

Your bumper print edition!

Trust Times

August 2023
Issue 06

YOUR HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB TRUST NEWSLETTER

Time to Join the Trust!

The Trust was set up by a group of residents who were worried about the future of the Suburb at the hands of speculative developers, selfish property owners, the negative effects of modern development, and a lack of stewardship.

Those residents became the Trust's first Members, enabling it to exist and holding it to account against its object to preserve and maintain the character and amenities of the Suburb.

That was more than fifty years ago, and these threats and more remain in various forms. Membership of the Trust is as important now as it was in those first years, if the Suburb is to retain its unique qualities as a place to live. We therefore urge residents who care about the future of Hampstead Garden Suburb to join as Members today.

Four of the eight trustees on the Trust Council must be Members, resident on the Suburb and elected onto Trust Council by their fellow residents. The other four members of Trust Council are each nominated by a separate organisation – the Law Society, the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Town Planning Institute, and the Victorian Society. None of these must live on the Suburb.

Join online today:



The combination of local insight and specialist expertise ensures that decisions are taken for the sake of the Suburb as a whole, and that individual interests are not allowed to weaken the overall integrity of this unique place.

Trust Membership is open to anyone who lives within the defined area of the Suburb. You do not need to own your property, and any adult living within your home can also register as a member.

Our Membership is separate to that of the HGS Residents Association, and it is not automatic. If you do not fill in our membership form, you are not a member simply by living here or paying the Management Charge or ground rent.

Email mail@hgstrust.org to check your current membership status. Membership currently lasts three years and must be renewed. If you were previously a Member, it may now have lapsed.

It's now easier than ever to join or renew your membership – just visit www.hgstrust.org/membership and join online.

Membership entitles you to attend and vote at the Trust's AGM, receive Trust Times and come to events such as our popular Member's Winter Lecture. But the real importance of Trust Membership is a sign that you care about the Suburb and want to ensure that it continues to be preserved and maintained into the future, for the benefit of all residents.

Trust AGM

Our AGM is on Wednesday
20 September 2023
at the Free Church Hall,
Northway
(Please note change of venue)
See page 7 for more information
We hope to see you there

The Year Ahead



One version of reality? This illustration is from 1906 and is captioned: 'Central Square: prospective view of St Jude's-on-the-Hill Church, the Institute, and houses.'

Moving forward with Central Square

You may have noticed that we are currently working on one of the disused tennis courts along the path down from Central Square.

Several years ago, we renovated the two courts at the top adjacent to Central Square and these have proved very popular ever since. They are free to use by any Suburb residents for playing leisurely games of tennis – a booking form is available on our website.

The former courts further down require a more considered approach. The land between Central Square and Willifield Way has generally suffered from an historic lack of attention. It could certainly merit better use, and our eventual aim would be to find a way of rehabilitating the whole of this area for public benefit. However, there are a number of basic issues to resolve before we can open a wider conversation on what might be possible.

So why have we already started work on one former court?

Looking at the area as whole, we considered this court's relative isolation and the inability to create step-free access mitigated against its future use as a sports court, particularly one suitable for all-ability use. It is however well placed as a first step in creating a greenspace on this side of the central path, alongside the adjacent spinney.

Our contractors therefore begun dismantling the old court surface in May, so that the space can be reborn as an orchard meadow, for the quiet enjoyment of all residents. This site was

originally an orchard, and a return to this historic use seems entirely appropriate (see above).

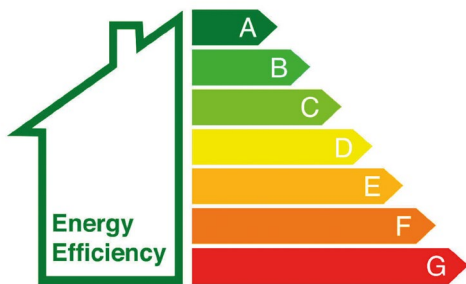
Central Square and its environs are a focal point of the Suburb. Decisions on our open spaces are not taken lightly, and we want to take an holistic rather than piecemeal approach to this important space. It this way, we can bring about a better result for the Suburb as a whole.

