



# The Wanstead Society

The small charity for Wanstead, Snaresbrook and Aldersbrook

## Newsletter October 2015

### The Wanstead Society Executive Committee

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John Ongom: Treasurer  
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Roger Estop: Planning Consultant.

Iris Vandenberghe:

Residents' Forum, Cleansing Department.

Geoff Horsnell: Newsletter Editor.

## Wanstead Society AGM

It's that time of year again! The Wanstead Society hereby gives notice of the 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Society. It will be on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November in the Manor House in the High Street. All members are invited. There will be nibbles available for those who are hungry and your first drink will be paid for (well, until the tab runs out!). The meeting will start at 7:30 pm. It will be a time to not only meet the executive committee but to ask those questions you always wanted to, but never found the time or the place to do so!

As ever, we also invite the six local councillors from Wanstead and Snaresbrook wards to attend, so if you have any questions for them as well, please come along! For information, the six local councillors are:

Cllr Sheila Bain (Labour), Cllr Colin Cronin (Conservative), Cllr Chris Cummins (Conservative), Cllr Michelle Dunn (Conservative), Cllr Paul Merry (Labour) and Cllr Sue Nolan (Conservative).

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## Erratum

**Editors note:** In the previous edition of the Wanstead Society newsletter (July/August 2015), the membership fee on the back page was inadvertently shown as the old £8 instead of the current (and correct) £10 per annum per household. Please accept our apologies for this oversight. We hope it didn't spoil your enjoyment of the newsletter as a whole.

## Nightingale Green - Time for a Change

Nightingale Green on Nightingale Lane has a fascinating history. 'Tis said that it was originally a plague pit. Later, known as "Mob's Hole", it was a place of fun and ill repute much enjoyed by C18th travellers on a day out from London.

In my memory, it was a rather sad rose garden, the roses somewhat overwhelmed by the shade of the surrounding ever growing trees. A couple of times, the Green has had a make over and is now a pleasant square of trees, grass, shrubs and gravel paths.

Over the years, people have mentioned to me that they really would like to see some spring flowers on the green. I've always thought "Yes, that's a really good idea. Someone should organise it". A few weeks ago, it was mentioned again by a resident who really would love to take her daily dog walk to the Green and enjoy the sight of flowers in spring. I thought, "It's a good idea, let's get on with it". So, 2015 has proved to be the year of the spring bulbs. I posted the idea on The Wansteadium, the website of all things Wanstead, asking for people to help me organise the event. Help was forthcoming and Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October was marked as B Day, (Bulb Day). Flyers were delivered to local residents and put up on trees as well as a post on The Wansteadium.

The Green is much enjoyed by young children who run through the shrubs and have made their own paths. We were keen to avoid the children's trails and chose patches for planting which would not interfere with this aspect of the Green.

Luckily, the weather was with us and on the 18, boxes of garden tools, bags of spring bulbs and parcels of old fashioned garden flowers from my own garden were carried to the Green in preparation for action. We wanted to overplant the bulbs as we set them in, with good tempered garden plants so that the spring bulbs would come up through a carpet of green (they look much better that way) and at the end of their flowering when the leaves are withering, other plants would be growing and covering them. The Green being rather shady in summer, we chose plants that can cope with that and give flowers later.

What a brilliant time we had! Talk about a hive of activity! Litter was removed. Weeds and seedling sycamores were hoiked out. Dads were breaking up the soil with heavy garden forks and a trusty pick axe and children were cutting up pieces of red ribbon to mark where the bulbs were set. Each family group had their own area so the children will be able to identify with "their patch". Some people brought their own bulbs for planting, others gave donations towards the cost.

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Altogether we planted over 150 bulbs, mostly shorter varieties of narcissi, species crocus and a few snowdrops. They are better planted in March when they are in leaf. Hopefully, all these will naturalise and increase in time. We overplanted the bulbs with hardy cyclamen, perennial geranium, pulmonaria and other good tempered old favourites.

All in all, a good time had by all and more to come! We look forward to seeing the fruits of our labour in Spring and may these fruits be enjoyed by many in years to come.

## **Wanstead Hospital - A Reprieve?**

On the evening of Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October, there was an Extraordinary meeting of the Redbridge Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) in Ilford Town Hall. The purpose was to hear the latest proposals from the Redbridge Clinical Commissioning Group (RCCG) on the plans to close Heronwood and Galleon wards at Wanstead Hospital and move the facilities (Intermediate Care beds) to King George Hospital (KGH) in Barley Lane.

At an earlier meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October, the first draft of the plans to use Japonica ward at KGH were aired. Unfortunately, the ward would need extensive reworking in order to be used as an Intermediate Care facility, and the work would not be completed before December. This, it transpired, was only phase 1 of a three phase project. And the outcomes of phases 2 and 3 would not be known until May 2016! However, the two Wanstead wards would be closed in December anyway.

