



## **Vartry Residents' Association - [www.vartry.org](http://www.vartry.org)**

### **First Annual General Meeting, 2 September 2010**

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND TO THE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

Vartry Residents' Association began initially as a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme in Vartry and Berkeley Roads. A public meeting was held on 26 March 09 where a Neighbourhood Watch coordinator was appointed and Neighbourhood Watch signs approved. On 4 June 09, a steering group met to consider forming a Residents Association (RA). It was agreed that in forming a RA, we would have a stronger voice in representing the views of the community, particularly as the NDC would no longer be around to support local groups and a committee was established. At a committee meeting on 23 July 09 a RA was formed and a standard constitution was adopted. A bank account was set up and we applied to the Resident Involvement Team at Homes for Haringey, for a start-up grant.

#### **RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

The first public meeting was held on 17 Sept 09, which was also attended by interested residents from adjoining streets and it was agreed that we expand to incorporate these streets, so in total; Vartry Rd, Berkeley Rd, St John's Rd, Heysham Rd, Manchester Rd, Candler St, Franklin St, Richmond Rd, Albert Rd. Further public meetings were held on 14 Jan 10 and 29 April 10, the last of which was attended by 28 residents. Over the last year or so, resident interest has steadily grown and we have formed good links with agencies and community partners.

#### **HOMES FOR HARINGEY (HFH) AND THE COUNCIL**

The resident involvement team at HFH has supported us in establishing a RA and we are grateful for their advice and for the start up grant that they awarded us in December 2009. The tenancy manager at HFH attended a meeting in September in order to feedback on council properties in the area and we hope that this contact will help us to further engage with members who are council tenants and provide a more direct line of communication regarding properties belonging to the council.

#### **POLICE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM (SNT)**

We are raising local crime issues and representing residents' views directly with the police via RA meetings and attendance at both Neighbourhood Watch meetings and Police Ward Panel meetings. This is enabling us to feedback information and to highlight issues from residents to the SNT; such as the series of burglaries earlier on in the year via Paignton Park as well as ongoing issues in Candler Street and Franklin Road. Links with the SNT along with our bid for a crime prevention event have supported projects in the area, such as the locks security initiative which started in Vartry Rd and has now been extended into Berkeley Road and St John's Road. Members' involvement at police ward panel meetings has also helped to inform SNT agenda across the ward. We are grateful to the SNT for all of their engagement with us.

#### **HARINGEY ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCHES**

A quarterly meeting regularly attended by the RA, which hosts presentations on various issues such as status dogs and rogue/traders/doorstep crime (forthcoming meeting) as well as updates by senior Police Officers. This information is distributed to members via the RA website.

#### **HARINGEY ENFORCEMENT**

An organized 'walkabout' around the neighbourhood with the enforcement team; to identify dumping hotspots to the council has resulted in immediate fly-tipping clearances and a mailed response to residents from the team. Enforcement also attended a meeting in January to expand on their role and to respond to questions from residents. We now have direct contact with this council service.

## **WOODBERRY DOWN BAPTIST CHURCH**

The church continues to offer us a hall for our meetings and lately and in the absence of printing facilities at the NDC, the use of a photocopier. This has been an invaluable help particularly as we started with no funding. We are keen to maintain our links with this partner and to help support their community work with events like their Winter Shelter project, where we were able to help via information sharing on our website and attached to our meeting leaflets. This resulted in member donations of food and clothing and volunteers from the local community during the project.

We are also grateful to the church for helping us to engage more openly with St Mungo's and we welcomed the feedback from the area manager of the hostel, who attended our last meeting in April.

Beyond the links we have forged with partners and services, members have also participated at Haringey events; following an invite from the council, three members attended an awards ceremony in February to celebrate resident achievement and members also held a stall at an NDC community event in Paignton Park in June.

## **WWW.VARTRY.ORG**

A year on, we now have a website for the community which was enthusiastically welcomed by members when features were demonstrated at a meeting in January. We believe that this provides a service and a resource for the community as it enables residents who cannot attend meetings to view the content of them online as well as supplying information about community services, news and events. Mailing lists have also been set up with the aim of including whole interested parties, in order that discussion is not restricted to a small group of members. A 'forum' area, which is self-managing, also gives residents a platform to raise issues, share ideas and post information.

Visitor numbers to the site have grown month on month and we believe that the website also feeds into both central and local government environmental and sustainability initiatives and targets, as it radically reduces the need to produce and circulate paper resources in response to all information from services, partners and members. While we continue to print and distribute paper publicity for meetings, we hope that we will be able to reduce the amounts being used, by posting information on the website.

However, whilst paper/printed information and publicity can be funded by our HFH grant, the website does not appear to meet this funding criterion. We would welcome clarification from HFH on this, given that digital information and publicity, with its time saving and ecological benefits, seem to be the way forward for most organizations.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Over the past year and a half, Vartry RA has successfully established itself and in the coming year, we hope to build on that success. In summary, we would like to continue to fulfil the aim "to make our area more attractive, welcoming & neighbourly". To achieve this, we value and rely on the support of our members, local agencies and community partners especially the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT). It is 'we', with our local agencies and community partners, not just 'them' working for the benefit of 'us'.

As a group we feel we have a stronger voice but as individuals, we can initiate projects we would like to do to improve our area. The current committee has established the RA, but we, like other members also run out of time and ideas. Engagement and participation from all residents' with ideas, resources, time and skills will determine the success of the RA. Ideas have been raised by residents for new and exciting projects and with the support of member participation, these will happen.

I would like to thank the committee and all members who have contributed in any way to the Residents' Association and in particular I would like to highlight the contribution of time, skills and resources spent on the development and maintenance of our website.

I am now stepping down as Chair and as NW Coordinator for Vartry Rd, to enable others to take on these roles and will continue to support the association in any way I can.

Best wishes

Chair of Vartry Residents' Association