



BARNES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Charity Registration No. 267955

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We finished the year in good heart, despite the gloomy economic news which is assailing us on all sides, and managed to achieve a small budget surplus, as the accounts show. That we did so is thanks, yet again, to the efforts of our small staff and our volunteers, who achieved great results with our fund-raising events. The Fair in particular had an exceptional year. We were again blessed with fine weather and our sponsors showed their usual generosity.

Our approach to community affairs concentrated on three main areas. First, we fully and pro-actively supported the initiative of BarnesVision in successfully opposing the building of a private sports club on Barn Elms land – the Council's original answer to defraying the cost of remedial work to the playing fields. The final plan is not yet known, but we will continue to assist BarnesVision in all ways possible in this very important project. We turned over a large part of the March issue of Prospect to flag up the dangers of undesirable development in the brown-field sites behind the High Street, and presented our specific concerns to Council officials in some very positive meetings. Perhaps our biggest challenge,

also in part connected with the activities of local developers, has been to find ways of supporting the local retailers in these difficult times. The appointment of Sue Nichol as the Retail Champion for Barnes – the result of a BCA initiative and now jointly funded by the BCA and the Council – was put in place just before Christmas and is a long-term project to help safeguard one of our prime assets, our small shops. In all these areas the work of our Environment Group has been invaluable, and indeed this report does not have the space to list many of the other smaller but equally important areas in which they and others of us have been involved.

Finally, as my two-year term of office comes to an end in April, I feel very privileged to have been supported by an outstanding group of people: Officers, Committee and all the staff in Rose House, and I offer them my sincere thanks. I am sure they will offer the same unstinting support to my successor when the BCA rises, as it always does, to meet the very considerable challenges of a fresh year.

DAVID STOTT
CHAIRMAN

HON TREASURER'S REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2008

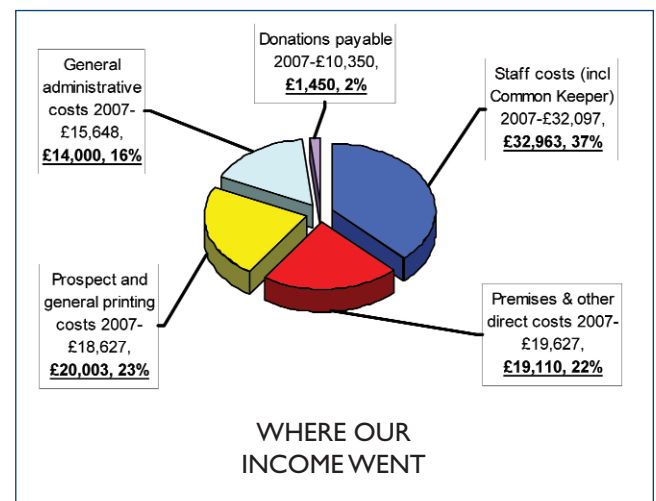
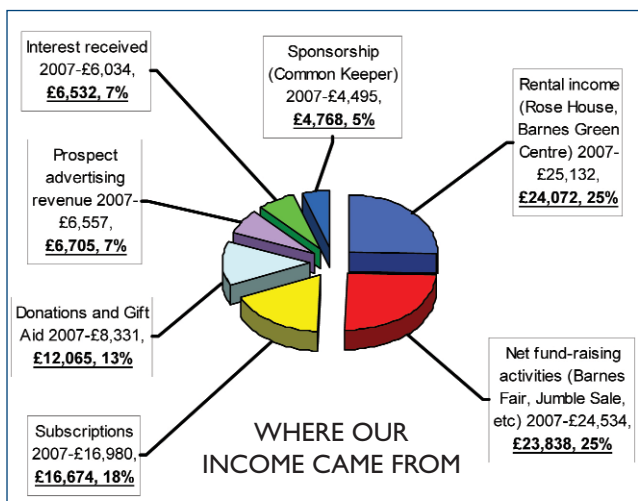
Our Income and Expenditure showed a surplus for the year of £7,128 compared to a deficit of £(4,286) for the prior year:

- Our income overall was broadly in line with 2007, with increased Gift Aid receipts off-setting a small decrease in fund-raising and rental income
- Our operating costs before donations payable were similarly in line with 2007

In order to return to a surplus for the year after the deficit of 2007 we limited donations payable (excl direct donations from the Jumble Sale) to a lower figure than the previous year.

