

Harrow Agenda 21 Environmental Forum ANNUAL REPORT April 2010 - March 2011



Beverley & Daniel McKeon
at the Education Group Spring
Event at Veolia
making mini beast bug hotels



Harrow Agenda 21

MISSION STATEMENT

"Harrow Agenda 21 Environmental Forum is a partnership of community groups, individuals, schools, businesses and the Council committed to making Harrow a more sustainable place to live and work."

DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABILITY

The ability "to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Bruntland Commission)

AGENDA 21 PHILOSOPHY

"Think Global, Act Local" encapsulates the philosophy of Local Agenda 21, which sprang from the Kyoto Earth Summit in 1996 as a follow up to governments worldwide signing up to Agenda 21 (for the 21st Century) at the UN Rio Earth Summit in 1992. The core concepts are environmental sustainability and sustainable development.

Administrative Information

Charity Name	Harrow Agenda 21 Environmental Forum
Status	An unincorporated association registered with the Charity Commission
Charity Number	1071931
Address	Community Premises, 27 Northolt Road, South Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 0LH
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4TA
Independent Examiner	Barry Hieger, 1 Broomfield House, Stanmore Hill, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7 3ER
Aim	The preservation, conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment of the London Borough of Harrow and The education of the public in forms of human behaviour which protect and improve the environment and promote the well being of humanity and other living species
Policy	To serve the residents of Harrow by promoting activities in pursuit of Agenda 21
Organisation	An Executive Committee oversees Action Groups pursuing specific areas of concern

Trustees & Post-holders 2010-2011

ELECTED BY AGM IN JULY 2010

Chairman	Mick Oliver (Waste Group Chair)
Trustees	Mick Campbell (Deputy Chair) Pam Gershon (Treasurer) Don Liversedge (Founder Member) Marilyn Raymond (Education Group Chair) Marion Garner-Patel (Planning Group Chair) Mary John Himesh Chavda Shivakuru Selvathurai

Harrow Council Nominees Councillors appointed as Trustees are named in the Chair's Report

OTHER KEY VOLUNTEERS

Administrator	Eve Swabe
Waste Group	Daniel McKeon, Shahrzad Amoli, Charlotte Neville, Eileen Kinnear, Evelyn Donald
Education Group	Margaret Atwill, Beverley McKeon,
Consumer Group	Jon Cope, Liz Binney, Chris Messenger

Chairman's Report

I was elected as Chair of HA21 at the AGM in July – the first 4 months of this report were under Caroline Hotchkiss' stewardship, and I would like to thank Caroline for her two periods in the chair, her care of HA21's activities on planning, her presentation to the 2010 AGM on "Environmental Legislation – does it help or hinder?", and for her superhuman efforts in accommodating HA21's papers and meetings at her home in the past. Commitment we will not see repeated!!

Early in the year Harrow's political complexion changed at the local elections. As a consequence Conservative Councillors Marilyn Ashton, Vina Mithani and Yogesh Teli and their ever-present deputy Jeremy Zeid left our Executive, and Labour Councillors Sashin Shah and Bill Phillips joined the long-serving Phil O'Dell. Susan Hall served briefly as the Conservative nominee, and was replaced by Ramji Chauhan in the autumn. It is encouraging for HA21 to have this demonstration of commitment from our Council, and to see that it transcends party lines.

Trustees who retired at the AGM were Caroline Hotchkiss, Sarah Kersey (another former Chair, and Chair of the Ethical Consumer Group), Linda Robinson (Secretary), and Madan Badale (a Founder-member and previous Secretary). A substantial record of service behind them which we are immensely grateful for, which is partly filled by our appointing new Trustees, Himesh Chavda (Minutes Secretary to the Executive Committee), Marion Garner-Patel (Chair of the reformed Planning Group) and Shivakuru Selvathurai.

Trustees who continued in service were the long-serving Don Liversedge (who we have seen at some of our Monday morning business meetings) and Mary John, our long-serving, indispensable and dedicated Treasurer Pam Gershon, Vice-Chair (valuable member of the Waste & Recycling Group, allotment-holder, film director and Under One Sky co-ordinator) Mick Campbell, and Chair of the Education Group Marilyn Raymond. HA21 would be lost without the work they all do – many thanks to all for all of these efforts.

And thanks must also go to Eve Swabe, who resists all attempts to persuade her on to the Executive Committee, but is the power behind the throne at HA21's office, who makes HA21's room bookings and masterminds the catering at our events.

The Way Forward – Where are we now?

In March 2010 HA21 asked the question "What difference would we like to see HA21 make in Harrow in terms of social, economic and environmental sustainability?" and received eight answers from its members.

