



The Committee of Management of
Hanover Crescent Enclosure

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

Thursday 18th May 2017

Opening

The Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Management of Hanover Crescent Enclosure was called to order at 19:35h on 18th May 2017 at the Mojo's Café, 148 Lewes Road, Brighton. In the absence of the Mayor, Neil Smith began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and introduced the chairman of the meeting, Warren Mead.

Present

There were 27 attendees and the names are listed at Annexe A. Apologies were received from The Mayor of Brighton and Hove, Phil and Kim Ryan (No 2), Joanna Davies and Julie Jepson (No23/24 Flat 10)

Nominations for Membership of the Committee

Mr Keith Cowell did not offer himself for re-election and all the remaining members of the outgoing Committee nominated themselves for re-election.

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 outgoing Secretary, Peter Clarke, presented his report and detailed the Committee's activities for the past year. The full report is attached at Annexe B. He thanked those residents who helped organise the Crescent clean-up, the party that followed, the annual bonfire and fireworks, and the Christmas tree.

Treasurer's Report

The outgoing Treasurer, Paul Farmer, presented the accounts (Appendix C). He said that we ended the year with a small increase in the balance of funds. He reported that we have adopted a policy of keeping 6 months' expenditure in hand, which in answer to a question from the floor, is £5-6,000, plus £1,000 representing the excess on our insurance policy. There was a question regarding the cost of the new parking permits charged by OneParking. Paul said this was covered, with a small surplus. The plastic Visitor's permits, which were an expensive item at about £7.50 each was a one-off cost since they would not need replacing for many years whilst the paper Resident's permits (£4.00 each and charged at £5.00) would be replaced annually.

Election of the Committee

Fifteen (15) minutes having elapsed with no further nominations for the committee or any objections having been received, those members of the outstanding Committee standing for re-election were duly re-elected for the next 12 months. Neil Smith thanked Keith Cowell for his contribution over the last four years.

GENERAL MEETING

General Business

Residents' events

Sian Thomas reported that last year's picnic was well received and will be repeated this year, after the annual 'clean-up', with people bringing their own food etc. This will be on June 4th. If anyone has any ideas for events they should contact her.

Garden

John Hird reported that because of the condition of the Lewes Rd boundary wall the compost heaps built against the wall have been relocated and any bushes that might be having a deleterious effect removed. To help prevent people climbing into the garden from the road there is an ongoing program of planting 'anti-social' bushes. The construction of temporary fences above the low walls at the North and South ends has proved to be effective at reducing anti-social behaviour and will be retained while the plants mature.

Trees

John Hinchliffe reminded us that a tree survey has now taken place to identify and label all the specimens and to develop a plan for dealing with care and maintenance. The budget of up to £1,500 p.a. for maintenance came in at £1,000 for the year. We have cleared away trees from the wall as much as possible and reduced the holm oaks at the South end to try to improve the parking there. There has been some thinning out of the trees above the flower bed. In reply to a question from the floor about the effects of the trees on the wall he said that there was often a limit to what we could do because almost all of the trees were subject to Tree Protection Orders.

Antisocial Behaviour

One of the recommendations made by the council advisor on ASB was that we try a security guard and Neil Smith reported that we had engaged one to patrol the gardens in each morning for a five week period. Nothing was found. We have also put up low gates with signs at the entrances to the back path and this might be having a minor effect. There seem to be fewer needles, etc. which may be because the local needle exchange has moved. We will continue to monitor the situation. Sue Gollifer mentioned that we would continue to try to ensure that events on the level were properly organised with adequate toilets and marshals. Eva Hewitt asked for more details about the security patrol; three companies were contacted and only one was prepared to carry out the work.

Parking

Neil Smith explained that residents permits now have the registration number printed on them and will be renewed this June. Visitors permits have been changed as well but this is a one off. The parking regulations have been changed mainly to make them clearer with the major difference that we will now charge £10.00 a day for skips (the council charge £40.00 a day.)

A question from the floor raised the issue of the contractor working on No 12, Woodmans, parking too many vehicles. Sue Gollifer replied that this was in the process of being dealt with and One Parking were issuing parking tickets and that the committee were alert to the problem and policing it. The owner of No.12 stressed that he would take it up them as well.

(Short break for refreshments.)

Infrastructure issues

The Wall: Neil started with some background to the condition of the boundary wall whereby a contractor indicated that a lot of the wall needed substantial repairs. So we had engaged a proper survey with a detailed report (available on the web-site) which indicated that there was a lot of work to be done . Using this report we asked for 5 quotes from reputable firms – two did not quote, one quote was very high and two at around £60,000, for all the work. The Road: Neil said that in addition last year we had obtained quotes for resurfacing the road of c £20,000 or, alternatively, patching it for £ 4,000.

