



The Committee of Management of
Hanover Crescent Enclosure

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Management of Hanover Crescent Enclosure

Thursday 21 May 2015

Opening

The Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Management of Hanover Crescent Enclosure was called to order at 19:40hrs on 21 May 2015 at the Velo Café, The Level, Brighton. In the absence of the Mayor, Neil Smith as Chair began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and informed that the Secretary, Neil Purssey, had resigned earlier in the year and Peter Clarke had taken on the position temporarily. Sue Blunt would be taking the Minutes.

Present

There were 33 attendees and the names are listed at Annex A. Apologies were received from The Mayor of Brighton and Hove, Martha Turland (No3), Cyril Bourke (No22) and Rona Waldon-Saunders (South Lodge).

Nominations for Membership of the Committee

All the members of the outgoing Committee nominated themselves for re-election with, in addition, John Hinchliffe; in the event that no other names were put forward and no objections within the expiry of the 15 minutes allowed, all those nominated would be elected to the Committee without the necessity for a vote from the floor.

Approval of the Minutes of the last AGM

The Chairman explained that the Minutes of the last meeting had been revised as there had been a dispute regarding a decision made at the previous AGM. The Chairman apologised to Natasha Purcell, who had taken the minutes, but unfortunately as there had been a delay of three months in circulating the draft minutes, and there appeared to be a misunderstanding about the decision regarding approval to proceed with the retaining wall at the South end. However the Committee were in agreement that approval to proceed with the building of the wall was given at the AGM. The revised Minutes were circulated and Natasha Purcell requested her name to be removed from these Minutes.

An open discussion followed. Questions were raised regarding how a decision is scored and how disputes arising from the minutes are dealt with.

To avoid any future uncertainty the Chairman clarified the draft Minutes will be circulated within one month of the meeting to all attendees to ensure that no action is taken before the Minutes are agreed. The revised minutes of the AGM 1 May 2014 were put to a vote and agreed by a majority.

Secretary's Report

John Hird presented a synopsis of the Secretary's Report which was produced by Neil Purssey and detailed the Committee's activities for the past year. The full report is attached at Annex B.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer explained that the largest percentage of the funding comes from the Garden Rate levied through the Council. The increase last year was 3.2% to £7,400 and this year by 2.26% - an addition of £200 based on the retail price index at September 14. The Bank Account has a balance of approximately £8000.

The accrued committed expenses include: on-going garden maintenance, the repair of the sinkhole in the road £999, up to £4000 for the South end wall and £700 for the Planning Application for the gates.

In real terms there is about £3,500 free cash in the Bank but £1000 has to be kept in reserve to cover the excess requirement for insurance. It is likely that future expenses of garden maintenance and tree cutting, repairs to kerb stones, road and any anti-social behaviour deterrents will be more expensive and there will be a need to increase the Garden rate funds.

Previously approaches to the Council to raise the rate have failed; alternative ways of raising funds based on parking permits and a Council Tax type banding had also been investigated but the £50 per front door 'levy' seemed to be the most appropriate solution. There followed an open discussion regarding the word 'levy' with most attendees finding it inappropriate, as there was no legal obligation to pay. However given that this was a voluntary contribution it was agreed that with immediate effect the word 'contribution' would be used instead of levy and with a suggested amount that would be agreed at each AGM.

There was also a discussion on how the levy/contribution was calculated per original front door with the Lodges at 50%. Over the years residents had investigated other schemes. A vote was taken on whether to investigate changing the system and the majority voted to keep it as is.

Clarification from the floor was sought regarding who was permitted to vote. The Chairman explained that the 1981 Act gives in detail the rights for voting for the committee and means that an owner-occupier had two votes and an occupier (i.e. a council-tax payer) one vote each. No proxy votes are allowed.

As far as voting on other issues is concerned then the same rules would apply with the exception that owner-occupiers had a maximum of two votes irrespective of the number of properties owned.

Expenditure for proposals in excess of £1000 will need to be included in the Agenda and voted on at the AGM. If there is an urgent requirement/decision an Extraordinary Meeting will be arranged.

Election of the Committee

No nominations for the committee or any objections were received and the Committee was duly re-elected for the next 12 months. A vote of thanks to the Committee was received from Ms Christine De Cruz and recorded.

GENERAL MEETING

General Business

Resident's events

Sian Thomas confirmed that the Crescent Bonfire and Christmas activities cost about £200 each. There was a short discussion whether to hold a summer event. One suggestion was to incorporate the wider Hanover Zocalo event.

Disappointment was expressed that the only two people turned up to the 'Clean-up'. John Hinchcliffe suggested annotating the date of the event in the Crescent website for all to view.

Garden

John Hird advised that there was a need for more tree-cutting and welcomed any suggestions for planting. Sue Gollifer explained that we had an ongoing contract to care for the trees, some of which have TPO's (tree protection orders) so need to be checked regularly, and previous cutting was expensive. John Hird reminded everyone that there was a composting facility at both ends of the garden but that for health reasons it was restricted to garden-refuse. Residents are welcome to take the finished compost.

It was agreed that the results of the poll undertaken last year would be made available.

