

# HOLLY LODGE ESTATE 2019 RESIDENTS' SURVEY

## Key Responses and Proposed Actions - January 2020

### BACKGROUND

Following the Holly Lodge Estate (HLE) Annual General Meeting in May, 2019 the newly-formed HLE Committee recognised the desire for greater openness and receptivity to the needs of the residents: To listen to what those living on the estate deemed as important. Therefore, it was decided to conduct a survey to solicit comments and suggestions regarding all aspects of managing and maintaining the estate.

A survey, to be conducted both on-line as well as for those preferring a paper version, was developed as a series of open-ended, neutral, qualitative questions. And, while they referred to specific topics of the estate to enable some guidance, the questions were designed to be unbiased and provide plenty of space for individual comments.

The actual survey was conducted at the end of October / beginning of November and generated a total of 207 responses, with all areas of the estate represented, including the mansions / flats:

HLEC Survey - Response Breakdown

Zone	Area	Paper	Electronic	Total
1	HL Gardens	2	12	14
2	Hillway (ab. Oakeshott)	3	13	16
3	Hillway (Oak. To Lang.)	3	9	12
4	Hillway (bel. Lang.)	8	10	18
5	Robin Grove	4	0	4
6	Oakeshott Ave. West	4	14	18
7	HL Mansions	3	18	21
8	Makepeace Ave. West	5	8	13
9	Makepeace Mans./Ave.	4	21	25
10	Langbourne Ave. West	4	20	24
11	Langbourne Mans./Ave	5	17	22
12	Bromwich Ave.	1	9	10
13	Swain's Lane	3	2	5
14	Highgate West Hill	1	0	1
NZ	Blank (No Zone Indicated)	1	2	3
	Totals	51	156	207

The *HLEC Highlights Summary* was presented at the HLE Half-Yearly meeting on 20 November and can be found on the HLE website (<https://hle.org.uk>) under the Residents Tab (at the top of the page) listed as "Estate Survey" Also available are key verbatim responses (*HLEC Survey Comments Breakdown*) from the survey (without duplication or identity of the respondents).

### OVERVIEW

Q1-2: In general, virtually everyone responding to the survey was positive about living on the estate and the many amenities it has to offer. Residents listed the peace and quiet, tranquility, community spirit and neighbourhood "feel."

Also mentioned were its location near Hampstead Heath, the shops on Swain's Lane and convenient public transportation. They were complimentary of the Estate Manager and the crew for the work they have done and their achievements over the past five years.

*When asked specifically what wasn't liked* the most frequently mentioned responses related to parking, security, dog fouling, litter, poor street lighting, leaf blowers and the need for greater engagement of plot owners with flat dwellers. These specific topics and others will be addressed below.

Q4: Overall, it seems that the HLE Committee is viewed as having "done things right" about the maintenance, the gardens, trees and shrubs. There is a perceived need to continue 'improving' communication on such issues as parking and security. Finally, given the number of responses

received from the flats and the comments and concerns that were raised; the Committee is more aware of the limited understanding of its responsibilities (and that of Camden) among those individuals and the need to achieve greater coordination with the HL Residents Association (representing the tenants and leaseholders.)

#### SURVEY RESULTS - WISH TO CHANGE:

##### Q3a: Gardens and Verges

Although most comments were “nothing to add” or “perfect as is”, there were some good suggestions that the HLE Committee will pursue:

