for the four resident trustees.

We hope that Suburb residents who believe that conservation of this unique area is important will consider becoming Members.

Residents may become Members, if they are over 18 and have lived on the Suburb for more than 3 years. Residents who have lived on the Suburb for less than 3 years can become Associate Members.

Forms are available from the Trust website:  
[www.hgstrust.org](http://www.hgstrust.org)

## And finally...

Standardised conveyancing packs are available on request for those buying or selling a Suburb property. They contain all the most accurate and up-to-date information the Trust holds on a property, as well as obligations for new owners. The standard flat fee is £100, and packs can be requested via [mail@hgstrust.org](mailto:mail@hgstrust.org)

**HAMPSTEAD - GARDEN - SUBURB - TRUST**

Residents are welcome to contact the Chief Executive, Simon Henderson, on any aspect of the Trust’s work.

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