1. Raised awareness and understanding of sustainability

HA21 circulates display copies of *In Contact* to all libraries in the borough and issues an Education newsletter every term, which circulates to all schools in the borough. We send contributions to the local press (some of which get published), and we run a stand at Under One Sky (and would do the same at the Canons Park Open Day if we could get the support to staff it).

2. More sustainable behaviour by people of all ages

The Education report describes how HA21 stimulates young people to take an interest in their environment through the Ann Swaine award (a valuable award which stimulates less interest than it should in these straightened times), visits to interesting nature sites in the borough, and our cooperation with the Veolia Environmental Centre. Our other activities are open to those of all ages.

3. Less waste

We know we aim to **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle** but do we realise we should do so in that order? It is a Waste Hierarchy. Do we always see prevention as the first thing we should be aiming at? HA21 have made contact with Sarah Dickinson, West Waste's new appointment as Waste Prevention Officer, and cooperate with her to promote this aim, as the Waste & Recycling report shows.

Harrow's recycling record is good, with 50%+ of the waste collected being composted or recycled, and HA21 are exploring alternatives to Harrow's "co-mingled" (mixed waste) collection.

4. People motivated to participate in local decision making

HA21 gives members the opportunity to do this by commenting on the borough's, London and West Waste strategies – HA21 invites its members to make comments, either by contributing to HA21's comments, or directly as individuals.

Alternatively, we all have power and influence through our role as consumers, in the purchasing decisions we make – we can choose to purchase Fair Trade goods and to use farmers' markets and locally distributed vegetable schemes. Many of HA21's members do this already, as individuals and in other organisations – we have supported Liz Binney's heroic efforts, and networked at Harrow's Fair Trade event, but it is a matter of regret that we have not been able to recruit a leader for our Ethical Consumer Group to give support to Harrow's renewed activity on Fair Trade.

5. Encouragement of local energy production

HA21 has visited Woking in the past – a smaller local authority but one which is seriously committed to and has achieved local energy generation, for example with a combined heat and energy plant serving their town centre.

HA21 has lobbied for a CHP plant in the proposed Leisure Centre development in the past and is continuing to do so in the Harrow and Wealdstone Intensification area and in the proposed Kodak redevelopment. We are monitoring proposals for anaerobic digestion as a strategy to provide energy from waste, and are alert to incineration, which other authorities are beginning to consider.

6. Enhanced natural habitats

Harrow is alone in London boroughs as having stretches of both the London Loop and Capital Ring – pedestrian equivalents to the M25 and North Circular Road respectively. These were set up by the initiative of individuals and the GLA, TfL and boroughs only adopted them after their citizens had established them.

Local initiatives include the Belmont trail, Roxbourne stream, Stanmore Common and Country Park, and Harrow Weald Common. (The Education Group made a most instructive visit to Stanmore Common). All Saints' Church (a member of HA21) won a national award for the green space and wildlife in their churchyard. All these amenities benefit from monitoring, maintenance and care. Who would like to do this – informally on their own – or by setting up and arranging a working party?

The Earth Project was a wonderful resource and HA21 has given it full support through its period of uncertainty.

7. Residents helped to save money and reduce carbon dioxide emissions and fuel poverty

In the past HA21 has cooperated with Harrow on the Green Homes Concierge Scheme, which enables citizens to improve homes that have poor insulation and heating.

This year we learned that Harrow has a particularly poor performance on national indicators 187 a and b on fuel poverty – HA21 has made comments on Harrow's Affordable Wealth/Fuel Poverty strategy to improve this situation. With adequate support we could arrange a visit to the Building Research Establishment's Innovation Park to investigate their strategies both in new construction, and more importantly in their work on regenerating the Victorian properties which are difficult to improve economically.

8. A more pleasant built environment

Over the year HA21 has re-established its Planning Group, and has kept abreast of proposals for the Harrow & Wealdstone Intensification Area, the redevelopment of the Kodak site, and proposals for St. George's Field, Headstone. With a wider membership the Group could do much more.

Resources HA21 has to help it with its tasks are its associations with other bodies who share our aims, for example HAVS, London 21, London Civic Forum, the London Sustainability Exchange, Sustainable Haringey, Talk Action, UK Aware, and the Earth Charter.

But HA21 has another resource – its members!

What difference would we like to make in Harrow in terms of social, economic and environmental sustainability?

The same aim, expressed more personally – **we** have to **make** this difference – **we** can't leave it to other people in HA21 – **we** are HA21 and it is **our** efforts that will make the difference (and it is more fun and easier to achieve if we do it together).

