

Highbury Fields Association

Founded  in 1971.

Affiliated to Living Streets - Islington
Member of Islington Stadium Campaign Alliance

Newsletter - August 2002

Chairman's Report

Most people dislike change. They prefer things to stay as they are. Yet Londoners are threatened with immense changes in the short and medium term. John Prescott is demanding that vast numbers of new homes be built in the South-East. Will there be sufficient and adequate schools and health centres to cope? Air traffic is forecast to expand enormously.

Ken Livingstone has produced a **Draft London Plan**. It can be viewed on www.london.gov.uk or at libraries and at the Planning Enquiries Desk, 222 Upper Street. The eventual London Plan will form the strategic spatial development plan and be the context for land use planning at the regional level over a 15-20 year period.

The HFA are organising, jointly with the Highbury Community Association, a **Public Meeting at 7.00pm on 4th September at Christ Church**. Speakers will take us through various aspects of the Draft Plan and answer questions.

We have had another busy year. We added our voice to the vain attempt to save the Conservation committee (see Jeannie Burnett's article) We continued to fight a

whole series of planning applications to build an ugly and bulky residential development to replace the Sarah Tinkel care home on the corner of Aberdeen Park and Highbury Grove. We won an Appeal in January against both an eight-storey and six-storey versions. The developers have now been granted permission for a five-storey block and will not proceed with another Appeal in October for a larger version. They have reduced the number of flats from 55 to 39 and have somewhat lessened the impact on that important corner site that the higher buildings would have made. The Baptist Church in Baalbec Road, including two houses and several flats, is due to open in October and the Calabria Road/Corsica Street development is part completed. Happily Murphys continue to leave Robin's Garden in Highbury Crescent in its wild state.

A disturbing side effect of the increasing population in the area is that health practices are refusing to accept new patients. As this newsletter goes to press Arsenal are facing a challenge in the High Court against their proposed developments. These are as much for the thousand-plus new homes on the three sites as they are for football. Arsenal have considerably scaled down the promised size of the new health centres they include. One encouraging piece of news is that there is a proposal to considerably narrow the roads either side of the dangerous Corsica Street/Calabria Road cross-roads to slow down rat-running traffic. (contd. p2)

AGM

**On Monday 9th September 2002
At Christ Church, Highbury Grove, London N5
7.30 for 7.45pm**

Guest Speaker: Jo Taylor, of BioRegional Development Group who has developed ZEDcars car club in S. London. All are welcome; those who are not members can join at the door.

We held an interesting **Hustings Meeting** prior to the May Local Election. Candidates from the various parties had to concentrate their minds on local Highbury matters for a whole evening and in the process made pledges which we noted carefully and to which we fully intend to hold them!

Visitors to the Tennis courts will have seen the new Automatic Public Toilet installed there. It was a long painful struggle to acquire it and we now hope it will be trouble-free in the future.

Greenspace have started a new scheme whereby residents can send in monitoring reports on the current state of various aspects of their open space, after receiving a brief initial training.

Members should be aware of an important change in the way **Planning and Licensing applications** are determined. They have been decentralised to four Area Committees, where the Ward councillors make the decisions. We are served by **Area Committee East** which meets monthly at Emmanuel Church, 145 Hornsey Road. Alternative months are devoted to Licensing and Planning.

We have co-opted a new committee member this year: Nicky Manby from Highbury Terrace. I take this opportunity to thank committee members for their continued help and support. I should also like to record that many other members give very valuable ideas and support throughout the year without which this Association could not function.

Martin Jones

‘Cellist and ‘cello teacher

Catherine Rimer, GRNCM, LRAM, M.Mus. (Eastman) is a busy chamber musician and freelance orchestral player who has recently moved back to Highbury and is now *offering lessons* to keen local cellists of all ages/standards, on a flexible basis. She began her studies with Emma Ferrand at the RNCM, continued as a post grad. at the RAM with Alexander Baillie and took masterclasses from Steven Isserlis and Ralph Kirshbaum at Prussia Cove. She also attended many European chamber music courses for coaching from leading players and Quartets, for which she won several scholarships, before completing her ‘cello studies with Steven Doane in the USA.

She has played with leading ensembles on both period and modern instruments including on John Eliot Gardiner’s ‘Bach Cantata Pilgrimage’ with the English Baroque Soloists. Her teaching experience includes being on the staff at William Ellis School and coaching chamber music at Procorda and also private tuition.