Pavement repairs

It was agreed that repairs to the kerbstones and pavement at the north end (Quotation £1500) should go ahead but that the work should be overseen to ensure it is carried out satisfactorily. The Treasurer also mentioned that the surface of the road is also deteriorating and will need to be assessed in the near future.

Parking

After a short delay a new contract with Capital 2 Coast parking has been signed. This, and a change in legislation, has necessitated the erection of new signage, which has now taken place. Following the complaint at last years' AGM about the untaxed and un-roadworthy yellow Volkswagen parked in one of the Crescent parking bays for some considerable time, the Secretary approached the County Court at Lewes to determine the right to have it removed. The Court has requested further information. The owner of vehicle, who attended the meeting, said she would tax it immediately and use the vehicle as soon as she is able to do so. She apologised for not understanding the rules.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

Keith Cowell introduced the position paper on ASB. There was a discussion on whether levels of ASB have increased following the re-development of the Level and whether anything could be done about it at all. Because concerns from residents the Committee had put together the position-paper to debate the issue and propose recommendations for approval; some of which are financial and some aesthetic but it is suggested that the whole package is necessary. In summary the recommendations are:

Additional signage	£500
Pedestrian gates	£7500 (a voluntary contribution would be required)
Horticulture	small cost
Dummy cameras	£500

There followed much discussion about levels of anti-social behaviour and the effectiveness of the proposed measures. The Chairman called for a vote the results were as follows:

Signage - Agreed

Pedestrian gates – Not Agreed

Horticulture- Agreed

Dummy cameras – Not Agreed but suggestion to include a statement that the area has CCTV on the new signs may have some effect.

A suggestion was made from the floor that CCTV cameras, live or dummy, would likely be vandalised and that signs for CCTV might be just as effective. Another suggestion, for uplighters around the garden was discussed along with how the power might be supplied by a number of means.

The other proposals in the position paper were not approved.

There being no further business the Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 21.55.

Annex A - Attendees

House /Flat No	Name	House/Flat No	Name
1	Sian Thomas ©	13	Paul Farmer ©
1	Tim Howarth	13	Christine D'Cruz
2	Phil Ryan	14	Natasha Purcell
2	Kim Ryan	14 4	Tim Harbridge
3	Keith Cowell ©	16	Carol Ellis
4	Eva Hewitt	18	John Hinchcliffe
5	Peter Clarke ©	18	Becky Simpson
5	Sue Blunt	19c	Josh Painter
6	Luke Harvey	20	Neil Smith ©
6	Sue Gollifer ©	21	Colin Elliott
7	Michelle Cobbin	21	Yvonne Elliott
7	Richard Gilpin	22	Marian Burke
8/9 1	Sue Heard	23/24 2	Sarah Pond
8/9 4	Sarah Turner	24 9	Betsey Beaumont
8/9 4	Simon Hopkins	North Lodge	Chris Carter-Pegg
10	Frances Curley	?	Mark Hamilton
11	John Hird ©	©	(outgoing Committee)

Annex B - Report from the Secretary 2014-15

The main activities of the Committee for the year 2014/15 are set out below but it should be noted that the Secretary resigned on the 25th February 2015 and did not attend the meeting in January 2015 and so this report pertains only to meetings up to that date.

An agenda is provided for Committee meetings with the headings as below, a synopsis of discussions and decisions is provided for the period under each heading.

Anti-social Behaviour

Since the improvements at The Level anti-social behaviour from outsiders had become an issue and it was decided to compile a 'position paper' for the next AGM explaining what the Committee proposed taking fully into account proposals received from the Council.

Newsletter

A newsletter was compiled and distributed and it was agreed to attempt to issue more frequently.

Garden status

The efficacy of Richard Oakley the gardener was considered and it became clear that he provides good value and should therefore be retained.

Wall, Road & Pavement

It was decided following the great improvement provided by the North retaining wall to go-ahead with a similar one to the South.

Parking

The contract with the 'Parking Management company' had lapsed due to change of ownership, it has now been renewed, One issue was the Yellow VW. At the AGM the Committee were asked as a priority to deal with this illegal parking.

Gates Update

The conservation officer for B&H council agreed in principle with the re-instatement of gates and provision of railings to the top of the main boundary wall. An outside agent was commissioned to provide the necessary drawings for the planning process.

Committee matters

This is a heading that covers individuals duties et al and in as much as I had said that when I moved overseas on the 5th January, I would return for all meetings and the AGM (January excepted) once away from the Crescent I realised that there are many on the Committee and other residents fully capable of getting on with the tasks and so my absence made little difference.

A.O.B. (Any Other Business)

The November 5th bonfire and the Christmas tree tend to fall under this and thanks must go to John Hinchcliffe for clearing the lawn for the bonfire again and Paul Farmer for organising the Christmas tree and lights.

Summation

A year much like many others since the Committee was first formed by an Act of parliament over one hundred years ago but this year marred by one 'single issue' individual who really doesn't seem to understand that the Committee is simply made up by interested and concerned individuals just like them.

Neil Purssey as summarised and read by John Hird