This year HA21 has made a start on the aims which were set last year, but we must face the fact that it was about 20 members who took part in the work and achieved this.

If HA21 is to achieve the aims we set last year, we need its 100 individual members and 30 organisational members to pick up the tasks which these 20 or so members shouldered in the last year. HA21 may face a more stringent future but it can do so with confidence if its members share and lighten the load which a few have carried this year.

Mick Oliver

Mick Oliver
Chair

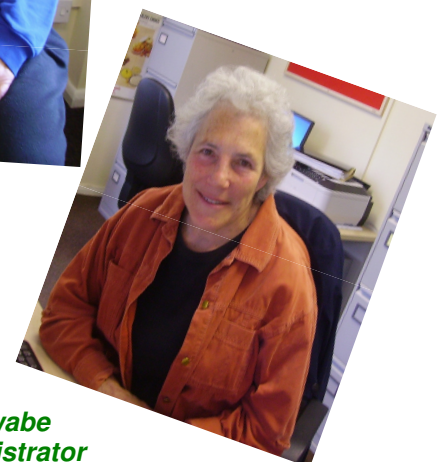


Pam Gershon
Treasurer

Some of the HA21 team
in the office on a
Monday morning



Mick Campbell
Vice Chair



Eve Swabe
Administrator

Treasurer's Report and Statement of Financial Activities for Year Ending 31 March 2011

As you can see we are starting the current financial year with £6,081 in our account at the Bank with no Petty Cash. We are financially better off than at the same period last year. We have kept our running costs as low as possible.

We were able to present one school with £500 (the Ann Swaine award for an environmental project) and hope that this year more schools will apply to be considered for a prize.

One kind person has made several payroll donations direct into the bank for which we are very grateful.

However we are unable to thank the donor as we do not know who it is and the cost of finding out from the

bank would almost wipe out the donation. **THANK YOU VERY MUCH.** In the present economic climate it is not certain what grant (if any) we shall receive from the Council this year but we have been fortunate in getting a donation of £1,000 from the Tudor Trust. We now have to find a worthwhile project on which to report back to them. (Perhaps a concerted effort to educate the public on waste and recycling?)

Meanwhile we shall continue to monitor all expenditure carefully and look forward to a successful year.

Pam Gershon

INCOME	2010/2011	2009/2010
	£	£
Gift Aid	0	0
Grant – London Borough of Harrow	5,730	£5,730
Activities	0	0
Bank Interest	6	8
Donations	187	59
TOTAL INCOME	5,923	5,797
EXPENDITURE		
Insurance	190	190
Youth Awards & School Activities	685	976
Software/Licences	0	0
Website Hosting	545	496
Office Equipment (including computer)	108	1,764
Telephone	480	576
Postage & Stationery	774	632
Sundry Expenses (training, etc)	687	1,653
Travel	475	584
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,944	6,871
Funds at 1 April 2010	4,102	5,176
Deficit/Surplus	1,979	(1,074)
Funds at 31 March 2011	6,081	4,102

Action Group Report—Planning

The Planning Group has made major efforts on the Harrow and Wealdstone Area Action Plan, and sees it as a great opportunity to improve Harrow. Its views/aspirations are given below:

Harrow on the Hill needs to be a London landmark; and be protected so that high buildings do not obscure it. Views of it have already been spoilt by monstrous buildings near the station; let us not allow any more.

In the consultations we propose:

