

CHAIR'S STATEMENT 2021

HOLLY LODGE ESTATE PLOT-OWNERS' HALF-YEARLY GENERAL MEETING

Overview

When we organised the April AGM on Zoom, everyone felt confident that it would be the right thing to do, but by November things would be back to "normal."

Regrettably, we are not there yet and the sense among the Committee was to ensure the health and safety of our residents by holding this Half-Yearly Meeting on Zoom as well, particularly for those who still feel uncomfortable in a large group. It does enable more residents to attend and participate even if it lacks some of the personal feel of our regular meetings.

Purpose

The business of the November meeting is to:

- a) Approve minutes of previous meeting (April 2021)¹
- b) Receive the report of the Committee's activities
- c) Approve the budget for the following financial year¹
- d) Address and discuss any questions raised or issues put to the committee

Note:

1) These are available at <https://www.hle.org.uk> (AGM Papers)

A busy six months...

Despite the lockdown and related restrictions including Health & Safety issues, social distancing and the like, the estate was very busy during this period and accomplished a number of projects that had been deferred, initiated or identified.

- The reinforcing and resurfacing of the yard was completed, a major project that required the HLE staff essentially working under makeshift conditions for months.
- The gullies were cleaned and some drain work undertaken.
- A new mirror was installed on Highgate West Hill by the gates for those leaving the estate to be aware of cyclists coming down the hill.
- A new van parking policy was announced and put in trial for the year through December. Results will be announced in January.
- Banners were produced to alert van and lorry drivers to the turnarounds at the end of the avenues to avoid damage to vehicles and verges.
- Roads and Paths were given their half-yearly inspection for any repairs that were required
- Stairs and railings were examined and repairs undertaken; and
- Regular estate work from lawn mowing to leaf collecting, continued despite these limitations.

We even found the time to organise a "Party in the Park" for residents and a concert that, unfortunately, had to be cancelled at the last minute due to inclement weather.

A big thank you to the residents for your support and understanding, to the Committee for their tireless volunteering efforts, to Barbara and her team (Gerry, Sean, Dean and Evan) for their dedication and hard work,

ANPR (Auto Number Plate Recognition)

Early this year we spoke to the residents about a trial to use ANPR to monitor the top of the estate in the evenings and deter unauthorised vehicles from parking or creating a disturbance.

Unfortunately, the lockdown delayed the installation of cameras until the summer. They have been set up and are now connected. A further delay was experienced more recently due to shipping / delivery of the materials to produce the new signs that are required by law to inform everyone that the cameras are now in use with the times, details, etc. These are now being installed.

The app for residents use to list a vehicle that can park in the zone is being completed and shortly a copy of the manual will be available and a meeting with residents announced to inform those interested how the system will work.

As long as you have a valid parking permit your vehicle(s) will be exempt and you need not worry about being ticketed. Visitors passing through the zone between 8 PM and 6 AM for less than ten minutes will not be ticketed.

Our plan is to begin the trial on 2 January and to run it throughout 2022.

Parking

As you may have seen in recent newsletters, 'parking' on the estate is still an emotive subject. We continue to engage MET Parking Services to patrol and issue tickets where there is a violation. We want to ensure that unauthorised parking is discouraged. Consequently, residents and their visitors will occasionally receive a PCN (Parking Charge Notice) if they do not follow the regulations. We want to be understanding and appreciate that mistakes do happen, so we willingly review every ticket that is queried by a resident and promise to cancel whenever we can. However, there is a £30 fee MET charges the estate and we must pass this along (otherwise, we would end up paying these charges from the EMF and penalizing all the residents for the benefit of one individual.) There is no charge if a ticket has been issued incorrectly.

We also engage a Parking Attendant, Joyndal from MET, whom many of you know, during the evening hours of 7 PM to 1 AM, six days a week to help deter activity at the top of the estate as well as cover all of the roads. He has become part of the family and will do what he can to alert residents before issuing a ticket.

Wilding and the Environment

Perhaps equally widely discussed this year is the subject of wilding; allowing areas of the estate to grow freely with wildflowers and other plants. This is our second year of experimenting with this approach and we have had mixed reviews.

After receiving much feedback from a number of residents, thoroughly reviewing what has been done (worked and not) and looking towards the future, with the lead provided by the Gardening Sub-Committee and our own ground staff, we believe that we have identified a better idea...we call it "The Green Framework."

It incorporates wilding specific parts of the estate, more than before, in identified and maintained areas, from the top parks to the ends of the avenues. In addition, it allows for the construction of birdhouses, bat refuges, and even hedgehog highways. Don't forget that the estate encompasses 54 acres and we estimate that over half are gardens, parks and verges...a lot of green!

This is in addition what we are already doing including use of our own materials, recycling and for composting instead of sending to a landfill. It has meant a move to battery-operated tools and our buggy instead of being petrol or diesel powered. It resulted in our seeking alternatives to replace glyphosate as a weed killer, which we no longer use. It even means greater encouragement of electric vehicles for residents with the installation of the first EV charging points. This year, the chargers have delivered 8,800 kWh, enough for over 25,000 miles of driving and there are now 27 registered users.

Please spend some time reviewing our Green Framework. We are still learning and still welcome your comments and suggestions, but we feel that we are moving in the right direction.

Finances

Finally, a few words about our financial health. Overall, we are in good shape and must again thank our plot holders for their annual contribution and generous support. The budget and Treasurer's report is included in the Half-Yearly materials distribution and can be found on the HLE website or by requesting a PDF (via e-mail) or hard copy from the Estate Manager.

With the increasing likelihood of rising inflation in the months ahead, we felt that it would be prudent to ensure that our financial health remains strong. And so, after several years of no increases, the Committee has decided that it is necessary to raise the EMF for the coming year to £670 in line with government forecasts.

Please be sure to vote on the proposed budget. Votes need to be cast by 6 PM on 9 November.

Yours respectfully,
Rob Schoenbeck
Chair / Trustee