



The Committee of Management of
Hanover Crescent Enclosure

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

Thursday 19th May 2016

Opening

The Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Management of Hanover Crescent Enclosure was called to order at 19:35h on 19th May 2016 at the Mojo's Café, 148 Lewes Road, Brighton. In the absence of the Mayor, Neil Smith as Chair, began by welcoming everyone to the meeting. The date for the 2017 AGM was set for 19.30, Thursday May 18th 2017 venue to be decided.

Present

There were 23 attendees and the names are listed at Annex A. Apologies were received from The Mayor of Brighton and Hove, Andrea Kinear (South Lodge), Phil and Kim Ryan (No 2), Tim Harbridge and Natasha Purcell (Flat 4 No 14) and Chris Carter-Pegg (North Lodge)

Nominations for Membership of the Committee

All the members of the outgoing Committee nominated themselves for re-election. 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 minutes of the last AGM were approved.

Secretary's Report and Review of the last year.

The Chair presented a synopsis of the Secretary's Report and detailed the Committee's activities for the past year. The full report is attached at Annex B. The Chairman thanked those residents who helped organise the fireworks and the Christmas tree. The Crescent clean up in 2015 was very poorly attended and the date of this years was set for June 5th along with other activities.

Treasurer's Report

The Chair, in the Treasurer's absence, presented a synopsis of the accounts (Appendix C). It was highlighted that there had been a significant decrease in the cash-reserves and the proposed measures to address this would be discussed in the General Meeting.

Election of the Committee

After the elapse of 15 minutes no nominations for the committee or any objections were received and the Committee was duly re-elected for the next 12 months and the General Meeting was opened,

GENERAL MEETING

General Business

Resident's events

Sian Thomas confirmed that the Crescent Bonfire Night and Christmas Tree would continue with the Bonfire Night fixed for November 5th 2016. The Crescent clean up with a garden party to follow has been set for June 5th.

Garden

John Hird reported that both retaining walls have been completed and temporary wire fences with planting behind them have been installed at the North and South ends above the walls. This seems to have been successful in preventing people using these areas for toileting. There is a family of foxes digging up the flowers and measures to prevent this were discussed. The hut at the south end has been demolished. Generally, Richard the gardener is continuing to increase the area for planting. There will be more planting of 'anti-social' plants on the Lewes Rd boundary. There was a proposal for a hard-standing for barbeques.

Trees

John Hinchliffe talked about the trees in garden. Although we have a contract with a tree surgery company with a budget of £600 p.a. for general annual maintenance it was felt we needed a long-term 5-year plan and budget to deal with the bigger issues of tree maintenance. Two companies were asked to quote and the existing contractor came as the lower of the two. The proposal is to budget for up to an additional £1,000 p.a. on top of the existing £600– i.e. about £1,500 p.a. ring-fenced to allow for this maintenance to take place as and when is needed. For example, one of the oaks at the South-end would be removed and some of the trees overhanging the lawn removed. Also the employment of an arboricultural consultant was discussed to help formulate a condition survey and tree map for £400.

Anti-social Behaviour

In addition to drug taking there are frequent complaints of discarded hypodermic needles in the garden and the standing instructions are to contact City Clean who will come and deal with them. Recently, John Hird and Neil Smith met with Sue Bowes the BHCC representative for liaising with residents about substance abuse:

There is no money from the council. Incidence of drug-abuse is increasing is probably related to an increase in homelessness. Also the location of the needle exchange close to us may be a factor. Community policing officers are now not walking through the gardens because of cut-backs. She also proposed using a uniformed security guard to disrupt the pattern of drug-taking. She said we may be able to get signage from the council and suggested writing to our local councillors.

The Chair pointed out we have done some of the measures that have been proposed in the past, such as the fencing above the walls, which has diverted to problem elsewhere in the gardens. The general wish is not to have a gated community.

Rea Painter talked at some length about the distress that the drug taking hand needle littering had caused her and her family and gave a perspective as a probation professional. (something about the number of needles collected that I didn't catch) There was some discussion on the impact of the location of the needle exchanges. It was acknowledged that this is a very difficult issue to deal with and the chair re-iterated that it was hopes that the measures that have both been done and are planned, such as low gates on the back-path, lighting etc. would all help. Nevertheless, it was agreed that having a private security guard patrol during peak times might be a measure worth trying. Also that incidents of ASB in the Crescent should continue to be reported to the 101 line.

Short break for refreshments.