Please bear with us. We look forward to discussing the possibilities for this wider space as soon as we are able to. We'll post updates to our Central Square notice board, social media, and future editions of *Trust Times*.

We are also planning to:

- Publish new energy conservation retrofit guidance
- Roll out new self-guided walk QR code points
- Offer up to £35,000 in grants (see page 7)
- Publish the first of our new green estate guidance
- Bring water to another of our allotments
- Publish a new technical guide on roofs
- Put on another of our popular Member's winter lectures
- Complete the next phase of Suburb architects exhibition
- Re-tender our gardening contract on new terms
- Purchase a further investment property to secure the Trust's longterm financial security

News in Brief



Retrofit guidance

Along with our main Design Guidance document, we have over the years produced other more specific supplementary design guidance on subjects such as home security, windows, hardstandings, and so on. These can all be found on our website. We will shortly be producing a landmark new piece of work which covers the various ways Suburb homes can be retro-fitted with modern technologies to unlock their energy efficiency and help future-proof the fabric of the building – all while maintaining the unique character of the property.

This work is being done in collaboration with a specialist consultancy in the retrofit industry, and will give residents a range of options to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, from the minor steps that can be taken, right up to a whole-house approach.

Look out for this new guidance later in the year. Trust Members will be notified as soon as it is available, so why not register today to ensure you hear the news?

Sunshine Corner bins

We're proud of our stewardship of Sunshine Corner, the beautiful interface of the countryside and the built environment at the edge of the Heath Extension. Some time ago the decision was taken to remove the litter bins, but we are pleased to say they have returned. The space is popular with people stopping for a pause or a picnic, and we want to reduce the impact of any litter left behind. Please use the bins provided, or take litter home if they are full. And please contact the Trust office if you see anything which needs our attention.



Graffiti attacks

On a related note, we were concerned by several major graffiti attacks on the Great Wall and Sunshine Corner during the year. The variety of paints used presented a challenge to our specialist conservation contractors but all were successfully removed, albeit at a cost. We consider that prompt removal is preferable to such measures as CCTV, which are of limited preventative value in these locations. Please contact us if you notice anything suspicious.

Open House walks

After a successful programme of heritage walks for Proms at St Jude's, we are pleased to announce that we are putting on some walks for Open House this September. See the Open House website for full details and to register: <https://programme.openhouse.org.uk/>

And if you missed our Proms walks this year – on subjects like Unwin's oaks, Suburb radicals, and the way in which the Suburb has been used as a shooting location for the big and small screen over the past century – don't worry. We will be including summaries of all these walks in upcoming editions of Trust Times.



© David White

The SPAB 'Old House Project'

The Trust's expert staff are always keen to expand their knowledge, working with other relevant organisations and colleagues to bring their rich experience to the Suburb. Architectural Adviser Joe Mathieson recently attended a Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) course which offered an intensive, hands-on insight into their work.

For residents interested in the repair of historic properties, no matter how old they are SPAB offers advice and training. In May I attended their week-long 'Repair of Old Buildings' course. Founded in 1877 by William Morris, the Society promotes the conservative repair of historic architecture, and their approach is relevant to the Trust's architectural work. The planning team deals with home extensions and designs but it also spends a lot of time on the diverse and technically difficult aspects of building repair.

Three days of the course were led by experts, covering brickwork, timber, windows and building services among other specialisms. The remaining two days of the course were dedicated to site visits, the highlight of which was the Old House Project (OHP), SPAB's exemplar project for repair. A derelict fifteenth century chapel in Kent with an Arts & Crafts extension, it was bought by SPAB in 2019. The plan is to conserve and extend the chapel to sell it and fund future projects, educating members and the public along the way.

