



The Committee of Management of
Hanover Crescent Enclosure

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

Thursday 23rd May 2019

Opening

The Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Management of Hanover Crescent Enclosure was called to order at 19:40. Neil Smith began by welcoming everyone to the meeting and introduced the chair of the meeting, Leanne Allan and the Deputy Mayor Alan Robins. The Deputy Mayor made a few remarks, this being his first engagement in his new role.

Present

There were 17 attendees at the start of the meeting. Apologies were received from 7 residents

Nominations for Membership of the Committee

All members of the outgoing Committee volunteered to be re-elected.

Approval of the Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the 2018 AGM were approved.

Secretary's Report and Review of the last year.

John Hinchliffe presented the report, part of the published AGM pack, and summarised the Committee's activities for the past year.

Treasurer's Report

Paul Farmer presented the accounts, published as part of the AGM pack. He said that we ended the year with little change in the balance of funds. All Crescent Contributions and Infrastructure Levy payments for the year ending are now settled. The insurance claim for the damage to the wall had allowed the Phase 2 repairs to go ahead and these are just completed. (Note: There are still some payments to be made to complete Phase 2 costs). The Committee will spend an additional £480 on extra insurance to indemnify committee members against legal disputes. Spending on garden and tree maintenance is lower than last year.

Election of the Committee

Fifteen minutes having elapsed and no further nominations for the committee having been made or any objections having been received, the outgoing members were re-elected for the next 12 months. There were no questions from the floor.

GENERAL MEETING

General Business

1. Change of Basis for Raising the Crescent levy.

Neil Smith introduced the proposal included in the AGM document pack and was made following a request to review the mechanism at the previous AGM. The committee had considered several options and selected one based on a proportion of Council Tax bands. A draft proposal had been circulated earlier in the year. The total amount to be raised by the new combined levy is similar to previous years and the Crescent Levy would be continue to be invoiced to owners/freeholders and not tenants.

During discussion among the points made were that it remains necessary for the Committee to raise the amount requested in the proposal but that to use Council Tax bands was unfair on residents in houses in multiple occupancy and single household properties were benefitting, that Council Tax bands were themselves out of date, that by not charging for parking an easy to raise income stream was being missed, and that a mix of funding sources may be better.

It was also pointed out that the Levy may or may not be passed on by owners to tenants, that all residents had had the opportunity to give feedback, that proposals to use parking charges had been rejected at previous AGMs – and was a very contentious issue for a few residents, that since the bulk of the Levy is to fund long-term infrastructure the charge should not be born disproportionately by car owners or tenants, that the proposed mechanism was simple to administer and transparent and in line with the existing Garden Rate raised via council tax and as set out in the East Sussex Act 1981.

It was agreed the legal basis for raising the funds was uncertain and the Committee does not envisage pursuing non-payment in the courts. It was noted that all owners/residents had paid their share in the past year but collection could be flexible and phased if necessary, particularly in case of hardship. (Note: The Committee is proposing a sanction for non-payment through the withdrawal of parking permits – see below).

On a vote the proposal to change the funding mechanism was approved by 12 votes to 4 with the proviso that the Committee should again review the mechanism in the next year with a view to shifting the balance in funding resources to include parking payments.

2. Trees and Garden

It was reported that replanting of the area affected by the fallen elm is continuing, and the area around the stump is being reclaimed as garden. There will need to be some replanting along the wall where repair works meant that vegetation and bushes were removed. The garden is looking very good at the moment. The tree maintenance program continued this year to with work mainly

on the Holm oaks and large elm overhanging the road. The works did not make a huge visual impact.

In discussions there was concern about the continued use of the garden for drug taking and whether the path along the back acted as a magnet for this. A few suggestions were to review again the possible effects of lighting, CCTV cameras, reducing and lowering vegetation to make the area more open and to look again at the need for the path.

There was a discussion on whether the trees on the lawn towards the north end should be allowed to grow or be reduced/removed in order to preserve the open lawn area and open up the garden. Whilst the lawn is considered a very valuable space, there was no clear consensus on this.

There was a request for any residents who wish to restore the garden furniture. There was some support for the idea that we should replace with new furniture permanently fixed in position.

3. Parking

New Resident Permits will be issued next month. The Committee had been monitoring the inappropriate use of Visitor Permits and does not cause problems at the moment but will be kept under review.

The Committee had considered the use of Visitor Permits for short holiday lets, and other business uses, that can mean that the permits are in near permanent use. The position adopted is that unless and until there is a shortage of spaces overall there is no need to make proposals on addressing this. There was a suggestion that the Committee could consider different categories of Visitor Permits.

4. Proposal to make an addition to Parking Regulations to withhold or suspend permits for non-payment of Crescent Levy.

Neil Smith introduced this proposal – which had been postponed at last year’s AGM after some feelings that it had not been properly consulted upon. The withdrawal or suspension of permits is the only practical sanction the Committee can impose when the Levy is not paid and is easily enforceable by the parking management company. In discussion it was said that this sanction is inappropriate because it does not relate non-payment of the Levy and could penalise the wrong individuals. It is hoped that the threat of the sanction would be sufficient.

On a vote, the proposal was accepted by 12 votes to 4.

5. Infrastructure Projects

Possible future projects were discussed. The committee has already made preliminary investigations on feasibility of installing electric car charge points, and this would continue. One resident offered to help with grants that may be available. It was suggested that shared car ownership schemes should be considered. There could also be electricity points for lighting around the garden and for the Christmas tree.

The committee will also be considering and consulting on introduction of high-speed fibre optic Internet along the whole length of the Crescent.

6. Approval of Expenditure

It was agreed that the Committee go ahead with up to £20k for Phase 3 of the wall repairs and that the Committee raise £17,500 from the Crescent Levy.

7. Facebook Page

Sue Gollifer will be introducing a new private Facebook page for informal use by residents. Links will be provided in a newsletter. It was noted that this was for social events and not to be used to communicate with the Committee.

8. Any Other Business.

Committee members were thanked for their work over the year.

There was a discussion as to whether the Committee could do anything about the high traffic pollution levels.

There was a general discussion asking the committee to look at dealing with graffiti on the wall and pillars, the value of CCTV in the Crescent, the regularity of rubbish collections.

Next year's AGM is planned for 21st May 2020.

At approximately 21:30, the Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

JH 27 May 2019