

**HOLLY LODGE ESTATE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
CHAIR'S STATEMENT
27 APRIL 2022**

These past twelve months have given meaning to the expression "weathering the storm."

- We managed, through not one but two lockdowns
- the departures of Dean Larkins from the grounds staff and
- our much-loved Estate Manager Barbara Wheatley
- great debates regarding vans and wilding
- a slow but steady progress towards the ANPR trial...plus,
- the real storm "Eunice" that left us with the loss of four large, well-established trees and some damage to properties on Robin Grove

But we have survived and are much stronger for the experience. I will touch on each of these and other topics in this report. But, before I do, I'd like to address the regular business carried out at our AGM, starting with a big sigh of relief as we return to a "normal, in-person, real live meeting at the Holly Lodge Community Centre."

The meeting will include the following items:

- a) Approval of the minutes of the previous General Meeting, the half-yearly held (via Zoom) in November, 2021,
- b) Presentation of the report of the Committee's activities and plans,
- c) Presentation of the accounts for the previous Financial Year

Election and Officers

As required by the rules and regulations adopted in November 2019 three Committee members, including a trustee, are to be elected at each AGM. The three members of the Committee standing for re-election were Rosalind (Rosie) Durant, Li Weinrich and Martin Narraway (Trustee.)

All three have dedicated innumerable hours of service to the Committee and the estate and have been recognised for their contributions by running unopposed for another three-year term. Consequently, no election was required or held this year.

Estate Activities and a look ahead

ANPR trial

Beginning with the most difficult subject, we must admit that the process of trialing ANPR (Auto Number Plate Recognition) has been much more challenging than we first imagined. After some delays in the availability of the equipment and signage the good news is that the cameras, provided at no cost to the estate by our partner MET Parking Services, were installed last July and are operating.

They have been monitoring the evening activities from 8 PM to 6 AM in the zone at the top of the estate and we will be able to tell which vehicles and how many are spending time in this area to give us an idea of the scope of the activity. We also believe that their presence and the associated signage indicating ANPR cameras in use have contributed to the decline in incidents at the top of the estate since last summer.

The bad news is that MET have been struggling to create our own bespoke app for use by the residents to log in their visitors themselves (as all residents' vehicles with valid parking permits will automatically be exempted.)

We are closing in on going live. The manual has been drafted and we plan to hold a meeting with interested residents shortly, "just as soon as MET can shake the bugs out of the system."

Parking and Security

Finding a place to park, especially in the three-hour zone at the bottom of Hillway, can sometimes be a challenge. We have advised MET to be more vigilant to ticket unauthorised vehicles from using this space and also to prevent workmen's vans from blocking driveways, footpaths and parking on white lines during the day. We have worked with residents to cancel PCNs when possible where reasonable circumstances exist and we continue to have the benefit of Joynal, our parking attendant, on the estate most evenings to check unauthorized parking.

With the pandemic and several residents turning to vans as a way of spending time with their families without leaving the country, it was decided by the Parking Sub-Committee to extend the van parking trial through the end of 2022 to gauge a more accurate assessment of what effect vans have on the parking situation. We are aware that some of the larger (camper) vans are more visible and we are regularly monitoring their presence (and remind all vehicle owners, especially vans) that the parking regulations require that "long-term parking of vehicles not in frequent use is prohibited with a minimum usage to be at least fortnightly."

EV Chargers

With the easing of lockdown and expansion in the size of the ULEZ zone last October, there has been an increase in usage of the charging stations on Makepeace Avenue. There are now 35 residents taking part in the scheme, and last year there were 298 charging events supplying 8.657 MWh of electricity providing close to 3000 miles of road usage and helping to repay the estate's investment.

Yard, Grounds and Gardens

Started last April, the entire concrete slab of the yard was removed and replaced with a new slab of supported by piles. While the construction created some challenging working conditions for the Estate Manager and staff and inconvenience to the residents; the result is a sturdier, longer-lasting premises, well laid-out and organised and with easier access to the tool sheds, equipment and skips.

This year we will be undertaking the beginning of renovation and restoration of the road and pedestrian gates at the ends of each of the avenues as well as repair and painting of other iron fences such as those in the gardens at the top of the estate.

The Gardening Sub-Committee in conjunction with the EM, Foreman and staff along with numerous suggestions and input from the residents have created "The Green Framework" to be more responsive to the environment: not just wilding, flowers and plants but the insects, wildlife and how we better use the resources around us. We have altered our tree pollarding schedule to split the work on the trees into three years so the estate always looks fresh and green and have been spending more time in the parks, adding features such a nature walk and restored benches and seating areas.

We are planning to resurrect our annual party in the park and are stepping up our planning for the Estate's Centenary Anniversary in 2024.

To that end we are working closely with representatives of the Tenants and Residents' Association, the Community Centre and the Nursery and have regular meetings together to discuss issues such as bicycle storage to improvement works in the mansion blocks. We have combined our efforts to gather food for those in need during the pandemic to the annual Christmas event (this year seeing the estate's buggy once again kitted out as Santa's sleigh to deliver presents to needy children on the estate.) We have introduced and share two WhatsApp groups for all interested residents to improve communications for everyone.

Staffing

As with all organisations, turnover is a fact of life. This past year, Dean Larkins, one of the grounds men, decided to set out on his own into the wide world of business and enterprise and we wish him well. With the temporary help from Evan Hartigan for six months, we were able to find an enthusiastic and experienced replacement Nicola ("Nick") Baldo, now part of Foreman Gerry's team along with Sean and the other Dean.

We also lost our Estate Manager, who has spent the last seven years with us helping to make the HLE what it is today. Barbara was known by everyone and had her finger on the pulse of the estate. We were afraid that we would never be able to replace her !

But we were wrong. It wasn't easy, and I hope they'll forgive me for making the comparison, but we believe that we have found Barbara 2.0 Her name is Antonia Pereira and she joined us on 14 March to jump into the position feet first. With the assistance of Barbara, who kindly helped in the transition and the support of the Committee, Antonia is off to a great start and has already come to grips with many of the resources in the estate manager's tool kit. If you haven't met her already, be sure to say hello and become acquainted with the newest member of the team.

Discussion of Motions

The Committee welcomes proposals of topics to be discussed or motions to be considered in advance of the general meeting. There were no submissions for this AGM.

Looking Ahead

The estate has a much loved and cherished heritage that we work very hard to maintain. It is this connection to the past that, in many ways, has contributed to this beautiful place in which we live.

It is equally important that we look to the future to continue to keep the Holly Lodge Estate as special as it is. And, that is what we as a Committee are here to do.

This has been my first year as Chair and certainly, at times, trial by fire. My thanks to the grounds staff who have kept the estate looking so good, Barbara and now Antonia, for managing it so well, to our bookkeeper Debbie Harries for keeping an eye on the numbers and, most of all to the other members of the Committee, as volunteers without compensation, spending countless hours in Zoom meetings, working in the estate's flower beds, keeping an eye on the trees, over-seeing the reconstruction of the yard and repairs to the roads and developing the budget and balancing the books.

Very importantly to you, the residents for your understanding, your annual contribution to the EMF and most of all your support. It is reassuring to know that we, the Committee, can count on you when we need you.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Schoenbeck
Chairman / Trustee