The total Reserves of the Association remain strong and total cash and investment balances at 31 December 2008 totalled £114,566 compared to £105,242 a year ago.

CHRIS SPURGEON



VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The year started well with Hamptons International estate agency agreeing to sponsor part of the Commonkeeper's salary. New to Barnes, Hamptons were very helpful and willing to try and raise the profile of the work of the Commonkeeper. Unfortunately within a few months they had closed the office which does not bode well for 2009.

At the beginning of the year the BCA decided, in principle, to donate more money to Barnes based organisations. However, we only donated £4000 during 2008, less than 2007. This was fortunate considering the financial restrictions in the latter part of the year. The recipients included the local primary schools, the Scouts and Guides who all help at the Jumble Sale, and three

of the local old people's residential homes. They used the funds to improve communal gardens or towards the costs of their Christmas parties. The BCA also provided funding towards the art exhibition shown during the Fair, the Barnes Music Society and Christmas street lights in Barnes village.

Finally, I have been working with the Richmond 'heroes' team to encourage reduction of plastic bag usage. Kew Residents Society launched a campaign last year to great acclaim and now estimate a reduction of 2m bags to date. We hope to run a similar campaign this year.

ISOBEL WOOLF,
VICE CHAIRMAN

BCA EVENTS

Jumble Sale

This year we had the most successful jumble sale ever, banking over £8,000 so a big thank you to everybody who helped. While the credit crunch is on this is a great benefit to the community, providing a service and all working as a team.

Late Night Shopping

We had a lovely evening with hundreds of people in the streets and all the shops really busy. At one point one couldn't get into Rose House because it was full with children meeting Father Christmas. This is a fantastically busy time for the retailers in the High Street but much quieter for those in Church Road. Perhaps in future years this could be something for the Retail Champion to take on board.

Christmas Lunch at the Barnes Green Centre

Once again a traditional turkey dinner was provided by the BCA on Christmas Day. This year almost 60 people enjoyed the event and our chef for the day was Shelagh Taggart, so many thanks to her.
HILARY MCGOUGH

RETAIL CHAMPION FOR BARNES

The BCA has a long history of supporting local traders, ranging from organising meetings with the Council on parking issues to producing advertising supplements to be distributed with *Prospect*. This year the BCA decided to take our support to a further level by initiating the appointment of a dedicated, part-time 'Retail Champion for Barnes', who will be funded jointly by the BCA and the Council. Sue Nichol, recently retired as a geography teacher at St. Paul's (Boys) School and a local resident, started in this new position from 1st January 2009.

Sue's role will include helping address issues faced by local traders, developing new strategies to attract and retain new independent shops to Barnes, and developing schemes to enhance 'green' trading (using recycled/canvas bags, etc.). In general, she will act as 'the voice' of Barnes traders. We ask Barnes residents to support both local traders and Sue Nichol in this new role.
SRIRAM CHARI

BARNES FAIR 2008

We were lucky with the weather after a rainy setting-up, and Barnes Fair was once again able to provide a happy and successful day for visitors and stallholders alike.

The varied and delicious food offered by local restaurants was very popular once again and all the activities, including a splendid Parade, lots of great live music and plenty of fairground rides, to name but a few, were obviously much enjoyed and appreciated. New to the Fair was Silly Millie the Clown who thrilled the children, and the BCA Pimm's stand which had long queues and sold out – but only after a few visits to the off-licence for more supplies!

As ever, our volunteers were wonderful – without them we would have no traffic marshalls or Treasury, no Quiz, Tombola, Voucher Tree, Information Stand, Bookstall or Pimms! And there are lots more, hard at work all around the Fair and behind the scenes.

In all it was a very successful day and this was reflected in the excellent amount raised for the BCA.

LIZ COLLISON
CHAIRMAN, FAIR STEERING GROUP

FRIENDS OF LE PECQ

Le Pecq is a small town, with many similarities to Barnes, situated in a loop of the Seine, just twenty minutes west of the centre of Paris. Coming up for five years have passed since the 'official' events marking the inauguration of the partnership between Barnes and Le Pecq. The main hope is to encourage friendship between individuals and families, and to facilitate social, cultural, educational and sporting links between our communities.