SPAB's emphasis on repair was originally a response and challenge to the late Victorian tendency to remodel historic buildings and return them to their imagined original styles (especially gothic buildings). Morris judged this approach -



South elevation of the chapel

famously carried out to the west end of St Albans Cathedral in the 1880s - to be dishonest and unsatisfactory. While the Victorian restoration tendency has died out since, the SPAB ethos remains much the same. The OHP shows the Society's trademarks - eroded stone replaced with 'honest' tile repair; defective timber posts preserved; and all mortar produced from a working on-site lime kiln.

Alongside the conservation work, we considered the architects' plans for a double garage extension and screen wall to aid the building's residential conversion. Despite SPAB's emphasis on light touch repair, it adopts a contemporary approach to development to visually separate the extension from the old building. The proposal was strikingly modern and jarred with the (at times overzealous) attitude to the chapel's building fabric. While SPAB's contemporary approach is understandable in principle, it is not appropriate to every site.

With its extensive archival research, recording, monitoring, surveys and proposals, the OHP is conscientious to an extreme degree. It is unrealistic to expect Suburb projects to always follow suit where jobs are smaller, timescales



Tile and mortar repair at a corner of the chapel

shorter, budgets tighter and buildings less historically complex. But the OHP is an instructive project from which architects, planners and contractors can learn, particularly when it comes to the fine detail.

For more information on the project, please visit:

www.spab.org.uk/old-house-project



Architect's rendering of the converted chapel and the proposed extension

The Trust's Year in Numbers

3,500+
phone calls



We're proud of the fact that, unlike almost any other related organisation in 2023, you can pick up the phone and immediately talk to our qualified staff. We take a huge number of calls year-round, and most initial queries can be answered immediately. In some cases it is helpful for us to consult with colleagues or check our files, so we'll call back as soon as we can.

Our lines are open 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday. Outside of those times, please leave us a message and we'll get back to you.

If we can't help with your enquiry, we'll endeavour to point you in the right direction of who you should speak to.

Countless = @
emails

It's not always convenient to pick up the phone, and we rely on emails to agree smaller details or receive photographs, documents and sketches that help us fully understand a proposal.

It's not just emails from residents – we get questions from people around the world on the unique nature of the Suburb, from how it came about, to the way it is managed today.

If in doubt, your email can be addressed to mail@hgstrust.org – we'll pass it on to the right person. But you can also find all our individual emails on our website if you know who you want to contact.

500
architectural
site visits



When considering making alterations to your Suburb property, it is often helpful for us to meet on site with the property owner and their builder or architect. It's also vital that the Trust is kept up to date on the progress of the works, to ensure that important details from the agreed drawings are not missed, and that appropriate materials and techniques are used. We also carry out site visits before issuing Final Consent to ensure the work was completed to the agreed specifications. We carry out regular visits on Wednesdays, and staff are out and about on ad hoc site visits most days of the week. Ring the Trust office to discuss your plans and to request a site visit if necessary. These site visits are also free of charge.

370
Tree and hedge
advice site visits

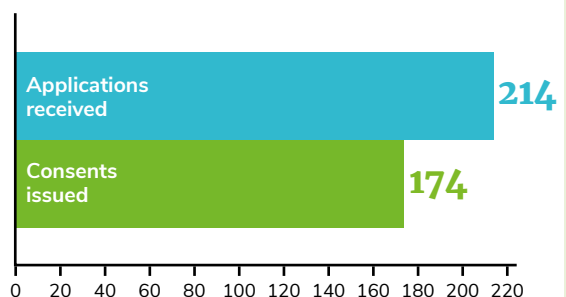


Tree work of almost all kinds needs the prior, written consent of the Trust. We take professional advice from our arboricultural consultant Anthony George before issuing consent, and it is Tony who will come out to see you on a site visit when you are planning tree works on your property. We think it's vital to see the tree in situ before coming to a decision, and Tony has many decades of experience of the Suburb's trees. Our arboricultural site visits are free – covered by the annual management charge.

More detailed and financial information about the Trust during the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 is given in our Annual Report. Copies were sent to all members just recently, or a PDF can be found on our website.