- Management of the trees of Hillway
  - In late 2018, based on resident input and a thorough review of the tree management, the Committee decided to implement *a revised pruning schedule for Hillway* by pollarding half of the trees (every other tree) every second year. This will ensure that Hillway has more trees with foliage on an ongoing basis, which will benefit the insect population as well as be more aesthetically pleasing.
  - In addition, *all trees will be continue to be inspected annually* by the Trees Sub-Committee and where necessary, a diseased or dying tree will be replaced with a like-for-like (with preferably a native species) wherever possible (In 2018, 11 trees were planted. In 2019, the number was 10.)
  - *A long-term plan should be developed* for the eventual replacement of the Lime trees on Hillway, as they begin to die off, to avoid having to replace all of these trees at one time.
- More planning in the gardens / benches requiring repairs or replacement
  - Since May, following the election and the selection of a new HLE Committee, *a Gardening Sub-Committee has been created*. Its purpose is to oversee the design and management of the gardens, especially those at the top of the estate, working in conjunction with the Estate Manager and her team. Steps have already been initiated to *upgrade the gardens at the entrance on Hillway* below the gates and *a formal plan is currently being explored for the top gardens* and will be shared with the residents when ready. Further suggestions from the residents are always welcome !
  - The *benches and stonework are also being addressed*, thanks in part to ‘In Memoriam’ donations (a limited number for benches) as well as trees and plants.
  - The Sub-Committee has also been requested to explore the practicality and cost of adding the names of various tree and plants in the gardens such as is done at Kew Gardens.
- Use of leaf blowers / collection of leaves
  - *All leaves are now being collected* for composting or recycling
  - The Committee is assessing *the move to all ‘battery-operated’ equipment*, beginning with leaf blowers to reduce noise and pollution.
  - In addition, *a study is underway to introduce the first all-electric vehicle* on the estate for maintenance use.
- Create more ‘wild spaces’ / plant more bulbs on the verges
  - The Committee will *explore the feasibility of testing a controlled verge area* (most likely on one of the avenues) where wild flowers and bulbs would be planted and allowed to grow during the season. While this does present additional problems for the maintenance crew, it is worthy of assessment and offers many benefits including a more natural appearance and to the bees and other insects.
  - Also, more *attention is being given to plot owners’ foliage that overhangs the footpaths* and could be hazardous. Residents are being asked periodically to keep their gardens trimmed where they extend into the public areas and will be reminded again this Spring.
- Reduce dog fouling (especially in the top gardens) / litter
  - *A regular weekly maintenance schedule is in place* for the HLE crew to cover the entire estate, emptying dog waste and litter bins on a regular basis and are always seeking ways for further improvement. The crew has also been asked to remind dog walkers to pick up if they see an abuse occurring.

- *Further steps will be explored to tighten enforcement* such as regular reminders to residents via the HLE Newsletter and to visiting dog walkers via through the possible use of additional signage and leaflet handout for all dog walkers on the estate.
- Remove Leylandii trees
  - Although a TPO (Temporary Protection Order) has been placed on these trees on Langbourne Avenue, there are *a number of reasons why they should be removed* and replaced.
  - *A planning application (that closed in early January) has been submitted to remove these trees, supported by the HLE CAAC (Conservation Area Advisory Committee) and the HLE Committee is awaiting a decision from Camden Council.*
- Ban use of pesticides
  - *Glyphosate-based weed killers, specifically "Round Up" have been eliminated from use on the estate and environmentally friendly options are being tested for use in the future.*

### Q3b: ROADS AND PARKING

This is one of the more complex topics and generated more responses and suggestions than the above (but more geographically concentrated to specific areas of the estate.) Parking regulations and the current system (and its misuses) were the focal point of many comments; although it is important to note that many felt the current system was in keeping with the openness of the estate (but still urged that steps be taken to minimise its abuse.)

One overall key takeaway from this specific topic is that the committee will give careful thought as to how to simplify but maintain parking control, particularly in the light of the continuing increase in demand to keep cars and their related costs.

- Eliminate unauthorised parking (particularly on Hillway at the bottom of the estate) both below and above the gates. Also, MET Parking Service should leave a note / advice when a vehicle has been issued a Parking Charge Notice (PCN).
  - *A three-hour zone on Hillway (below the gates near Swain's Lane) was instituted to enable residents and their guests to park, shop, eat, etc. This has been implemented with residents living at the bottom of the estate in mind to eliminate vehicles from the top of the estate from occupying parking spaces in front of these residents' properties.*
  - *A more rigorous enforcement* has been enacted by MET in these areas (both below and above the gates) to deter unauthorised parking.
  - *Notes are also being used* to prompt residents to park below the gates or near their own homes and will periodically appear in the HLE Newsletter as a reminder.
- Develop a better way to manage parking / system is abused
  - *The HLE Parking Sub-Committee meets regularly* to assess the situation, review the number of PCNs (Parking Charge Notices), where they are issued and discuss options. *A recent change was the introduction of a required date* on the visitor's note to discourage unauthorised long-term parking.
  - Under current consideration is the *testing of a more controlled system* (but easier to use for residents and their visitors) designed to deter unapproved vehicles from parking on the estate. Options might include:
    - Parking scratch cards
    - Permanent visitor's cards issued by the HLE Committee
    - An authorization system (such as is now in use in Camden and other boroughs) issued via an app or on the HLE website.
  - *Other considerations* may be the reduction in the number of vehicles permitted per household (without an additional annual fee), restricting the vehicle parking on a road or avenue to those residents living there (parking by zone) or registering each vehicle through the use of an ANPR (Automobile Number Plate Recognition) system, also commonly in use by the various London boroughs.
  - *Any change to the current "Visitor's note" system would be thoroughly evaluated and would require residents' approval* prior to implementation.

