



### Area of Special Character

#### Chairman's Report for the 59<sup>th</sup> AGM on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2014

##### Guest Speaker

I am pleased to tell you that our guest speaker for this year's AGM is Gordon Turpin, who is chair of the Highams Park Planning Group Coordinating Committee. He is going to give us an update on the Highams Park Plan.

##### Summer Party in the Park

Looking out of the window on a rainy April day, it is difficult to think back to the day in June 2013 when we had our Party in the Park. The day turned out to be breezy but bright and sunny. We decided to have a more modest set of home made activities in 2013 but this was just as successful as 2012's more elaborate affair. There was always a queue for throwing the ball in the bucket or racing the horses as well as enjoying badminton and other play equipment. Children also took part in an art competition and the art was displayed on a line for everyone to admire.

There was of course the wonderful selection of homemade cakes and pastries donated by residents that make this event so special.

What was clear was that residents really enjoyed the opportunity to meet each other in an informal environment – everyone chatted to each other and seemed reluctant to leave at the end of the afternoon. Many thanks to all who contributed their time and equipment to make this another memorable event for the HRA.

##### Area of Special Character (ASC)

A reminder in these changing times that our Highams Estate is the only ASC in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. An ASC has none of the legal and statutory protection that applies to Conservation Areas. But our Council has shown a continued interest in promoting and reinforcing our ASC, consistently placing it centre-stage in reaching its final decisions on all planning applications on our estate. But preserving the ASC also requires commitment from ourselves, the present-day residents, who are fortunate to live on an estate that has attractive streets and homes. Of course, we don't live in a time-warp. And this is why the HRA has never been against development itself, just against inappropriate developments. Our responses to planning applications have long been guided by ASC considerations, and this will continue to be the case going forward.

##### Committee Members

It is now 5 years since the Association almost collapsed through lack of support. Since then it has seen quite a revival, as evidenced by 3-4 Newsletters each year, annual parties, vetting of all planning applications with particular reference to our Area of Special Character designation, and generally building credibility and rapport with the Council and Police to support the interests of our residents and the estate.

Even so, we have much still to do - the estate never stands still, nor does legislation, especially as regards planning. Our Committee membership once again is falling, reflecting time pressures and changing lives. If you are able to devote some spare time to help us, we would warmly welcome you onto the Committee, and especially if you are from one of the roads currently not represented on it – namely Tamworth Avenue, Montalt Rd, Lichfield Rd, and Mason Rd.