Do call: Tel/Fax 020 7359 7937 or Mobile 07941 770422



Question your Candidates: Hustings Meeting April 2002

‘Annie’s Box’

Annie’s Box: Charles Darwin, His Daughter and Human Evolution by Randal Keynes 346pp, Fourth Estate, £8.99

I make no apology for plugging this book, written by Randal Keynes, a local resident and member of our committee (member indeed of many committees). No apology because we should be proud of our local authors and because this is a fine book.

The Annie of the title refers to the first daughter (one of ten children) of Charles and Emma Darwin, Randal’s great-great-grandparents. Annie’s box is the writing box in which Emma stored some of Annie’s possessions when she died, aged 10, in 1851, sorely missed by her parents.

Randal came across the box which also contained the daily notes which Charles Darwin kept of her condition during that last illness. His fascinating and moving book reveals the human side of a great scientist and the way in which he sought clues to human nature by studying the behaviour of his own children and of wild animals

Martin Jones

Anti-social Behaviour

As with most other parts of the country Highbury has been affected by a few families whose anti-social behaviour causes misery to their neighbours. The government is determined to counteract this trend. The new Housing Benefit Bill has recently gone to Committee. If enacted, families who are twice found guilty of such behaviour are likely to lose their housing benefit. There is also likely to be new legislation later this year under which very disruptive tenants will be evicted.

Maryse Jones

Car Club for Highbury – Park and Ride made easy(ier)

- gleaming status symbol outside no more?
- shopping delivered to your home?
- zero-emission vehicles?
- freedom and safety for pedestrians, cyclists, elderly and disabled people to move around?
- less polluted air?

We can all dream and car clubs can play a role in making those objectives achievable even though we are told that London's population since 1989 has grown at a rate equivalent to adding a city the size of Sheffield every decade and over the next 13 years another 700,000 people will be added.

Some 18 months have passed since the idea of a car-sharing club in Highbury was first canvassed by the HFA. In that time many new clubs have sprung up. There are now about 40 UK-wide, including one in Southwark and others - as in Tower Hamlets - are being researched.

Islington Council is one of seven London Councils - forming the Carfree Consortium - collectively to receive £490,000 from Transport for London over the next two years to promote Car Clubs. The seven (including Camden, and Kensington and Chelsea) have engaged Smart Moves, a company with experience of running the Edinburgh City Car Club (the first in the UK, and a test case, with 120 members, 95% of whom are very happy with the reliability of the scheme) and the Bristol club that has 50 members and four cars, and which helps set up schemes and provides software and booking systems.

Smart Moves have discounts with car manufacturers (although Islington Council do not envisage any money being spent on cars) and will be choosing locations at the end of this year. Their goal is to have set up two clubs by January 2003, one being in or close to the congestion charge area with another two by the end of Spring.

25 people/households would be needed within 10 minutes walk of a car for each start-up consisting of two cars. Islington Council would provide a free parking bay from existing "pay and display" areas. If enough interest is generated here in Highbury there's nothing in theory to stop us from having a good chance of being chosen for one of the Spring schemes.

Although our community has heaps of things going for it, you could say it is blighted by traffic. Over the last 15 years Highbury Fields has certainly seen an increase in density and that will continue in line with Government and local policy. Parking spaces are shrinking, recent developments having brought more car users into the area. Then drivers will have to pay Ken Livingstone's planned £5-a-day congestion charge, so more cars will be left on the streets as more of us choose public transport for certain voyages. Those without a car already find access to taxis or ambulances from their homes awkward because of parked cars. Congestion on our roads is mounting. Camden council, has stopped issuing parking permits in some areas to try to cut car use. Who is to say Islington might not follow. At certain times all of us find it nearly impossible to receive visitors, be it for business or not, as there is no parking for them. Some cars are parked on the pavement. A Car Club offers a solution.

After the article in last year's newsletter 11 members contacted me expressing an interest, which is a start but not enough even if all were committed. Certainly more members would be interested if they appreciated the benefits. So let's recap.