Gates

As agreed at the 2014 AGM planning permission for pedestrian and vehicular gates and railings on the wall was submitted in November 2015 was rejected by BHCC in January 2016. The grounds for rejection were that traffic would back up on Lewes Rd and that the design was not in keeping with other gates in the area, such as Park Crescent. The committee's recommendation is that plans are re-submitted for pedestrian gates only after discussion with the Heritage officer on an appropriate design. There was some discussion on the value of gates in preventing trespass and it was felt that it was one of the many measures that might have an impact. It was re-iterated that this was just planning permission and that further consultation would take place again before any gates are installed.

Parking

Peter Clarke reported on behalf of Sue Gollifer that the contract with Capital to Coast continued for parking enforcement on the same terms as before. But the possible introduction of a controlled parking zone in the Hanover/Elm Grove area might have an impact on un-authorized parking in the Crescent and lead to us having to review the arrangements. The committee had also decided to reprint and re-issue both residents and visitors parking permits for a number of reasons. Records of cars and permits had become out-of-date and it was believed that a number of visitors permits had been reported lost but were still in use. Also, there have some complaints that visitor's permits are being used for long-term parking both by residents and non-residents. In the case of the abuse of visitors permits then the permit would be withdrawn. There was considerable discussion on the rules and the allocation and use of permits under the existing system.

Recommendations for road contribution and Crescent contribution

The proposal put before the meeting was, in order to build up contingency funds for road repairs and for general maintenance as discussed earlier in the meeting, to implement a ring-fenced 'road'

contribution of £50 per vehicle per year and to increase the voluntary Crescent Contribution from £50 to £60 per year.

Mr Cyril Bourke (No 22) immediately made a point-of-order to ask for the removal of the item concerning the road contribution from the agenda. He read from the minutes of the 2009 meeting and pointed out that at that time there was a vote not to charge for permits and that the parking regulations themselves stated that any revisions of them must be notified in writing in advance of the AGM and it was “not forthright or transparent” of the committee to attempt to introduce this change. There was considerable debate over this issue including complaints that some flats could not obtain a permit but could not qualify for a council permit in the area.

The chair suggested the debate returned to the principle that it was necessary to raise more funds for future work and if this was agreed then what is the acceptable way to do this? The chair pointed out that he had a quote for the repair of the road of over £20,000 and at some point every house would have to pay over a £1,000 each, and the road was deteriorating. Cash needed to be raised more quickly. Martha Turland pointed out that it would be fairer to raise money for major investments over a period of time – in the 15 years she had been living in the Crescent she had made no contribution to the road. The suggestion was made that the voluntary Crescent levy (VCC) was a mechanism for doing this but Mr Bourke argued that even so then there should have been a consultation over this. John Hinchcliffe argued that the AGM was that consultation and there was a debate over this, Becky Simpson pointing out that we should not be bound by decisions made over 7 years ago by people who may have left. Caroline Ellis stressed that there were procedural issues and that there should be proper consultation over the changes like this involving more residents. Mr Bourke pointed out that the VCC replaced the option for charging for parking permits and that if the parking regulations were to be reviewed then it should be done so at the next AGM after due consultation.

The Chair put it to the meeting that there was a need to raise more money in advance for repairs on the road and if this could only be done by raising the VCC then his proposal was that this be raised to £100 per front door and that any changes to the method of collecting money be discussed at the next AGM with a period of prior consultation. There was then a debate about who used the road and who didn't and the perceived fairness of a per household charge.

The Chair then said that the committee would review the parking regulations and its management and make proposals for any changes for allocating permits within the next few months. Again there would be a period of consultation with all residents prior to any changes being made.

The chair made a formal proposal that the VCC be increased to £100 and asked for a vote on this; the proposal was passed unanimously.

Any Other Business

Peter Clarke mentioned that the Crescent web-site www.hanovercrescent.org was undergoing revision and John Hinchcliffe expanded on the objectives of this. Also, since the beginning of the year the aim had also been to distribute information as much as possible by email and this would continue. There was discussion of the fact that some residents were exercising their dogs on the lawn, that cars were speeding down the Crescent and driving on the pavement, the organisation of the parking bays and the use of parking by holiday-lets.

The Chair thanked those residents attending and the committee for their past and future efforts and closed the meeting at 21.40.

Attendees (Committee in **bold**)

1	Sian Thomas
3	Martha Turland
3	Keith Cowell
5	Peter Clarke
5	Sue Blunt
8/9 Flat 4	Sarah Turner
11	John Hird
14 (Base F)	Donna Paraskeva
16	Caroline Ellis
16	Paul Hill
18	Becky Simpson
18	John Hinchliffe
19 Flat C	Rea Painter
20	Pat Smith
20	Neil Smith
22	Cyril Bourke
22	Marian Bourke
23/24 Flat 4	Joe Arch
23/4 Flat 10	Joanna Davies
23/4 Flat 10	Julie Jepson
N Lodge	Emma Southerby