1. A square on the Kodak site named after Eastman with a water feature from the artesian well on site.
2. A pleasant walkway to Moat Farm from Harrow & Wealdstone Station. Cycle routes, connecting green spaces, and a place to sit and watch people go by.
3. Industrial buildings should be concentrated along the railway and should be the highest buildings on the site to shield the development from noise from the railway.
4. Residential buildings should not be high rise.
5. A link across the railway to Wealdstone.
6. A youth centre.
7. Cultural centre in Harrow or Wealdstone for performances. (Harrow Light Opera Company can then come home).
8. Care is needed with retail - many now shop on the internet but we do need more high quality shops; Watford and other centres out-shine Harrow.
9. Harrow is tatty and needs a facelift badly. There is too much street furniture and hindrance to pedestrians. Station Road needs a lot of improvement, especially on the Tesco Corner. Here traffic and pedestrians are at odds.
10. Should Wealdstone and Harrow be separate entities? The Group believes that they should be.
11. If Harrow College loses one site should the other be a Music School? Watford has had one for years - why can't Harrow?
12. Do we want Harrow to be "Any town anywhere?" Somertons was a lovely shop – we have none like it. Also Barnards in Wealdstone was a haven for men – it needs replacing.
13. They want to provide 2,500 homes. This increase in population will put pressure on schools, medical services and other amenities. These must be guaranteed - too often development has occurred without full consideration of these vital back- ups. (This has been experienced on the south coast and elsewhere.)
14. Harrow View/ Headstone Road is being considered as an alternative route to enable traffic reduction in Station Road. This road has its own problems with residents having short gardens in many cases and it will become a road where no one wants to live and become run down. It is already congested, especially in the rush hour and there are delays near St. George's Centre. There are also many schools in Hindes Road and Marlborough School in Marlborough Hill. Other routes should be investigated.
15. Harrow has had piecemeal development with no good layout for a town centre. This presents an opportunity to rectify this and make it a far more pleasant place to visit and shop in. Will the flats already built in Wealdstone be included in this figure of 2,500 homes? Can we avoid high rise in Harrow Centre?
16. Sustainability must be examined. Car use must be reduced and policies so far are not helping this. Many are now unable to visit a post office, bank or buy a loaf of bread without getting into a car; this situation needs reversing, so small shops are essential. It must be made easier to walk and pleasant to do so, a way must be found to make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists and separate them from cars and fumes. We should also have points for electric cars of the future to recharge.

Action Group Report—Education

The Ann Swaine Award for 2009/10: The prize money of £500 was awarded to Roxbourne Middle School. We are surprised at the lack of responses for this award considering the state of the economy and education cuts.

The Spring 10 meeting at Pinner Wood School proved to be a useful networking experience for those who were able to attend, as advice was freely given by such as Dennis Vickers, Harrow's Biodiversity Officer, Veolia Water Services, the Warden for Stanmore Common, Simon Braidman and others. Sadly not many were able to take advantage of the event.

Simon Braidman led a summer Walk over Stanmore Common in May and also informed us of the services for schools that could be provided by Continental-Landscapes.

The Autumn Term saw us back visiting Veolia Environment Centre, Clay Lane Site for a 'test and try' various water-based experiences. Ted Casey and his team also enticed us back for this Spring to 'make and take' raised beds, bird boxes and mini beast hotels plus free plants and seeds to get people started

The grant made to Alexandra School for a nest box with camera and microphone has proved so successful. The pupils have been able to observe on a TV in the entrance hall, the successful laying, hatching and development of 10 young blue tits.*

I was privileged to attend the Marriage of Rupal, our past Newsletter Editor. Unfortunately her commitments still mean that the Editorship of the Newsletter falls to me. The Newsletter is still being circulated on time. Thanks must once again go to Prontaprint' in Harrow, who have retained their very competitive printing rate and the Council for circulation to all.

* at the time of writing I believe they have now flown the nest

Marilyn Raymond

Action Group Report—Waste Management and Recycling

The year has again been an interesting one for the Waste & Recycling Group. Andrew Baker's responsibilities as Head of Climate Change include waste and he continues to attend our meetings. This year he brought good news of Harrow's achievements on waste, with an increase over the proportion recycled or composted the previous year.

Events and projects

The Group ran a recycling and renewable energy stand at Under One Sky and we arranged a visit to West London Composting in Harefield. Our small group saw how Harrow's brown bin waste is inspected to check for material that should not be there, and converted into compost.

Nower Hill are continuing their experiment with the Time Capsule project, a joint project which shows how waste decomposes or doesn't when it is landfilled. The project is cheap and easy to organise – why has no other school followed Nower Hill's lead on this?

The Group ran a competition on recipes for leftover food to draw attention to the wider population's extravagant habits with food. A disgrace in a hungry world when there are others in need, and a problem of waste disposal.

We made contact with Sarah Dickinson (Waste Prevention Officer in the West London Waste Authority). She held a Love Food Hate Waste event in the Civic Centre, spoke at Greener Harrow, has been in contact with the Education Group, ran her own recipe competition across the 6 boroughs, and publicise the Waste & Recycling Group's meetings on the website www.westlondonwaste.gov.uk.

With the practical co-operation of Andrew Baker and his staff, Mick Campbell, Beverley and Daniel McKeon completed the filming of a video/DVD, "What happens to Waste". This was premiered at HA21's social in January, it is now on general release to groups and schools, and is available for the Civic Centre's One Stop Shop.

Hard water has implications for waste (we use twice as much soap or detergent to compensate as we would in soft water), is easily treated at source (as Sutton do, and as Colne Valley did in 1938), and has implications for biodiversity (tropical rain-forests are lost when palm-oil plantations are created to supply the soap that we so wastefully convert to hard-water scum). We are seeking to bring this problem to wider notice.