The concept - "pay as you drive" motoring in action - This is not a shared journey. A car club is an organisation whose members drive cars without the problems of owning one. It offers short-term vehicle hire with simple, cheap and efficient access to a variety of vehicles close to your home. The principle of charging by usage is an inherent characteristic of all clubs, and the more sophisticated clubs have in-car terminals which allow access via a smart card and then generate bills for the miles driven. Much the same as a gym, members pay a one-off joining fee (about £25) and annual subscription fee around £100 then use the cars on a pay-as-you-go-basis. Charges consist of a combination of mileage and hourly rates (average 15p per mile including fuel, and £2.50 per hour). The AA calculates that the cost of running a small car can be as much as £2,700 a year, with petrol and maintenance at another 14p for every mile you drive. As compared to hiring a car the costing of the scheme works out to be a far better deal.

An example is Carvenience. This is a network of car clubs, managed by car hire company Avis, whose members pay a £150-a-year fee, a charge for the miles they drive and get an electronic key fob to let them into its cars. Currently, Carvenience is the scheme being adopted by south London boroughs, Southwark and Sutton. Each club has between two and four cars: new Vauxhall Astras and Corsas. They are parked in agreed, pre-paid spaces in shopping areas, near bus and rail

stations, or outside housing and office developments. Subject to good progress by the two pioneers, other boroughs (but not the Carfree Consortium for the time being) are keen to join.

The benefits - You can save money, e.g. up to £1,500 a year if you drive less than 7,000-8,000 miles per year. Servicing, repairs, maintenance, renewing tax and parking permit, and insurance are no longer your problem. You have access to a range of reliable vehicles at reasonable rates. There is no more hassle buying and selling your car. Pressure on parking spaces is eased. You could experience improved health through more cycling and walking and less stressful driving. Experience in Europe shows that, on average, members reduce their miles driven by up to 50%, and every car club car takes five private vehicles off the road.

The users - Three sorts of people would benefit from joining a car club:

- Those who do not currently have a car, but would like to have access to a car for occasional use.
- Families who run two cars, but who could manage with one car.
- People who currently run a car and are doing less than 8,000 miles per annum.

The insurance - Car club members will sign up to the car club's insurance scheme to be covered for driving the club's cars. Currently, this is limited to people with a fairly clean licence, between 24 and 75 years.

Appeal - We need at least 12 committed people either to set up a club ourselves or to stand a chance of being chosen by Smart Moves and the Council. Understandably we all need to know many more details. If you have access to the Internet, try CarPlus, the car club network's, very well designed site www.carclubs.org.uk

We would love to take more positive steps, including visiting a club to see it in action and having a question and answer session with Smart Moves so PLEASE COME FORWARD. If you are interested in setting up a club or finding out more, including how to calculate your car's real yearly cost please drop me an e-mail at ks_hodgson@hotmail.com or a note through my letterbox at The Coachhouse, 10 Highbury Place.

Kate Hodgson

[At the AGM, at Christ Church on 9th September, the speaker, Jo Taylor, will talk about her experience of setting up ZEDcars car club in South London]



Playground fence in poor state of repair

Bay Hodgson Honoured

Bay Hodgson, the founder of the Highbury Roundhouse and of its Youth Club, was honoured for his many years of service to the community at a dinner at the Roundhouse on July 6th. More than 50 friends, co-workers and representatives of community organisations gathered in the Roundhouse hall for an evening of light classical music, home-made salads and cake. Jeremy Corbyn MP was the lead speaker and talked about the importance of centres like the Roundhouse in maintaining the health and vibrancy of neighbourhoods in the borough.

Islington Play and Youth Officer Maureen Palmer praised Bay for his contribution to education and presented him with a commemorative paperweight and a Certificate from the Council. But it was Michelle Tracy, head of the Youth Club staff, who described what Bay meant to the youths themselves. "He bridged the generation gap" she said. To youths who regarded the older generation and authority with suspicion, Bay was a reassuring figure. Without fail, he visited the Club regularly, if only to enquire how things were getting on. Year after year he made sure that the Youth Club received sufficient funding. But, above all, he was a friend to the youths themselves, Ms Tracy said. To honour this work, the Roundhouse presented Bay with a plaque which will be hung outside the Youth Club. Speaking briefly to the gathering, Bay said he was overwhelmed by the tributes.

The evening had a festive air. On the flute and cello respectively, Liz Cutts and Glenda Weil played a selection of Classical music before and during the dinner. And an ensemble of primary school musicians played the Trio by Carl Philip Emmanuel Bach. On the violin: Bea Cutts, Lotte Cutts, Anne Lim and Chloe Smith. The cello: Lilia Smith and the double bass: Amy Ellington.