- Finally, the *HLE Committee has been working with MET to explore the possibility of installing a temporary CCTV camera below the gates on Hillway in the three hour zone to deter unauthorised non-resident / non-visitor parking with the anticipated increase in traffic once the new shops on Hillway open this Spring. No decision to test this approach has taken.*
- o More Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points
  - In 2018, a proposal was put forth by the HLE Committee to introduce the first resident / visitor EV charging points on the estate following an estate-wide survey.
  - Approval was given at the 2019 AGM to proceed with a planning permission application and at the Half-Yearly meeting last November for the construction budget.
  - Initially, *four charging bays (which can be expanded to six) will be installed on Makepeace Avenue (SW corner with Hillway). These units will become operational by mid-2020 and will available for use by residents and their guests.*
  - *Three additional charging stations are envisaged on Bromwich, Oakeshott and Langbourne Avenue intersections with Hillway (in that order) pending the usage of the Makepeace station.*
- o Manage rented bicycles on the estate
  - Several comments have been received requesting that rental bikes not be permitted on the estate as well as those in support of their greater use.
  - While the HLE Committee wants to encourage the use of environmentally friendly transport, *the dangers imposed by rental bikes left abandoned on the footpaths and in crossovers as a trip hazard (especially at night and for elderly residents) must not be ignored.*
  - Currently, no action has been taken to ban hire bicycles, but residents will be requested to leave their rental bikes on the grass verges and not on the footpaths or crossovers. If this system proves unsuccessful and / or unable to manage, further steps will be considered including the banning of all rental bikes by declaring the HLE a 'no parking' zone.
  - *Details will be provided in the HLE Newsletter and residents will be reminded to park their rental cycles on the grass verges.*
- o Improved push / wheel chair access on the avenues / intersections
  - Currently, those residents who require this access have found it necessary to use the roads and crossovers to avoid the stairs. Although this may require a significant capital expenditure, it is *a reasonable request and the HLE Committee will explore the feasibility, costs and options available.*
- o Parking signs in black are difficult to read at night
  - Replacing all the signs at the moment is not practical as they were done recently to accommodate the inclusion of the GDPR (General Data Protect Requirements.) However, *the next time these signs are up for renewal, we will examine the option of a white or lighter background that makes them easier to read.*
- o More frequent gritting when snow / ice occurs
  - *The HLE Manager has completed a course in "Weather Basics for Winter Service Decision Makers."*
  - She is *in contact daily with Camden and receives a complete weather analysis* along with the borough's plan for gritting each day. Depending on what is proposed and where it will be implemented; she determines whether or not to grit the estate.
  - *Priority is given to stairs, footpaths, and steep / hilly areas of the estate.*
  - *More grit bins have been added to the estate this winter and can be found in all key locations. They are available for all residents to use on their own property or the common areas nearby.*

### Q3c: ACCESS, TRESPASS AND SECURITY

This was also a topic of great interest, generating a number of concerns and comments. More than half of all those who responded indicated that something more needs to be done about security on the estate. In fairness, there is an overwhelming sense that the estate is moving in the right direction in

tackling this issue by introducing the HLE Security WhatsApp for those who wish to participate and engaging the MET Parking Attendant to discourage unauthorised parking on the estate. There is also a definite concern about drug dealing / taking on the estate, but acknowledgement that there seems to be little that can be done to reduce it.

- Install security (CCTV) cameras
  - As there is opposition by some residents to this approach, the HLE Committee recognises a need to *move cautiously with any steps that may be taken*.
  - In 2019, plans had been presented to the residents for a *test of the temporary use of a CCTV camera at the top of Hillway* to deter unapproved parking in the late evening / overnight
  - This test was originally scheduled for last summer, but required the use of two cameras (CCTV and ANPR) and presented certain concerns for MET in the application of the data captured to issue a PCN. Additionally, there was the need to create a specific ‘No Parking’ zone with signs and yellow lines.
  - And, while the technology is moving forward and *a new generation of cameras is now available*, we have yet to identify the equipment to enable us to issue a PCN that meets MET’s stringent requirements. The search continues and other options are being examined.
- Install a gate (like that in Holly Lodge Gardens) at the bottom of Hillway / Employ a full-time security guard / Engage a regular security patrol / Make all gates on Highgate West Hill In / Out (like HLG) / Create a manned barrier on Hillway / Have NO controlled access (but happy for CCTV at the top of the estate / etc.
  - There have numerous suggestions along these lines among the responses to this topic. The *HLE Committee will review the feasibility of each* to determine the benefits, limitations and costs. At present the actions will be limited to maintaining the Parking Attendant (on a reduced basis and not at all during any proposed CCTV test).
  - The *residents will also be reminded to*:
    - Call the police immediately when a crime is being committed or to report any suspicious activity (and be sure to report any incident that has occurred to the HLE Manager.)
    - Stay in touch with your Neighbourhood Watch Captain and notify him or her of anything unusual
    - Alert the HLE Security WhatsApp group of real-time events
    - Be aware and stay smart by protecting your own property
- Ban door-to-door salesmen
  - Apart from the impracticality, *this is not deemed a fair action for those residents who may actively benefit from local sales personnel*. The HLE Committee proposes vigilance, or if there is no desire to engage in these services, not to answer the door or post a “No Soliciting” sign (or simply say no thank you.)
- Install hand rails of both sides of steps / oil side gates
  - These *proposals will be reviewed with the HLE Manager* to determine the feasibility and cost of installing additional railings (perhaps in key intersection locations only to begin.) Oiling the gates should not be a problem.