We asked our three Harrow MPs for their support for Early Day Motion 1101 (which seeks to establish a register of the final destination of recycled wastes – with the intention of improving the credibility of recycling). We received helpful replies from Bob Blackman and Gareth Thomas, but this enquiry may well be overtaken by the publication of the Government’s Waste Strategy - the topic is certain to continue into 2011-2.

Strategies

During the year we commented on the Mayor of London’s Waste Management Strategy “London’s Wasted Resource” and on the West London Waste Plan proposed sites consultation.

Conferences and exhibitions

Over the year I visited the Futuresource and Ecobuild exhibitions and

- the Chartered Institution of Waste Management’s conference “Prevention is better than cure”, which was dedicated to Waste Prevention and Re-use and rather regretted the emphasis that recycling received. It pointed out that much recycling recycles wastes that should never have been created in the first place. The slogan **Reduce – Reuse – Recycle** is a hierarchy, in order of importance. One speaker made an appeal for durability to be considered in design, as part of a strategy to avoid waste (by not having to ditch appliances that had failed, prematurely).

- the opening of Biffa’s mrf (material reclamation facility) at Redcar. This innovative plant was commissioned within a year of WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme) awarding it a grant, and is capable of separating the different plastics in mixed plastic waste, including film, by colour and by composition. The plant was a prototype and Biffa have ambitions to build others. The implications of the technology are 3-fold.

- the materials separated can be used to replace new materials that would otherwise need to be created from virgin raw materials – a saving on resources which also increases the value of the waste and totally undermines the case for waste plastics to be used as the fuel for “energy from waste” incineration.

- RECOUP (Recycling of Used Plastics)’s Conference “Recycling on the Go” This conference made the point that much waste is generated by people who are on the move, and hence cannot use the recycling arrangements they have at home – street collections need to be smarter, and events organisers (such as the Olympic Games) need to be alert to their responsibilities.

Group

The attendance at our meetings has fluctuated with a peak of 11 members present at our September meeting. We are an expanding Group, and welcomed Eileen Kinnear (now Chair of Greener Harrow), and Shahrzad Amoli (who has researched Waste Management in Tehran and shared the results with us). New and long-standing members have been energetic and enthusiastic, and I thank them for their efforts in the last year and look forward to this continuing into the coming year.

We enjoyed listening to a Scottish folk-song “Let’s Recycle” by the McCalmans, which is based on a Mid-Lothian recycling leaflet which is not much different from our procedures in Harrow.

The Group was without a Secretary in previous years but Himesh Chavda minuted our meetings until he began to do so for the Executive Committee. Charlotte Neville did this task during the autumn, but we now have a vacancy.

Mick Oliver



Situations vacant

Harrow Agenda 21 is in urgent need of people to serve in the following positions:

Secretary

This post has been vacant since July 2010, and the consequence is that our administration risks being mishandled, and that our Chair and our Office Administrator are becoming stretched, and less able to do the tasks they should be handling.

(If he is re-elected to the position at the AGM) our Chair will not consider serving beyond July 2012 if HA21 has not been able to fill the position of Secretary.

Editor for Education Group newsletter

This post has been vacant for longer, since Rupal Mehta retired from the role. The consequence is that the Chair of our Education Group is handling this task, and that she also is becoming stretched, possibly distracted from her mainstream tasks.

Chair for Ethical Consumer Group

HA21 has many who are active in consumer affairs and in Fair Trade. Harrow as a borough is taking renewed steps to achieve Fair Trade borough status, and it would be good if HA21 could give these moves its full support as an organisation (rather than through its members acting on their own behalf as individuals). To do this we need an enthusiast to give leadership to the Group.

Chair for Waste & Recycling Group

HA21's Chair doubles up as Chair of this Group, and our past experience is that chairing HA21 and a Working Group at the same time does not work well. The Group is active – is there an enthusiast for waste prevention and recycling who could take up these reins?

Secretary for Waste & Recycling Group

Charlotte Neville filled this role till recently but is likely to be away at college in future. Is there another enthusiast for waste prevention and recycling who could do this task of arranging meetings, minuting them, and sending out calling notices, agendas and minutes?

Maybe we need a

Membership Secretary to keep track of new members and make sure they are involved,

- **a Publicity Officer** to handle press releases and publicity in libraries and elsewhere,
- **an Officer** to investigate possible sources of grants and to apply for them,
- **an Officer** to keep in contact with the other bodies we are associated with and act as champion for them.

If you are interested in any of these posts or possibilities, please ring 020 3114 6020 or email HA21's office admin@harrowagenda21.org