Over the past year there have been a number of reciprocal visits that have centred on walking, art, music and golf – not to say a little shopping and socialising. A highlight of this year was the visit of the Mayor of Le Pecq and his team in November including the Remembrance Sunday service at St. Mary's church, conducted in French and English, commemorating the 90th anniversary of the armistice. Staying with families has been a great opportunity to discover how others live and some firm friendships have developed. Some have taken the opportunity to improve their language skills and to understand more of the French way of life. More of the same is planned for this year and we will also explore some new opportunities and ideas
MIKE SPILLANE

ENVIRONMENT GROUP

A busy year for the Environment Group and, in many ways, frustrating as so many planning applications take a long time in the process. Through *Prospect* I try to keep the BCA in touch with monthly reports of what the Environment Group is doing. We have in fact been quite successful in forging links with the Council on many aspects of things that affect our everyday environment.

Barnes Vision is now under the umbrella of the Environment Group and they keep us informed of what they are doing. It is wonderful that a group of people was able to stand up and say that we do not want building on Barn Elms but we do want a project, funded by both government and private funds, and kept

within the playing fields' wide open arena without losing a portion to private development.

It is very sad that there are so few of us who work quite tirelessly for the community and I really would like to use this opportunity to ask for more people to come forward and help us. We do not take up problems for individuals but issues that will affect the whole community. Please come and talk to us: as a group we can tackle issues, ensuring that we continue to live in our pleasant village.

Change is inevitable and often a welcome improvement, but it's how the change is achieved that is so important.

SUE BOYD

FRIENDS OF BARNES COMMON

2008 was yet another active year for the Friends of Barnes Common, with the following highlights:

In the summer we received confirmation of funding from SITA Trust for the three to ten year Mowing Project, which aims to introduce a more sympathetic mowing regime, especially in the acid grassland areas and meadows, as well as helping in scrub control and restoration of about one hectare (two acres) of acid grassland. The funding has covered purchase of a mechanical scythe, brushcutter and other tools as well as covering running costs for three years. FOBC was supported in this by the Richmond Community Initiatives funding scheme and has also received a grant from the Barnes Workhouse Trust towards the running of the Project. Early indications are that the machinery will make a significant difference to maintaining the Common how we like it to be, as a bio-diverse Local Nature Reserve.

FOBC has led the local responses to plans brought forward for the former Goods Yard. We do not oppose some enabling development, but consider the proposals are as yet overly massive and fail to comply with the terms of the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

FOBC is working with the Council, as the legal manager of the Common, and others on a large number of issues, including: the problems of dog mess and control; bio-diversity actions including the reed-bed, heathland and acid

grassland restoration; woodland management; footpath maintenance and improvements north of the railway now those to the south have been upgraded; prevention of parking and fly-tipping on the Common; as well as general conservation work and maintenance, including litter picking.

The Council is proposing Barnes Common for a *Green Flag* award. As part of that we will be formalising the Management Plan for the Common, based on the proposal made by FOBC two years ago, which has been the practical plan since then. We do not envisage significant changes in the management of the Common (we are assured the award does not require open spaces to become 'municipal parks'), but it will help to have a recognised Management Plan when co-ordinating the various interests in the Common.

Finally, we conducted two surveys in 2008: one of the acid grassland showed that even our prime areas are only borderline 'species rich', the highest category, and we will need to continue conservation work to improve all our acid grassland areas. The second was more encouraging: a survey of small mammals confirmed a varied and significant breeding population of wood-mice and voles, enjoying a proper natural diet. This confirmation of the value of the acid grassland was most welcome, and bears out that the observed frequent visits by kestrels and owls is not just chance!

MIKE HILDESLEY

BARNES POND

The most important issues this year have been those of Pond maintenance, namely tree and reed-bed work, fish control, and updating the pump system. At the end of last winter the island was visited by a council work party to cut down the dead willow and replace it with a weeping birch, as well as reducing the number of saplings and controlling the brambles. This winter two further birch trees will be added.

In spring there was yet another increase (15%) in breeding frogs and newts and a new notice board was installed by the Pond. In summer two new birds were recorded at the Pond, common sandpiper and a kingfisher, the latter's presence confirming the increase of fish stocks which has been detrimental to the Pond ecology. It was decided to remove as many carp as possible by seine netting (thirty of 2kg and above

were caught) and to thin the numbers of predatory perch and, unbelievably, piranha! This was carried out with help from Barnes and Mortlake Angling Society and hopefully we will see a reversal in fortune of dragonflies, damselflies, and submerged plants in response.