So, adding these together we are looking at around £100,000 on major repairs and the committee started to look at ways of funding this and spread the work out. Grants from the likes of the Heritage Commission and the Lottery are difficult to get and have restrictions. We looked at what money we could get from the council and last year we discussed raising money from parking which was discussed and rejected. So the conclusion was that we needed to set up an infrastructure fund, separate from the ongoing expenses, that would be used for these major works. Rather than asking for a large amount of money upfront we have spread the work out over a number of years and asked for an annual infrastructure levy of £600 per house per year for a period of 8 years and the committee's recommendation is that we start to go ahead with this work. The first step would be to apply for planning permission to repair the wall – we have been informed by the council that we would need full planning permission including technical drawings. This will probably take about a year so the work on the wall, the construction work itself would not start for a year. Then by collecting the infrastructure

levy we should have sufficient funds to begin the first phase of the repair of the wall, leaving any major work on the road to one side for the time being – maybe just essential patching.

The proposal is for a levy of £600 per house but stressed that this is to be charged to owners only.

In answer to a question from the floor Neil said that some parts of the wall were in worse condition than others and that the plan was to prioritise the repairs, starting with the most essential work. We could obviously do the work more quickly if we increase the amount of money that we could raise. The committee felt that the proposal was a compromise but a reasonable one.

In answer to a question about liability Neil said that obviously we could have a problem because now that we know that the wall is in poor condition then if we do not do something then we could be liable for any damages incurred. Doing nothing is not a viable option. Of course, if the wall deteriorates more quickly then we may have to ask to restructure the levy payments but at the moment, this is the plan.

Martha Turland asked about the practical problem of collecting money from absent owners; Neil replied that we have the contact details now of all owners and property managers in the case of the flats. Everybody's deeds mentions that the committee can collect money provided that it is an equal amount per house; if we do have difficulty in collecting from somebody then we may have to look at other measures even if this means taking them to court as last resort although that is not our intention.

Becky Simpson asked whether there could be a condition such that if insufficient number of people paid to make the repairs viable then the money would be refunded to those that had paid. The Committee felt confident that a majority will pay but that action may have to be taken against non-payers.

Eva Hewitt asked whether it was possible to transfer the responsibility of collecting the money to the Council. The answer was that this has been investigated and that without a change in the Act of Parliament under which the Enclosure is administered this would not be possible.

Martha Turland asked whether it would be possible to get some sort of written commitment from everybody that they would pay. Keith Cowell said that it is in everybody's deeds anyway. Paul Farmer mentioned that the Enclosure is actually owned by the Council and we could take up any none payment with the them. The responsibility for the repair of wall and the road is firmly with the owners of the houses. There was a question from Natasha Purcell regarding the accuracy of the quotations and Neil replied that we had used a reputable surveyor to obtain quotations and that as far as possible the prices we have been given an accurate reflection of the work required, which is quite substantial in parts.

Cyril Bourke raised the issue that the deeds date back 200 years and given that some of the properties were now divided into flats it was not fair to make a charge on a per house basis and there was some debate on this issue.

The chairman then moved to vote on the following issues:

1. That the general Crescent contribution of £100 is continued for 2017/18. The motion was passed.

2. The creation of an annual infrastructure levy of £600 per house. The motion was passed with no votes against. The two lodges are to pay half of this amount. (There was a later clarification and vote that this should be an ongoing levy and will require a vote to change it. This was approved.)
3. After a brief discussion on whether there should be further investigation on the feasibility of charging on a per rated property basis there was only one vote in support of this.
4. That that the expenditure of £4000 for patching the road surface is approved. The motion was passed.
5. That the cost of the planning application for the wall repairs , £2000 is approved. The motion was passed with no votes against.

Any Other Business

There was a request that the possibility of installing high speed optical fibre broadband into the Crescent be investigated. John Hird mentioned that it had been discussed with Virgin and their response was that it was too costly unless everybody agreed and also there was the issue of the Listed Status of the Crescent. Nevertheless, it was agreed that when the issue of resurfacing the road comes up in the future then the possibility of installing cable would be investigated again.

Eva Hewitt raised the issue of the trees in Southover Place. It was felt that this was an issue for the householders whose property backs onto this.

There was also discussion about the level of pollution on Lewes Road and whether something could be done about this with the council.

