

## **Holly Lodge Estate – January Security Meeting Summary and Initial Next Steps**

On 22 January, a meeting was held at St. Anne’s Church, open to all residents, to discuss issues and questions about security on the estate. In all, over 100 were in attendance. Reverend Andrew Meldrum moderated the meeting and we are grateful to him for his participation and the use of the Church.

The meeting was opened by Peter Wesley, Chairman of the HLE Committee, who explained that there has been a concern among some residents about the level of security on the estate. He addressed the need for security to begin at home with each plot holder, leaseholder and tenant doing their share to protect their residence and belongings. He also listed the many things done by the Committee to improve the Estate and help safeguard its residents. Finally, Peter indicated that the Committee members were in attendance throughout the audience, but were present as individuals rather than part of the committee. (A copy of Peter’s speech is available on the HLE website in the “Committee” tab under “Security.”)

Two speakers were provided the opportunity to discuss their perspective on security. Justyn Trenner spoke on behalf of those in favour of the need for additional security measures, in particular patrols and CCTV, referencing recent events on the Estate. Ines Newman then spoke about the need for residents to take responsibility for security of their own homes, the feeling of community that the estate fosters and why importing outside security patrols would affect this sense of community. (Copies of a summary of Justyn’s and Ines’ presentations are also available on the HLE website in the “Committee” tab under “Security.”)

The meeting was then handed over to Father Andrew and, for the next ninety minutes, 27 members of the audience expressed their concerns, raised questions and, in general, debated among themselves the various issues surrounding security provisions. Father Andrew also proposed that anyone who felt uncomfortable speaking in public or had additional thoughts after the meeting were welcome to e-mail their comments. To date, we have had 25 responses submitted by e-mail and these comments are included in this summary.

It was reassuring to hear from a number of individuals both at the meeting and subsequently that there is a general feeling the HLE Committee is doing a good job and people are happy with its initiatives. Further, many mentioned that the responsibility of managing the estate, including matters regarding security, is in the hands of the Committee and those individuals are happy to allow the Committee to carry on.

Some spoke of unpleasant personal experiences, including burglary and anti-social behaviour (such as drug-related activities). There was a genuine, heartfelt sympathy among many members of the audience for those who experienced these incidents personally.

It was generally agreed that burglary and anti-social behaviours were separate issues (both of concern) and needed to be dealt with differently. The former appears concentrated in one or two areas including Langbourne Avenue and Robin Grove. The latter towards the top of Hillway and Holly Lodge Gardens. Some incidents were also reported from several of the mansion buildings.

### Security Patrols:

With reference to the security patrols, there were more divided feelings. Some felt that they were effective and cited the statistics for burglaries during the periods of security patrols organised both by the residents and by the Committee. Others questioned the economics, overall ability to discourage crime and the side effects of bringing about a change in the fabric of the estate, for example, by having to encounter a patrolman at night with some unpleasant experiences. Others cited Government statistics that showed crime is lower in Highgate Ward than the national average and lower still on the Estate than Highgate Ward.

Although patrols may be more effective with ASB due to the static nature of the offence, there may not be a majority support from all HLE Residents. The HLEC is thus also currently examining whether there are alternatives to patrols that residents might support. Nevertheless, we have not ruled out the possibility of periodic and limited-time patrols to address specific problems (as we have done in the past) and will certainly be giving this the consideration it deserves. In the interim, we want to encourage everyone to do their part and report any incident immediately to the Police and to the Estate Manager. Every call or contact logged will increase our chances of securing better coverage and more rapid responses in the future.

#### Survey:

While several members expressed concern about being bound by a majority vote, many felt that a wider consultation was needed, to include the residents of the flats, and some type of study would provide an indication of what might be included in the next steps for the Committee. To this end, we are currently investigating the use of a research survey that will be seeking the views of residents across the estate as to what counter-measures they would support and at what cost. Whatever measures are agreed will need to be effective.

#### Other actions:

In light of the meeting and e-mails received, the HLE Security Sub-Committee is forming a Security Liaison Group to include the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (Highgate Dedicated Ward Officer - DWO), local Councilors, members from the HLE Committee, representatives of the flats and ploholders, specifically to tackle the highlighted issues of concern. The purpose of the meetings will be to identify and address specific concerns from recent burglaries to drug-related incidents and engage relevant authorities to identify solutions to reduce their incidence.

A flyer issued by the Metropolitan Police is being distributed with this newsletter to remind everyone of what steps can be taken to protect your home.

In addition, the Highgate DWO, PC Wendy Lee, has offered to visit any residence to advise owners on how to secure their property. Also, for those elderly or more vulnerable, PC Lee has offered individual support. Finally, seminars will be organised to educate residents on topics including personal safety, online scamming, burglary, crime prevention and awareness.

The Committee promised to keep everyone informed and to continue to act in the best interests of the Estate and its residents.