Regeneration of the trees and reed-bed cut in 2007 has been successful and over the autumn and early winter half of the willows were coppiced or pollarded and several more areas of reed cleared and protected by fencing. A further half a dozen trees are to be planted on the Green too. The Pond pumps, having failed over the summer, have recently been replaced and the whole system repaired and upgraded.

RUSSELL GREAVES,
BARNES COMMONKEEPER

LEG O' MUTTON RESERVOIR

This year has been a year for maintenance jobs and the black poplars which we now discover are a very important part of the towpath landscape will be pollarded to keep them safe. Black poplars have a habit of shedding limbs in high winds and can cause quite a lot of problems so it is best for us trim them in order that they remain healthy.

Some islands have been renewed and we have also had a local fishing club take some of the larger fish from the water. This will definitely help with the regeneration of the water weeds and this is water the dabbling ducks are after. The swans continued to nest this last year and we also had a sparrowhawk nesting

amongst all the other birds that use the Leg O'Mutton. Some evenings people have heard an owl which is really rather lovely.

One of our number, naturalist Neil Anderson, leads walks around the reservoir, usually in the autumn and spring/summer, which are a joy. Notices on the railings tell people of these walks and they really are an eye opener on how special so many of the things in our own nature reserve are.

We request that people heed the notices asking for dogs to be kept out of the water; dogs really can cause problems to the nesting birds we want to encourage.

SUE BOYD

BARNES GREEN CENTRE

The BCA had another successful year of partnership with Age Concern Richmond upon Thames (the main service provider at the Centre) and FiSH. Age Concern has been responsible for day care services for the elderly at the Centre since 2004 under a contract with Richmond Council, and FiSH provides assistance and support services to the needy. The Centre now has over 400 members. On average, around 30 members spend the day at the Centre, with many more attending specific activities that take place there during the day. Led by Allan Lockett, three full-time staff and a cook provide a warm and welcoming environment for the users. Meanwhile, FiSH offers its services to around 730

clients – these are provided by as many as 230 volunteers in the Barnes/Sheen area.

Apart from participating in the overall management of the Centre, the BCA oversees lettings at the Centre. All lettings income is retained for spending on improvements and on new facilities at the Centre. This year, we were able to spend just over £2,000 on a new loop sound system, new chairs and steam cleaning of all chairs. The combination of diverse services and a pleasant environment has helped keep the Barnes Green Centre an important hub in the local community, which the partners are keen to see continue.

SRIRAM CHARI

ROSE HOUSE

Steady bookings have ensured that our old building continues to be heavily used and the need for maintenance continues. We always try to fit in most of the work during August when Rose House is closed.

Last Summer the problem of the rotting window frames at the front was tackled by Peter Tagg working with Bob Martin. Initially we were worried that expensive replacement windows might be needed for this, a Grade II listed building. In the event damaged wood was cut out and followed by careful filling and painting. It is hoped that these repairs will last for a number of years. The boundary wall to the left of the building was extensively repaired and painted, and damage to the front wall of the actual house was also made good and repainted. At some time in the not too distant future the exterior will need

professional redecoration – a costly exercise requiring scaffolding.

Inside the house more redecoration took place. The hall lighting was serviced and repaired, the boiler serviced and a toilet replumbed.

Improvements to the Hall (especially the counter area) and possibly the floor are still in mind, but in view of other expenditure it was decided that these were not essential and should be postponed. More recently Isobel Woolf and helpers rearranged reception to make it more welcoming.

For personal reasons I have had much less time this year and am indebted to such people as Bob and Peter without whom I would have found life even more difficult.

BOB GLOVER

PROSPECT

The full-colour *Prospect* has continued to be well received but we are always looking for new ways of improving it.

Our constant problem continues to be delivery on time to members. It should arrive by the first of the month and then depends on the 'reps' to deliver it. We are all volunteers and it is difficult to put pressure on recalcitrant ones. Commercial delivery is expensive but we have sometimes to resort to this, although we are aware that it is not always successful either and certainly not ideal.

Any suggestions on improving our delivery service in some areas would be gratefully received.

SALLY HOLLOWAY

BCA ENGLISH SCHOOL

In 2008 The BCA English School

- had students of over **20** different nationalities
- offered **9** classes at **7** different levels plus Business, Vocabulary & Conversation
- had a teacher/pupil ratio of **1:14**
- had **23** social events on the programme, many of which were free to the students
- **44** students entered Cambridge examinations, **43** passed (97.7%)

HILARY HAWKEN
PRINCIPAL
