

PLOT-OWNERS' HALF YEARLY GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Martin Narraway Trustee & Chair, Peter Jacobs Trustee, Peter Wesley Trustee, Rob Schoenbeck Vice Chair, Justyn Trenner Treasurer, Ronnie Day Secretary, Rosie Durant, Pippa Rothenberg, Daniel Virgili Estate Accountant, Barbara Wheatley Estate Manager, + 29 residents representing 24 Plots.

Apologies: Li Weinreich, Robert & Anita Morgan

Venue: Highgate Library Civic & Cultural Centre

Time: 20.00 Wednesday 20th November 2019

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 1 May 2019

Approval of the minutes was proposed by Richard Preece, seconded by Judith Hunt, approved and duly signed.

2. Revised minutes from half yearly meeting 21 Nov 2018.

Following an amendment requested by Richard Preece these were addended and re-presented. Proposed by Pippa Rothenberg, seconded by Geoff Hoffman, approved and duly signed.

3. Review and plans.

3.i. Chair's Statement.

The Chair summarised his report, which can be found in full on the website at

<https://hle.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019%20half%20yearly%20Chair%27s%20Report.pdf>

The first priority of the new committee was to review the governance assisted by John Hendy and Judith Hunt.

Parking and ASB – the parking attendant seems to be working well and has now been reduced to part time from 6 nights a week to 3 nights to see what impact this may have.

The WhatsApp group has been very well received and allows residents to share information and for the HLEC to see any concerns.

Justyn will report on finances.

An Estate survey was undertaken, and the highlights will be shared later in the meeting along with an update on the EV charging project.

A Parks and Gardens sub-committee has been formed and they will be looking at some of the suggestions that came out of the survey.

Thanks were given to the staff, Gerry, Sean, Dean and Dean plus Barbara for all their hard work. And thanks were given to Daniel for looking after the Estate accounts. Finally, the Chair thanked the Committee.

3.ii. Accounts and the Estate Maintenance Fund.

Justyn started by thanking Peter Jacobs and Daniel for all their help in supporting him as the 'new boy'.

JT proposes a small but important change to the way we treat the accounts which will be described later.

The financial year is almost at an end and with 11 months actual spend and 1 month forecast spend we will have spent approx £1400 more than budgeted, less than ½% overrun, being £345k which is 10% less than last year principally because we didn't have to do the new hut. The main budget overspend was £21.5k on parking management which was fairly equally offset by savings of £20k on small projects and estate management.

Income very much in line with our expectations.

Going forward, since 2016 the EMF has been set at £600 which was a £50 reduction on the previous year and £670 in prior years. So, we have benefited from a reduction for several years, but we need to be

prepared to invest more in our assets and infrastructure now as well as an investment in the provision of EV charging points.

We have £560k of reserves to cover us for unforeseen issues, such as a major subsidence incident, but it is our view that we do not need to hold such large reserves.

Upcoming expenditures, which will be accounted for over several years in order to smooth the line over, will include a new truck, on a 6 year pay back, resurfacing the estate yard on a 12 year pay back. If £30+k is approved for installing EV charging points this will be kept as a separate line in the accounts and will be repaid by users over time. So, taking these 3 expenditures into account we are proposing that the EMF should increase this year to £630. JT gave thanks to Bob Rothenberg for his help.

DV has pointed out that in the long-term forecast we may have underbudgeted to the tune of £40k for the following years. JT will look at this and of course correct if needed, but for now he is only asking for this year's budget to be approved. A query then arose about the presented budget which appears to have been printed with columns hidden. The meeting moved onto the next item whilst long term budget copies were hastily reprinted.

A question was asked as to the large sum in the budget for Parking Management. It was explained that this is the cost of the Parking Attendant who has been employed to tackle the parking issues and the linked anti-social behaviour. The annual cost for him is £30k, we have spent £20k this year to cover the 8 months he has been with us, and as ASB does appear to have declined we are reducing his hours from 6 nights a week to 3 and will review. If we should need to increase his hours, then we are covered from a budget point of view. This works out at approx £50 per plot. A concern was raised about using a parking attendant as a de facto security guard. This arrangement was put in place as a compromise to the pro versus anti security patrol issue, that the community can live with. However, other solutions are being explored such as electronic parking management and these will, of course, be put to the plot owners for approval.

3.iii. Update on Trees

PJ explained the tree programme. PJ & RDur take the main responsibility for overseeing the trees on the Estate.

Early autumn we do a comprehensive walkround and look at the trees with our tree surgeons and put together a programme of pruning, lifting, monitoring & replacing. The tree surgeons are often on the Estate throughout the year doing work for residents and alert us to anything that needs attention in between time.