The evening ended with the presentation to Bay of a big chocolate Birthday cake. The event wasn't just a retirement, it was a Birthday as well.

Victoria Ellington

Living Streets – Islington

Living Streets, formerly known as the Pedestrians Association, aims to make streets and public spaces fit for people in the 21st century – safe, secure and a pleasure to walk in. In Islington we campaign for improvements, lobby those responsible for the public environment and carry out practical activities like community street audits. There are two on-going campaigns in Highbury which may interest Association members.

The first concerns the access to Highbury & Islington station. Although we would like major improvements around the station and Highbury Corner, our modest campaign is to get the station entrance improved. At the moment it is totally inadequate and pedestrian unfriendly. First, there is the ugly barrier (to stop vehicles) which you have to negotiate. Then there is the narrow pavement which, because of the crowds at peak time, means you are forced on to the 'road' which is so pot-holed that on a wet day you end up mud-spattered with shoes full of water. Such little footway as exists is constantly being eroded by traders as Railtrack, which owns the land, rents out as much space as possible. The coffee stall and the florist are welcome additions but not at the expense of easy access to the trains. We would like to see this attractively paved. The Islington Gazette has reported our campaign and we have written to Railtrack. They have responded and are meeting us on site to discuss what might be done: more to follow.

The second concerns Corsica Street from the corner of Calabria Road down to St Paul's Road. When Furlong Homes sought planning permission to build houses on Highbury Place, Calabria Road, and Corsica Street we, together with the HFA, successfully lobbied the Council to make a Section 106 agreement with the developer to provide a pavement down Corsica Street. Planning permission for another development, further down the street, also provided for a pavement (where there had been none before). When those developments are complete there should be a continuous pavement on the west side of Corsica Street to St Paul's Road; that will be a real improvement for pedestrians especially all those with young children. We will of course need to monitor that this actually happens!

Anyone wanting to know more about our activities can contact me on 7359 0609

Christine Mabey

Future of Conservation in Islington

I want to give a very clear message: our conservation group will continue. 'How' is a matter up for discussion and advice. For thirty years conservation has played a major part, by protecting the historic environment, in making Islington one of the best places in which to live, work and do business. We have the largest number of listed buildings in London, outside Westminster. Conservation has also brought in millions of pounds of regeneration money especially to some of our more deprived areas – such as the P & O development at Kings Cross.

Committee members are drawn from amenity societies, local groups, borough-wide groups such as the Islington Society, regional bodies such as the Museum of London and the Victorian Society and specialist groups like Islington Wildlife. There is an incredible range of pooled expertise that the council does not have among its own members and officers, *voluntarily* given.

Our CAC is widely acknowledged as the model to which other authorities should aspire. It is inconceivable that this wide ranging overview could be provided to four different area committees.

We are concerned that, against the advice of English Heritage, no arrangements have been made to retain and integrate the borough-wide Conservation advisory committee and the advisory panels. They would in fact fit neatly with the new council structure, with the committee advising the executive, while the panels would deal with local, area matters. Steve Hitchins has categorically stated that he plans to do away with CAC and the panels. Together with English Heritage we are also concerned about threats posed to the independence of the conservation service by the planning service.

The new structure will affect our environment. There will be fewer restraints on developers and many more applications will be left to officers to decide under delegated powers. It seems very short sighted not to hold on to something that works well and is widely admired. So what do we do?

Jean Burnett

[Henry de Lotbiniere, barrister husband of Anita, (HFA Membership Secretary) mentions below that he has undergone 16 operations over 12 years. Those who are lucky to know him admire his unfailing good humour and dauntless enthusiasm. This explains why so many colleagues and friends wanted to be involved in the fundraising efforts in April]

‘A Bout de Souffle’

On the weekend of 6th and 7th April 2002, 20 intrepid souls from Chambers, 5 of their spouses and 11 of their children undertook a range of physical endurance challenges in the Loire valley. The aim was to raise money for the Facial Surgery Research Foundation (“Saving Faces”). Various other participants supplemented the Chambers team, including the pioneering facial surgeon Iain Hutchinson and his two children.

