



Highams Residents' Association

Founded in 1955 for the residents of The Highams Estate

58th Annual General Meeting - 16th April 2013

Notice is hereby given that the fifty-eighth Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held on TUESDAY 16th APRIL 2013 at 8pm in the Pavilion of Woodford Rugby Club, High Road, Woodford Green (pedestrian access in Nesta Road),

for the purpose of receiving the accounts and the Highams Residents Association Annual Report, the appointment of an independent examiner of accounts and for the conduct of other such business as may be placed before the meeting. Some retiring officers and members may offer themselves for re-election. Any nominations for committee members should be sent/phoned through to the Secretary by 15th April.

On behalf of the Committee

ALISON RING, Secretary

Tel: 020 8505 2945 Email: highamsra@me.com

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Talk by a senior Council Planning official regarding current planning issues of relevance to our estate
3. Adoption of the minutes of the 57th AGM
4. Matters Arising
5. Adoption of the accounts
6. Chairman's Report
7. Election of Officers and Committee Members
8. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts
9. AOB

Following the meeting light refreshments will be available

**www.highamsra.org.uk
email: highamsra@me.com**

Chairman's Report for the 58th Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 16th April 2013

Guest Speaker

This year's AGM has a guest speaker from the London Borough of Waltham Forest. A senior Council Planning officer will give a talk to residents on current planning issues of relevance to our estate. There will be an opportunity to ask questions about the proposed changes to planning which the council may introduce later this year and to discuss our status of Area of Special Character.

Summer Party on the Park

Thank you to all who attended the Highams Residents' Association Party in the Park on 15th July 2012. We were so lucky with the weather, it being the first warm and sunny day of the summer. In the week before the event members of the Committee went to the Park to check the layout for the different activities, and were wearing welly boots and waterproofs! The Party was a great community event bringing residents of all ages together over such activities as the three-legged race, the football shoot out and the reading corner. It took a lot of planning! Even the Mayor of Waltham Forest came along to join us in the egg and spoon race.

Spring Clean

Last year residents joined in the annual Waltham Forest Spring Clean. This year we hope to encourage even more residents onto the streets to help make our estate cleaner than before. The date for your diary is Saturday 23 March 2013 – 2pm to 3pm. Please come to 7 Henrys Avenue at 2pm for your spring clean tools.

Communications

Please continue to use the email and website to let us know if there are issues arising on the estate which you would like to see tackled. We would like to be able to contact you to let you know in a timely manner about events happening in the area. There is already an email group specifically set up to contact residents if criminal incidents occur. Fortunately this email group has not had to be put to use many times during the year.

Sadly Hazel Gadsby, our Communications Officer, is moving from the estate. Hazel set up the website, designed and put together our newsletters, and has dealt with all emails over the last five years. On behalf of you all I should like to thank her and wish her and her family sincere best wishes in her new home.

We have sent out three newsletters. Thanks to those who volunteered to deliver them. We hope you have enjoyed receiving them and feel better informed about Estate matters.

Ransom Strip

The Residents Association owns, what is called the "Ransom Strip", which is a narrow strip of land running down the side of the playing fields of the Woodford Green Girls School. Redbridge Council now has access over the Ransom Strip to the Girls School for emergencies only. We have not seen any building work starting on the access.

New Residents

If you are a new resident then welcome to the Estate. If you would like to become a member of the Committee please contact us via the website.

WATCH THIS SPACE... for more information about the next HRA event. Have you any suggestions for this year?

BONFIRES



It's that time of year again, days getting longer, plants budding, birds singing... and bonfires are back. But bonfire smoke is all-pervasive, noxious and unhealthy. As the Council's literature states, "It's not actually against the law to have a bonfire, but it is to cause a smoke nuisance – and in practice it is very difficult to have bonfires and not do so" - nuisance here being defined as something that "affects the enjoyment of another person's property and is unreasonable". Smoke does not magically stop at your boundary, instead it ruins the environment for everyone roundabout, and even with windows shut, gets into houses via air vents and gaps between doors and frames.

Bonfires today are almost entirely unnecessary, courtesy of the Council's fortnightly brown bin collections for garden waste - now increased to weekly from March to September, specifically to eliminate bonfires. It is surprising how much material these bins take, if it is first cut up into manageable pieces and then tamped down. By phoning 0208-496-3000 or e-mailing wfdirect@walthamforest.gov.uk, you can also request that excess green garden waste only, is collected at your next brown bin collection, provided it is left alongside the bin in open black sacks. There is also the option of composting at home. Finally, garden waste (not food waste) can be taken to the Council Recycling Centre barely a mile away in Kings Road, North Chingford, just left off the roundabout at the far end of Friday Hill and shortly before the railway bridge; this is open every single day from 8:30am to 5:15pm, except for 25-26 December and 1 January.

Very rarely, e.g. when a large tree has to be felled, a bonfire might possibly be deemed "necessary". On such occasions some simple and obvious rules should be observed. Avoid hot days, also windless days, as the (often putrid) smoke then tends to linger for several hours; wet days are ideal. Wait for a good wind that is blowing away from, not towards, our houses. Avoid burning green garden cuttings, as these generate far more smoke than withered ones. Above all, a bonfire should be continually tended, to ensure it is completed quickly, and should then be extinguished efficiently. It should never just be left to simmer, which causes huge problems on summer nights.

The annual Guy Fawkes bonfires almost never cause a problem, precisely because they respect all these rules. They are held at an appropriate time of year when windows are fully shut, there is usually some wind about, and they are invariably tended and extinguished properly.

Any resident inconvenienced by noxious smoke from nearby bonfires, should contact the Council Environmental Department on 0208-496-2207/2212/2219. A warning letter is then usually sent out, and repeat offenders can ultimately be prosecuted. Burning of builders' waste in back gardens, which has occurred a few times in recent summers, is emphatically not permitted, and should likewise be reported.

SPRING CLEAN

We really hope to encourage residents onto the streets to help make our estate cleaner than ever before.

The date for your diary is **Saturday 23 March 2013 – 2pm to 3pm.**

Please come to 7 Henrys Avenue at 2pm for your spring clean tools, we have everything you need to help pick up some rubbish.

See you soon!



Elementary Security Self-Help

On Boxing Day, a leaflet was spotted sticking out of the letter box of one of our houses. It was quickly established that it had been part of a general leafleting exercise...five days earlier. It was a miracle that there had been no break-in.

There are two simple lessons here. If you are going away for any length of time, let a neighbour know. Secondly, it is up to each of us to minimise security risks on our estate by keeping our eyes open. If each resident spent just one minute each day glancing briefly to the house fronts of his/her two immediate neighbours and those immediately across the road, every house on the estate would be covered by three residents looking out for it.

Alongside incompetent leafleteers, there is a regular problem with bins left for several hours on the street after being emptied on collection days. When a bin is still out there at dusk, it normally indicates that there is no-one at home, so perhaps then it is time for a neighbour to remove it to well within the property's frontage. While Neighbourhood Watch is a blessing for us all, it cannot constantly have eyes everywhere, and it is ultimately our responsibility to work together to make life tough for the would-be opportunist intruder.

On which note: we all assume that if we leave the lights on when we go out after dark, our house is safe. According to the Police, not necessarily so. A burglar will often still ring the bell to see if you're in. So it's crucial to have reliable mortice locks, that are used. And if someone rings your doorbell on a dubious pretext like "looking for someone", make sure you get a good description and write it down. This could be the person who returns to break into your home another time when you're out, or moves on to break into your neighbour's house now.