We ask residents to help us with watering new trees outside their homes in times of drought.

The limes are pollarded every three years because having started to pollard any tree the secondary growth isn't as strong and cannot withstand heavy growth. Also, in the case of any subsidence claims insurance companies will require to see our management programme and pollarding is one way of managing root growth. We have decided to slightly amend the 3 year cycle and pollard half one year followed by the other half the next year, then have a fallow year. This is so we can provide a habitat for wildlife and so Hillway doesn't look quite so denuded.

Despite the very dry year we got off fairly lightly.

Thanks were given for all the lovely trees.

3.iv. Update on Estate Survey

RS asked for there to be no questions as he does not have any answers! This is to report what we have learnt so far; we will issue a summary and we will hold a meeting in the New Year to discuss the findings & proposals in more detail. Security issues were separated out and will be addressed separately later.

RS shared the highlights. A full summary of the survey can be found on the website. All in all there were a lot of good suggestions and they will be examined for their feasibility, cost etc and then proposals will be presented at the open meeting.

Security – The HLEC, both as residents and as part of the committee are committed as a group to the security and safety of the estate. They are working closely with the Safer Neighbourhoods Panel and the Local Policing Authorities, and we have residents representing the Estate in these meetings. HLEC is active in supporting the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. RS thanked Mary Selfe for her tireless efforts as Chair of several groups. It was announced that there will now be three dedicated ward police officers to cover the Highgate area, the last time we had three officers was five years ago.

We continue to employ the parking attendant and are currently trialling a 3 day rotating schedule to see whether his full time attendance is necessary given the reduction in ASB. At the same time we are exploring installing a CCTV/ANPR camera at the top of the Estate, provided by MET Parking Services, to assess the effectiveness of using cameras to deter illegal parking. These cameras would not need yellow lines to be put down. We will inform everyone of the details and timings of this.

A question was asked about whether we could have a CCTV camera at the bottom of the Estate. This is another question and the MET parking camera is only on trial for parking infringements, but it is portable so we could move it to the bottom of the Estate if it was felt it appropriate for the trial.

4. Motions.

4.i. Proposed Rules.

Following issues around proxy voting and Trustee tenures, which became apparent earlier in the year, a thorough review of the Estate's Rules & Regulations was carried out. Thanks were given to a well thought out draft set of Rules but a concern was raised around clause 10.2 whereby the HLEC may determine any matter on which these R&Rs are silent or ambiguous, and it's decision will be final. This was raised by several others before the meeting too, so the HLEC will change the wording to reflect should any urgent decision need to be made it will be ratified at the next available meeting.

MN asked the meeting to approve the new R&Rs, so the new clauses around proxy voting and Trustee tenures can be in place for the next AGM, with the commitment that the HLEC will address the concerns raised in an open meeting in the New Year and present a final version for approval at the 2020 AGM.

On the conditions outlined above, with the exception of the final decision on Committee Member tenures which was voted on shortly afterwards, the new Rules & Regulations were approved by a majority in favour and 2 against. Proposed by Mark Rogers, seconded by Tom Harris.

The two options for managing the Committee Member tenures were explained and a vote taken.

Option A explained by MN, 1 year term, received 12 votes

Option B explained by PJ, 3 year term, with a review of the rotation detail to be held in the New Year open meeting, received 17 votes.

4.ii. EV Chargers

43% of residents responded to a questionnaire about EV charging points and of those 73% were in favour of charging points being installed. Planning permission was applied for and granted. The cost of the application was funded by a grant from the GLA. Further grants have been explored but nothing has come of these yet. Installation costs are estimated at £30K. The chosen company to do the installation will also do the back office too. It is proposed we restrict use to HLE residents only, but this will not stop you giving your card to a visitor for them to charge their vehicle whilst visiting you.

Thank you to MN from the floor for the enormous amount of work he has put into this project.

The motion to accept the installation of EV charging points was proposed by Rob Schoenbeck and seconded by Emma Jay

Approved by the majority.

4.iii. Budget

The motion is to accept the budget with an expenditure of £352K which includes an apportionment of the sums of money outlined above in 3.ii that we will pay back to ourselves over a number of years and to approve the investment in the provision of EV charging points, should the EV project be approved, and to approve an increase in the EMF to £630.

Proposed by Richard Preece

Seconded by Martin Narraway

Approved by the majority, 1 against.

5. AOB.

Michael Zagor appealed for volunteers to help man the Highgate Library as it is under threat.

Thanks were given to the HLEC for all their hard work this year on behalf of the Estate.

Meeting closed 22.00