Other comments included “Torn between more intensive security and keeping an open feel,” “Keep access to residents only...but not sure how,” “Welcome the gentle nature of the Parking Attendant – leave dogs and vans to the suburbs.”

The responses have provided much to consider and we will. The Committee will also continue to work closely with the Neighbourhood Watch, the Safer Neighbourhood Panel and the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) and Dedicated Ward Officers (DWO). There will be continued periodic meetings with the HLE Security Liaison Group, composed of plot owners and residents of the flats and a closer coordination with the HLE Residents’ Group (Tenants and Leaseholders of the flats.) Above all, any action planned to be tested or implemented will be made available to the residents via the HLE Newsletter or in the semi-annual meetings.

#### Q5: ANY OTHER TOPICS

- Why has the HLE Committee banned 'Blue (disabled) Badges' ?
  - The HLE *Committee has not banned Blue badges*. However, they do not qualify for any special parking privileges on the estate.
  - *Non-residents with a Blue Badge are eligible to park on the estate as a visitor (with appropriate visitor's note) but are not entitled to park in a disabled bay (which is reserved for qualified residents only with a special HLE Disable Bay permit.)*
  - *Disabled residents are eligible for a special HLE Disabled Bay parking permit* by completing the necessary forms and meeting the required qualifications. This enables them to park in any disabled bay so designated on the estate. (Note: Disabled bays are not exclusive to only one individual.)
  
- There is far more need for consistency when residents make changes to their properties: renovations, garden designs, windows, etc.
  - As the Holly Lodge Estate lies within a conservation area, *residents must seek and receive planning permission from Camden before work can be undertaken*. All such projects are reviewed by the HLE[.
  - The HLE Committee does remind residents periodically of the need for these steps to be taken and encourages the resident to work closely with both parties.
  - Should the estate personnel notice new work, it is noted and if no planning permission is available, the resident will be advised to take the required steps before proceeding.
  
- Something should be done to restrict Estate Agent's boards
  - *These are the HLE guidelines*: Regulations require that [For Sale or For Let] signs do not exceed 0.5 sq. meters in size and must not protrude onto the footpath. One board per property is permitted and must be removed no later than fourteen (14) days after completion of the sale.
  
- The HLE Committee should look into establishing a recycling scheme (and do more composting)
  - These are both good suggestions. *The HLE Manager is current exploring the options to do more composting* of organic material on the estate. *We will also undertake an exploration of establishing a recycling scheme* and report the findings to the residents.
  
- The conduct of some residents at the ploholders' meeting has become aggressive and rude
  - *The HLE Committee, as part of the recently completed Governance review, has enacted a 'Code of Conduct'*. Residents will be kindly reminded and trusted to adhere to it at all future meetings.
  
- "Car Free" days
  - This means no cars / vehicle traffic allowed on a specific section of road for a designated period of time. This action has been done in the past for street / block parties. It would enable the street to be used as a play area, for games, skating, etc. This requires the agreement and cooperation of all residents along that portion of the avenue.
  - *The Committee will explore the interest in this action among the residents* to see if it can be implemented.
  
- A facility to have hire / rental cars available on the estate; Hold the summer party every other year; Bicycle storage facilities around the estate; Repair gates and railings; Conduct a similar survey as this in the future; Improve mirrors for drivers at the bottom of Hillway...*these and many other 'individual' suggestions will also be examined by the HLE Committee* and results will be shared with the residents in future Newsletters.

*Finally, thanks to each and everyone who participated in the survey...*

*The HLE Committee*