The Chairman thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

Annexe A - Attendees

<i>Residence</i>	<i>Attendee</i>
1	Sian Thomas*
1	Tim Howarth
3	Martha Turland
3	Keith Cowell
4	Eva Hewitt
5	Peter Clarke*
5	Susan Blunt
6	Sue Gollifer*
8/9 Basement	Gideon Bainton
8/9 Flat 4	Sarah Turner
8/9 Flat 4	Simon Hopkins
10A	Frances Curley
11	John Hird*
12	Christopher Walter
12	Jas Walter
13	Paul Farmer*
14 Flat 4	Tim Harbridge
14 Flat 4	Natasha Purcell
16	Caroline Ellis
16	Paul Hill
18	Becky Simpson
18	John Hinchliffe*
20	Neil Smith*
21	Colin Elliot
22	Cyril Bourke
23/24 Flat 2	Sarah Pond
23/24 Flat 5	Rasanthi Pathirani
*Indicates committee member	

Annexe B – Secretary’s report

The secretary reported that the committee has met on seven occasions in various of the committee member’s houses. He then went on to comment on some of the goals that the committee set itself last year.

In terms of communications we now have an email list of most residents and continue to send out irregular newsletters and notifications. More importantly we now have a very attractive new web site, constructed by Paul Farmer.

We have continued to maintain the gardens and trees, with a planting programme along the boundary wall to help counter antisocial behaviour and an ongoing tree maintenance plan which has included a detailed tree survey.

We have updated the parking regulations to make them clearer and, hopefully, fairer for all residents. New, annual, residents permits have been introduced along with new visitors permits. This has proved effective in weeding out some unauthorised use of these permits.

We have spent a considerable amount of time working on obtaining estimates for repair of the boundary wall and the resurfacing of the road which we will discuss later in the main meeting.

As discussed at the last AGM we engaged a security company to carry out patrols in the Crescent to try to identify the level of antisocial behaviour and this has been reported on already.

In terms of events, the annual clean-up and picnic took place on June 5th last year and we would like to thank John Hird and Sian Thomas respectively for organising these events. Special thanks to the Manchester based Marakatu band Juba do Leao under the leadership of Holly Prest for providing the musical entertainment.

Last year’s Guy Fawkes Night did actually take place on November 5th and thanks to John Hinchliffe for preparing the bonfire, Kim and Phil Ryan for organising the refreshments, Richard Watkinson setting off the fireworks and a special thanks to Tim Harbridge for a splendid guy.

Annexe C



The Committee of Management of Hanover Crescent Enclosure

Revenue and Expenditure Account for Year to 30 April 2017

		2015-16	2016-17	
INCOME	Garden Rate (via BHCC)	7,562.00	7,631.20	
	Crescent Contribution	1,150.01	2,499.99	
	Other Income	-	950.00	Resident & Visitor Parking Permits
	INCOME Total	8,712.01	11,081.19	
EXPENDITURE	Garden Maintenance	4,630.00	4,270.00	
	Tree Maintenance	588.00	1,503.00	
	Pillars & Walls Maintenance	3,996.00	1,930.00	
	Road & Pavement Maintenance	1,896.00		
	Gates, Railings & Fence Posts	360.00	285.00	
	Signage & Road Marking	168.00		
	Parking Management	-	610.00	Parking Permit Production
	Antisocial Behaviour	-	486.00	Security Patrol Trial
	Community Event Materials	255.97	512.47	Christmas & Bonfire Night
	Website	-	446.17	Software & Hosting
	Rent	50.00		AGM Venue
	Professional Fees	201.00	150.00	Planning Documents for Pedestrian Gates
	Insurance	540.60	563.93	
	Stationery	-	47.97	
Bad Debts Written Off	50.01	(16.67)	Reversal of Bad Debt	
EXPENDITURE Total	12,735.58	10,787.87		
Excess of income over expenditure	(4,023.57)	293.32		

Notes for 2016/17

Year End Cash Position

Opening Balance	9,229.00	5,047.10	at 01-May
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	(4,023.57)	293.32	
Crescent Invoices Outstanding	216.67	(961.80)	Brighton & Hove Council; 3 unpaid or part paid invoices.
Crescent Bills Outstanding	(375.00)	1,000.00	Surveyors Report for Wall Repairs
Closing Balance	5,047.10	5,378.62	at 30-Apr

These accounts have been prepared from the treasurer's receipts and vouchers and give a true and fair view of the cash position at 30-Apr-2017.