Remember, these plans to move the wards were first mooted in a consultation last year - but it was only this month that the name of the ward in KGH was released - and this would still prove to be temporary - subject to circumstances affecting phases 2 and 3 - which were beyond the control of the RCCG.

Due to the lack of detail (we had repeatedly been given "assurances" over the past months - but nothing materialised) The Wanstead and Snaresbrook Residents' Alliance (WaSRA) of which the Wansrtead Society is a partner member, have consistently opposed the plans such as we were given together with the fact that this lack of detail flawed the original consultation document. People had been asked to choose options without knowing any of the details or the full facts.

The HSC asked Redbridge Healthwatch to comment at the meeting as they represent the official patient body with which the NHS should liaise at all stages. Healthwatch replied that they had been promised involvement at the outset, but that subsequently they had not been invited to a single meeting. They were as much in the dark as everyone else! They recently published a report damning the overall situation.

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The RCCG were intent on praising the work that their newly formed Care Teams were doing - saying that these teams would replace the need for Intermediate Care beds. However, it was quickly realised that the patient needs for Care Teams were not the same as the need for Intermediate Care beds.

The meeting was attended by a full contingent of HSC councillors, numerous representatives of NELFT (North East London Foundation Trust), BHRUT (Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Trust), Healthwatch and a large contingent of local residents - together with press reporters. A number of the residents had applied to speak, and so there was a lot of discussion that ensued.

Finally, a motion was raised to request a multi-part vote on the issue. Whether to accept the latest phased plans of the RCCG or to raise the question of the flawed consultation with the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt. The matters to be decided were -

1. To refer the matter of the flawed consultation process to the Secretary of State for Health to ask if he would involve the Independent Reconfiguration Panel to investigate the circumstances.
2. Refer the whole process to Monitor. This is a body like the Care Quality Commission (CQC), but whereas the CQC can only make suggestions, Monitor can escalate and enforce the issues. They would be asked whether the policies and plans of the RCCG and NELFT on Intermediate Care would be harmful to the standards of patient care overall.
3. Have a proper assessment of the Decision making Business case made by the RCCG - with special reference to the involvement of NHS England - who "validated" the figures given in the original consultation document.
4. Ensure that Healthwatch, patients and other stakeholders be involved in the planning of Intermediate Care.

All four points were agreed unanimously by the HSC. This is a victory for commonsense and the Wanstead Society now await the next moves. Currently, none of the existing plans can be enacted until a response is received from both the Secretary of State and Monitor. We now must hope that the whole process is revisited and that this time, all interested parties are involved!

## The Guercino Project

Some of you may remember in the last newsletter that the Wanstead Society was promoting a concert at St Mary's Church on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September called "Musical Miscellany" in support of the raising of funds for the restoration of the studio copy of Guercino's "The Entombment of Christ" painting. Unfortunately, the concert did not take place due to the illness of one of the singers. We can only apologise on behalf of the singer concerned.

Whilst the September concert had to be cancelled, both the singers have promised that, as soon as the Soprano is sufficiently well again, they will ask to reinstate the concert. This is now likely to be in the new year. In the meantime, anyone who had purchased tickets in advance of the concert now has a number of choices. These are:

1. They could contact the organiser, Geoff Horsnell, and ask for their money back. Please bring the ticket(s) as proof of purchase in this case.
2. Keep hold of the tickets and present them at the re-instated concert. They will be honoured.
3. Choose to donate the money towards the Guercino Project.

If you would like to contact Geoff Horsnell, he can be contacted via the various methods given on the back page of this newsletter, or by telephone (020 8518 8687).

## The Good, The Sad and The Ugly!

You may have heard by now that last March, the council scrapped the post of Conservation Officer. Just recently, the Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP) was disbanded. All to save money! According to the leader of the council, the disestablishment of CAP will save between £3,000 and £6,000 per year. At the higher rate, the deficit should be cleared in a little over 10,000 years!! Good luck with that!

In the meantime, other minor changes (such as the need to provide a second planning conservation application for any work proposed within a conservation area) now means that most of our councillors are no longer aware whether an application lies within a conservation area or not. This surely makes it more difficult to apply the different conservation rules and loses the additional money that a second application affords! I believe the phrase is "Shooting oneself in the foot".

All of which means that the Wanstead Society is more important than ever. There is little else standing between a conservation area and an inappropriate design. Let us know your thoughts. Until then, here are three of the current major planning applications that have recently been received and are being progressed within Wanstead and our thoughts on their respect worth.

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**The Good.** Have you seen the transformation of the old Wanstead Police Station and the surrounding grounds? The new owner has been true to his word. Before purchasing the site, he applied to Redbridge Planning Department to ensure that his idea of turning the Police Station into a house would be acceptable. Then, with his plans drawn up, he invited local residents to an open day at the library so he could share his ideas with the local people. The new houses, built on the car park and replacing the original stables are all built with materials that merge in with existing dwellings. The Wanstead Society applaud the design and the way in which the surroundings have been enhanced by the new additions.