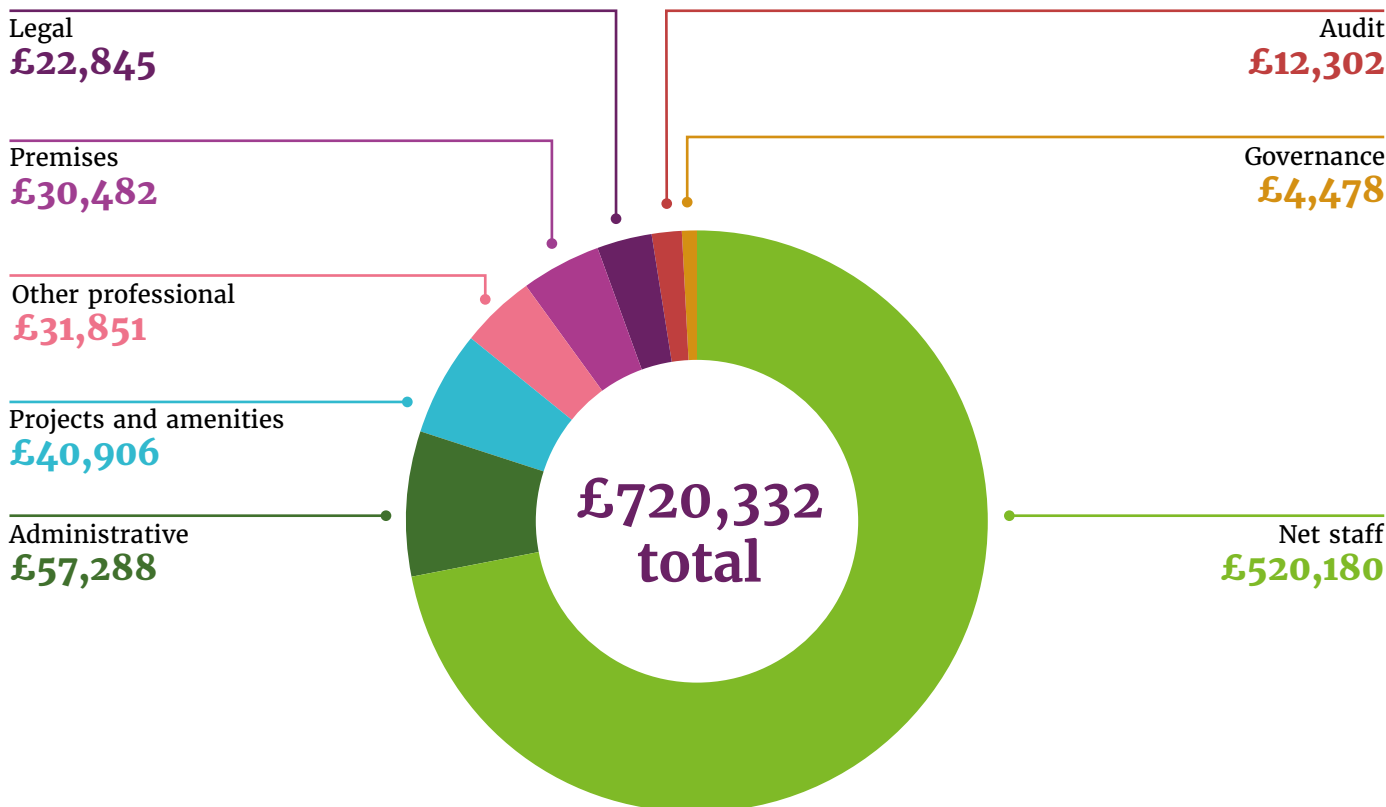
Number of planning applications received and consented for the year ended 31 March 2023

We are usually able to approve applications which are in line with our Design Guidance and which carefully note the details, dimensions and materials necessary to make appropriate changes. Achieving a good solution often involves an ongoing dialogue between applicants, their agents, and our architectural advisory team. This can take time, but the end result will be a building that respects and preserves the unique architectural character of the Suburb.