Of the participants, 5 ran in the Cheverny marathon, 9 broached a 50-mile walk, 12 attempted a 95-mile bicycle ride, 10 mostly enjoyed a 16-mile canoeing trip and 12 children (with their minders) rode a 26-mile cycling marathon. The Grand Total distance covered over the two days came to 2,220 miles.

The outing was the work of Christopher Russell who named the event in the hope that the title of the 1959 Jean-Luc Godard film “A Bout de Souffle” would stand translation as ‘completely shattered’! Christopher has shared a room in Chambers with me for about 12 years, during which time I have had some 16 operations removing tumours on my face, all carried out by Iain Hutchinson. Christopher wanted to suffer with his fellow members of chambers to raise a worthwhile amount of money for the Foundation, which was founded by Iain in 2000 to carry out research into the appropriate surgical treatment for facial diseases such as cancer and treatment for facial traumas.

The walkers’ ordeal began in the cold and dark at 5.00am on Saturday 6th. It ended, for those who had survived, in the cold and dark at 11.30pm. They had all done remarkably well. The other event on that day was the 12 children attempting a 26-mile cycle ride. That went well, with various parents joining in – all finished and all enjoyed it hugely. The rest of the teams performed on Sunday. There were some 1,000 runners in the Cheverny marathon. Our team was five strong. Three of them, including Christopher, ran it in under 4 hours. The ten canoeists completed their course ably, despite being hindered by a slow current and having been soaked going through rapids at the outset. The cyclists provided the finale. Only one of their number



Henry de Lotbiniere with the Junior Cyclists

had to give up before the finish after his bicycle, which he had found on a rubbish tip, dramatically collapsed.

I would never have dreamed that so many would have been prepared to expend the time, the money or the energy in order to exert themselves so excessively. The event was truly extraordinary. It has also been extremely successful. So far, from those who very generously sponsored the performers, a staggering £100,000 has been collected.

Henry de Lotbiniere

15th Tennis Tournament

We were lucky with the weather on 30th June and had a very successful and most importantly a very enjoyable day. We changed the format this year to make sure everyone got to play plenty of tennis. Where there were enough entrants the competitions were split into two or three groups who played Round Robins leading to semi-finals and a final. We hope next year to encourage more ladies and girls to enter the singles and doubles.

Wendy Proudfoot and Nicky Manby managed to keep the games running smoothly. Nicky and her husband Charles had organised an outdoor television tent with a large screen so that football fans were able to watch the World Cup Final in comfort during the delicious lunch laid on by Maryse and her excellent band of helpers.

The prizes were presented in amusing fashion by Patrick Milmo who has played in every one of the HFA tournaments.

Ladies Singles	Kat Deyes
Ladies Doubles	Bridget Wake & Kat Deyes
Mens Singles	Ian Godsell
Runner up	Paul Godsell (his brother)
Mens Doubles	Rene & Robert Wiesner
Runners up	Tim Bushe & Patrick French
Mixed Doubles	Bridget Wake & Chris Dufton
Runners up	June Young & Richard Caira
Junior Doubles	Archie Stebbings & Horatio Cary
Runners up	Michael & Alex Manby
Family Doubles	Athel & Miles Hodge
Runners up	Michael & Charles Manby

Overflying nuisance

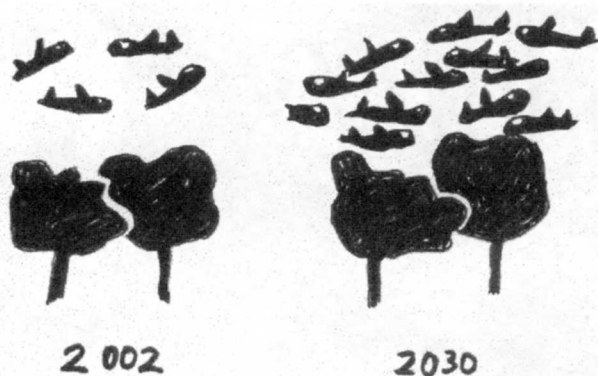
At the beginning of July, representatives of Amenity and Civic Societies met at the London Forum to hear updates on the campaign to reduce noise from air traffic over London and to achieve a ban on night flights – a victory that had been won in the European court, but against which the government is appealing. HACAN Clearskies, the campaign group, is seeking £150,000 in voluntary contributions to fund its case in the European Court of Human Rights for the right to a good night's sleep. Its position is that there is no overriding economic argument for maintaining the sixteen or so night flights over this densely populated area.