**The Sad.** I am sure that you will have seen the demolition of the old Kinema in the High Street, and the loss of that iconic building. Unfortunately, although in the Wanstead Village Conservation Area, it was not a separately listed building. Indeed, the developers also had to negotiate with the Panamanian company that owns the George car park for permission to use that access for their lorries. Although it is sad to lose the building, the developers have promised to use white brick for the replacement and to provide some memory of the old use as a cinema - perhaps in the foyer, possibly elsewhere. This will surely go some way to mark the passing of the original; building and act as a reminder of what was there before.

**The Ugly.** The new owner of the Jolliffe site in the High Street has recently submitted his second application for a shopping mall and block of flats in the grounds of the Jolliffe site - including the builders yard at the rear of the premises. This second application, like the first, also went to the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol on appeal. The informal hearing was held at the Town Hall in Ilford at the beginning of September. Luckily for the local community, the inspector took notice of the comments in the previous inspector's report and concluded that little had changed in the design from the first application. Certainly, not all of the comments in the first report were addressed by the second application. She therefore had a relatively easy task in rejecting the appeal.

Given that the design and overall size were out of keeping with the rest of the High Street - especially on either side of the site - the design did little to "preserve and/or enhance" the surroundings (one of the conservation area statements). Currently Wanstead gets to retain its village atmosphere - at least for the present.

**Conclusion.** As you can appreciate from the three examples given here, whilst there are some developers who take stock of the area in which they propose to design and build, there are others that need to be watched. With the demise of the Conservation Officer and CAP, the Wanstead Society is needed more than ever!

## Wanstead Playground Appeal

Some committee members of the Wanstead Society attended the Redbridge Public Forum at Wanstead House on 29<sup>th</sup> September. It was to support the Wanstead Playground Association (WPA), of which we are a trustee, to ask the Council for funds to improve the children's playground facilities on Christchurch Green. To date, the WPA has raised some £57,000 with the promise of a further £10,000 for the playground through a series of grants and other fund raising activities. However, £57,000 doesn't buy you very much these days! If we wanted to really make the playground a great place for our children, grandchildren and future generations to enjoy, we need to raise over £100,000. Thus, if Goodmayes Park could receive a grant of up to £400,000 we wanted to know why the Council could not share some of this money with Wanstead. Sadly they refused our request for funds on the grounds that there is no money available. So once again, it is thanks to the Wanstead Community and the WPA that we have managed to raise £57,000 for this important cause - and we will continue to pursue even more funds! We don't want our children to miss out on play facilities on the Green. If you would like to know more or would like to contribute to the fund, please visit the WPA website [www.wansteadplayground.co.uk](http://www.wansteadplayground.co.uk)

## CAP - An Update

The Conservation Advisory Panel (CAP) was abolished by the Council earlier this year, but the Wanstead Society continues to fight for its reinstatement. Local Councillors and activities have raised a petition of over 1,500 signatures to force the Council to debate the issue in full at the next Council meeting in November. In addition, the Society will participate in a deputation to the November meeting to speak in favour of re-implementing CAP. The grand annual total for maintaining CAP, according to Jas Athwal, our Council leader, was the princely sum of just £6,000.

The panel was made up from Councillors, supported by a Planning Officer, together with a number of volunteers who gave advice on planning applications in local Conservation Areas. Although the panel is, as its name suggests, only advisory, it provided one of the "checks and balances" for planning applications in sensitive areas - together with the Council's own Conservation Officer - another post abolished earlier this year!

We had hoped to gain the full support of the community with us, but at the last local forum (29<sup>th</sup> September) in Wanstead House, Councillor Paul Merry of Wanstead ward described CAP as a "luxury". Some luxury indeed! The Society hopes that, together, we can get this important safeguard against inappropriate or over development reinstated. We can but try!

## Payment Details

There are a number of different ways in which you can join the society, or renew your existing membership. These are:

- Cheque
- Paypal (online)
- Standing Order
- Cash

Please note that annual membership is now £10. We also have a Life Membership option at £150.

Cheques should be made payable to The Wanstead Society, and can be sent directly to the Treasurer. Please remember to include your name and address for our records. It would also be useful to tell us of any preferences you have, such as how you would like to receive this newsletter. We are happy to send out the newsletter either by post or by email. Requesting the newsletter by email helps us to save money on postage. Just let us know when you join or renew your membership.

Join or renew via our website using Paypal:  
[www.wansteadsociety.org.uk](http://www.wansteadsociety.org.uk)

You can contact us by email:  
[info@wansteadsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@wansteadsociety.org.uk)

If you have a news item or letter to the editor, then email us at:  
[news@wansteadsociety.org.uk](mailto:news@wansteadsociety.org.uk)

You can also write to us at **The Wanstead Society, c/o Wanstead House, 21 The Green, London E11 2NT**

Or you can approach any member of the Executive Committee.



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