How last year's management charge was spent

Here's how the actual cost of running the Scheme of Management in the last financial period (2022/23) is broken down – full audited accounts are available in our Annual Report and Accounts on our website



This year's Management Charge

The Scheme of Management for the Suburb was approved by the High Court in 1974 "for ensuring the maintenance and preservation of the character and amenities of Hampstead Garden Suburb". All current owners of enfranchised properties are required to pay an annual Management Charge as a contribution to expenses of the Trust in operating the Scheme. This charge is applied at the same level to all enfranchised properties.

The Management Charge is made up of two elements; the estimated cost of operating the present year's Scheme of Management, and a rebate or excess comprising the difference between last year's estimated Scheme budget and the actual costs incurred 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. No funds come to the Trust itself and they must be accounted for separately from the Trust's own funds.

The estimated Management Charge for this present year 2023/24 is £219.84, less a rebate of £55.84 for last year. This gives a payable charge of **£164 per property**, compared with £163 in 2022/23. The chargeable year runs from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Why is the Charge different from 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 the disproportionate inflationary pressures of 2022/23, the increase in the Scheme budget over the previous year has been held to 2.6%, significantly below the 12-month rate of inflation.

Careful spending and avoidance of the need for court action in 2022/23 resulted in a higher rebate than the previous year. This figure is less predictable, however, and there is no guarantee that every year will generate such a large 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;
- Maintaining communal areas under its ownership;
- Providing specialist advice on trees and hedges
- Developing relevant policies and practical guidance;
- Enforcing Scheme controls, if necessary through legal action; and
- Covering the Trust's own direct costs for managing the Scheme.

The costs of the Scheme for the year past are set out on the last page of the Annual Report and Accounts.

Could your Suburb organisation benefit from a grant from the Trust?

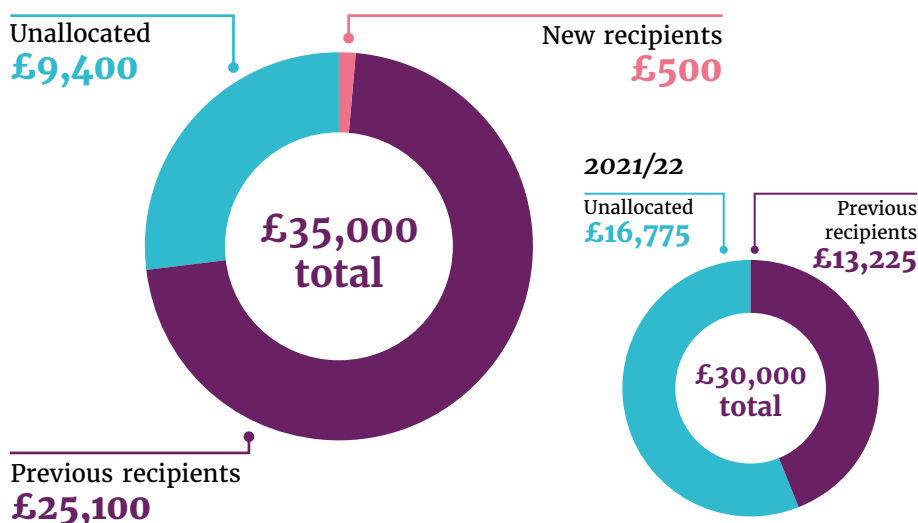
As part of the Trust's charitable objectives, we give grants every year to local charitable groups and associations whose activities are based on the Suburb and are likely to be beneficial to residents. These grants come from the Trust's own funds and are not a charge on residents.

In 2022/23 we made eight grants totalling more than £13,000 to a variety of groups. But we have more to offer! Our funds enabled us to make up to £30,000 of grants, so a large proportion of our available budget went unclaimed.

We want to do more this year, and we've increased our grants budget to £35,000 accordingly. The pie chart below shows, of the total we have to offer, the amount so far unclaimed this year and the amount given to previous recipients as compared to first-time applicants.

Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust Grants

2022/23



Do you have an event planned on the Suburb in the next year, or a project which needs an injection of cash to make it a reality?