London is now being overflowed in all directions. Both the government and the Mayor will be publishing their ambient noise strategies, showing mapping of noise and the actions to be taken. The Draft London Plan contains disturbing policy as it envisages meeting the demand for new or expanded airports in the south east with a complementary programme to expand access to them. Flight paths are already showing greater spread and from many more directions off the four London stacks of circling aircraft. This is a major problem: we need more control over air traffic control now that it is privatised.

Aviation growth is 5% per annum. Flights in and out of this country are expected to more than double by 2020, and by 2030 the equivalent of 5 new Heathrows being needed, half of them in the south east. This cannot be sustainable in respect of people's lives and the environment. Opponents of Terminal 5 won most of the arguments but the government saw the economy as overriding all other issues. Terminal 5 would be enormous, bigger than the whole of Heathrow today: on its own it would be Europe's third largest airport.

The argument that "planes are getting quieter" may be true *size for size*, but they are getting bigger, therefore noisier and there are many more flights – which is where the growth is coming from. In terms of annoyance, 57 decibels is the government's point at which it deems the public to be affected, but this is not, of course, the public's perception of where we start being affected. It starts well before that and is dependent on the *number* of flights too.

Heathrow is the biggest generator in Europe of air pollution and exceeds government standards. 24,000 people in this country die each year from air pollution. Airports threaten more land take, more flooding from water running off their sites, loss of wildlife sites,



Bettina Reiber

generate huge amounts of road traffic and more spur roads for access to them. Air safety is a major issue. Recently the vertical distance required between aircraft has been reduced by half, to 1000 feet.

What can be done? Introduce more efficient technology, better operations and obligations to meet aviation's social costs. Price out noisy planes; increase fuel efficiency; prevent the spread of shopping malls and car parks; constrain the growth in flight numbers; increase ticket costs; ban night flights; stop the subsidies to aviation. In the EU, the total annual subsidy is estimated at more than £30 billion. At present there is no tax on fuel, no VAT on tickets or on plane purchases. There are strong arguments for believing that the economic arguments of air travel are very much inflated.

All London's local societies, such as the HFA, should think of taking up issues such as air travel. Why should we sustain the rising demand for air travel which brings such problems?

If you wish to know more, dig around on the HACAN Clearskies website, www.hacan.org.uk. If you wish to complain about the noise from aircraft, call BAA's freephone noise line, 0800 344844.

The Mayor's Draft London Plan can be downloaded from www.london.gov.uk, and is in hard copy at £10.

Robin Hull





The corner of Calabria Road and Highbury Place in 1999

Your Price Food Store

Until about twenty years ago there used to be a very useful general shop, known universally as 'Jim's', on the corner of Corsica Street and Calabria Road. One day it closed, Jim disappeared and it remained shut, black and boarded up until now.

'Fields' opened a few years ago, several doors away in Corsica Street, essentially as a high-class delicatessen and wine shop with a few extras. Now it is to be joined by a general food shop on the corner, due to be opened by the middle of August. They will be an off-licence selling groceries with an in-store bakery but also newspapers and magazines, bus passes and travel cards and will hire out videos. They will be open from 7.00am to 11.00pm Monday to Saturday; probably shorter hours on Sunday.

Pasta

On April the First, some years ago, BBC TV produced a programme in which they showed viewers what they claimed to be a spaghetti tree – in the process fooling many people. If you go to the **Estorick Collection** at 39a Canonbury Square N1 you will see an imaginative exhibition of pasta, including a magnificent tree!

We have reviewed the Estorick Collection a couple of times since its opening. *"Italian culture on a plate"* departs from their usual fine art but the result shows enormous flair and has been very welcome. Bravo! 020 7704 9522 - www.estorickcollection.com

HIGHBURY FIELDS ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Membership Secretary
Maryse Jones, *Treasurer*
David Boniface
Jeannie Burnett
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Robin Mabey
Paul Magrath
Tony Miller
Jennifer Purchase
Paul Williams
Nicholas Witter
Ginny Worsley
Nicky Manby

Nominations for new members (proposed and seconded by members of the HFA) should be made to Martin Jones (see above) by Friday 6th September. Appointments to the Committee will take place at the AGM on 9th September.