

**Downshire Hill Residents' Association**  
**Minutes of the meeting at 8 Downshire Hill**  
**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April**

Present: Stephen Ainger (chair), Mark Dennis (treasurer), Andrew Neale, Peter Tausig, Margaret Rodgers, Nicky Sinclair, Patricia Morison.

Present for part of the meeting: Todd Berman, Hampstead Hill Gardens; John S; Councillor Stephen Stark

1. Minutes of the last meeting were circulated and agreed.

2. Discussion of the situation regarding the Old Police Station redevelopment.

Stephen and Andrew briefed the committee on the expected new planning application from Abacus Belsize Primary School. The committee was circulated with 2 letters exchanged between Jonathan Kendall, a school governor (7 April) and Stephen with Redding Thompson, (14 April).

It appeared that the school, via the EFA, has permission from the Minister to apply for planning permission for 210 pupils instead of 420 despite the EFA, in their application last year, saying that a 420 school was essential in order to make the school economic. JK asked for a meeting so that 'meaningful engagement' with neighbours and the local authority could begin quickly. In his reply to JK's letter Stephen asked for an explanation of the reasons for re-opening the controversial proposal. He informed JK that the matter must first be discussed with the committee and at the AGM. In his second letter JK said that discussions should be delayed and he would get back to Stephen when there is more substantive information.

In discussion the committee heard that there was no legal barrier for a school of 210 pupils, after a period, applying to grow to 420 if it could be justified. Committee members were unanimous in not believing it could be certain that the school, once built, would stay at the 210 limit.

At the time of Abacus' first approach, some of the DHRA committee had been quite positive about a 210 school. However, that was before the many objectionable features of accommodating a school on the street had become apparent in the rejection of the application by the council.

Councillor Stephen Stark joined the meeting to discuss what the council's view might be. He advised that all the previous issues would need to be readdressed in any new application. It was also felt that the nearby Hampstead primary school (Fleet) was unlikely to change their previous stance and withdraw their objections, as applications were down this year.

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Treasurer Mark Dennis

It was noted that the Public Accounts Committee had produced a critical report on free schools funded by the EFA.

On what was known at the moment the committee remained unanimously opposed to the Abacus redevelopment.

### 3. DHRA AGM on 10 May.

The date of the AGM was noted. Residents would again be asked on their views of a 210 place school.

### 4. Rubbish collections

Several committee members were unhappy with the new arrangements. It would be discussed at the AGM.

PM