If so, we'd love to hear from groups or associations whose work benefits the Suburb and who could make use of our grants. Contact us today for an informal discussion ahead of making an application.

We can accept applications for the next round of grants from 13 October, for a decision on 4 December. You'll find full details on our website.

The Trust AGM – please join us

**Wednesday 20 September at 8pm
Free Church Hall, Northway**

After a few different versions of the meeting in recent years – the Henrietta Barnett school hall, Fellowship, and of course a virtual only-only meeting in 2020 – we are changing venue again. This year's meeting will be at the Free Church Hall on Northway, a minute or two's walk from the school.

We hope you'll be able to join us – it's an opportunity to join staff and trustees for a brief drink and a hello, as well as to do the official business of the AGM itself. You don't have to be a Trust Member to attend, but we would strongly recommend that anyone thinking of attending should consider joining or renewing their membership. There will be forms available at the event, but the easiest method is online via: www.hgstrust.org/membership

In the event of a contested election for a new trustee, the AGM is also the best opportunity Members have of hearing from candidates directly on the issues that are important to them, and why they want to join Trust Council, just in time to return your postal ballot papers.



Free Church Hall, Northway

FAQs

Do I need Trust consent for like-for-like replacement?

The Scheme of Management requires the consent of the Trust for intended alterations to the “external appearance of any building...”.

Suburb houses, like all houses, need repairs and maintenance over the years, so why should I have to apply for Trust consent if I am just replacing an element with an exact replica?

Most Suburb houses were the carefully considered product of skilled designers well versed in the practice of good domestic architecture. The various journals and other publications they produced showed exactly how to design and detail such houses. Suburb houses are therefore exemplars of the very best of English domestic design, and they need to be cared for accordingly.

While routine maintenance often does not need formal Trust Consent, we do ask you to check the work you wish to undertake with us first. Even minor repairs can spoil a good building if they are carried out badly, and it is far

easier – and cheaper – to prevent poor workmanship than to correct it later.

Trust consent is normally needed for larger replacement works, and it will usually be given if the new work genuinely does reflect the original design. Again however, the devil is in the detail. Take re-tiling a roof, for example. Many tiles may look vaguely like those currently on your roof but will appear quite different when installed. Getting all the details right makes all the difference to the overall appearance of your house, and the road it sits in.

So, please do check with us before undertaking any building work, even if you think it is just “like for like”. We can tell you whether you will need Consent, and we can also advise you on good practice and materials. This advice is free, and it will ensure that the Suburb continues to hold its pre-eminent place in English domestic planning and design.

Contact us today on 0208 455 1066 or mail@hgstrust.org

Anyone for tennis?

Okay, maybe not just anyone... Our courts on Central Square are provided **free of charge to all Suburb residents**, and their upkeep is paid for via the Management Charge.

To ensure that they are only used by residents, we have a simple booking system in place – just visit www.hgstrust.org and follow the link under ‘Trust Property’ to check availability and book your slot today.

Our courts are not to be used by professional coaches, or for any other purposes than a game of tennis. If you think they are being misused in some way, please let us know

and we can intervene. Residents are welcome to invite others to play tennis with them, but the booking must be made in the name of the resident.

Our tennis courts are very popular, especially in summer. Booking opens a week ahead of each hourly slot, so if you can't see the slot you want, please try again later. And please, if you have a booking but no longer need it, use the link in the confirmation email to cancel it – this immediately makes that slot available to other users.

Feel free to contact us if you have any issues with the booking system or the courts themselves.

And finally...

Did you know the Trust manages a number of allotment sites around the Suburb? There are a variety of locations available to rent from the Trust, and we are indebted to our allotment site secretaries on the allotment committee and the work they do acting as liaison between us and the individual plot holders. If you are interested in taking on an allotment of your own, please contact us to ask about availability, or to be added to the waiting list, email 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.

862 Finchley Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London, NW11 6AB

T 020 8455 1066 • W www.hgstrust.org • E mail@hgstrust.org •  @HGSTrust