Year Review- Denise Gandhi 24/5/2020

**Minchenden Oak Garden**

The Garden continues to be attract visitors who often comment that they didn’t know of its existence. The majority of the shrubs planted 5 years ago are well established and four of the five trees acquired from the *Trees for Sacred Places* scheme are doing well. In **t**he past year, the Friends of Minchenden received a £200 grant from Enfield in Bloom towards planting a bed, and have also another received another £100 grant towards autumn 2020 planting. We received a donation of a strongbox which means watering hoses and other equipment can be left on site. We are looking into acquiring a battery operated/ solar powered mower: as we are so well hidden, LBE regularly forget about our grass. Many thanks to Ray for restoring the wooden entrance sign and to Julian for watering. I have attended Friends of Parks meetings throughout the year and these meetings allow Friends groups to share best practice and to keep up to date with local and national changes which affect all parks large and small.

At the moment the survival of the plantings depend on water, and we can always use volunteers who wish to help with this task.

**Mini- Roundabout**

The roundabout was re-planted two years ago and has recently been partially cleared.

**Trees around the Green**

Last summer, the saplings planted did suffer and despite valiant efforts at watering, a few on Cannon Hill have died. Earlier this year, the replacement Christmas tree wasn’t looking too healthy but recently seems to have revived. This summer will no doubt be another one where the trees will need some additional watering.

**Heritage**

LBE adopted in Nov 2019 a Heritage Strategy. <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/planning/heritage-strategy-2019-24-planning.pdf> this document now has a statutory role in determining local applications.

Enfield was also one of 5 boroughs selected to receive Heritage Lottery Funding for projects over the next five years. Chris and I attended workshops about the funding and SGA put a list together of potential heritage projects which would improve the public realm in Southgate Green. These ranged from small projects such as a sign on lamppost for Minchenden Garden to quite extensive ones like re-instating the Duchess Pond. Currently, the Heritage Lottery Fund is suspended and it is unknown in what form it will return, or whether Enfield will receive funding for any projects.

**Planning**

SGA has representation on the Conservation Advisory group which meets monthly to consider planning applications in conservation areas. Over the last year it considered a number of applications from householders and businesses for proposed changes. SGA also commented separately on these and other applications around The Green, Cannon Hill and the High Street. A recent application for 62 High Street (Antique Shop) conversion to take away café was refused. The Barber shop almost opposite was granted permission to revert to residential and conversion to two flats. Despite our objections, trees were felled at the corner of Balaams Lane which now make the presence of the bill boards even more pronounced and out of keeping.

The High Street end of Southgate Green has seen some development with Ellington Court 3rd floor extension and we understand that there are pre-application discussions for the Georgian cottages next to what was the Woolpack.

Further afield, most of the commercial buildings around Southgate Circus have been converted to residential use including Southpoint House, Newby House, Chase House (approved), Hobart House (with another roof extension approved). These are all car-free developments. As post-war buildings, none of these had architectural merit, and the conversions did little to address that. The conversion of commercial buildings is an ongoing debate, not only in Enfield but across London.

**Arnos Grove station** (20/01188/LBC and 20/01049/FUL) this application is now live. <https://planningandbuildingcontrol.enfield.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=Q80F6CJN09800&activeTab=summary>

The application is for converting the car parks to 162 residential units. Please send us copies of your comments.

**Walker School**

Walker School was granted planning permission last year to rebuild the school. SGA has been closely involved in decisions about the materials to try and ensure that the new school sits comfortably within the setting of Christ Church and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. Modular classrooms were supposed to arrive at the end of April, with a view to re-opening in September 2020. That schedule has been delayed due to COVID although workers returned to site last week. Last year saw the withdrawal of the Lollipop Lady’s services. The Green and top of Waterfall Road saw traffic calming measures introduced in the form of speed bumps.

Shortly before the lockdown, cameras were installed on Cannon Hill facing Cannon Road as part of LBE’s drive to encourage people to walk to school and prevent gridlock in that road.

**Other**

Members of SGA have regularly attended Southgate and Southgate Green Ward meetings at which local councillors have answered questions on issues ranging from school places and policing to parking and planning.. We are closely following the Fox Lane quieter neighbourhood scheme, as well as the proposed cycle pathways connecting boroughs. The next version of the Local Plan for Enfield 2018-36 is due to be published towards the end of this year and it remains to be seen how this pandemic will have influenced the amendments.