



The Committee of Management of
Hanover Crescent Enclosure

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Management of Hanover Crescent Enclosure DRAFT 4

Thursday 26 May 2022

Opening

The Annual General Meeting of the Committee of Management of Hanover Crescent Enclosure was called to order at 19:40. Leanne Allan, as a nonresident, was the independent Chair and opened the meeting.

Present

There were 26 attendees. Apologies were received from 4 residents. Neil Smith asked for confirmation that all present were owner-occupiers and no one indicated otherwise

Nominations for Membership of the Committee

All members of the outgoing Committee volunteered to be re-elected. Following a request for a further member, Chris Carter-Pegg and one other were nominated.

Approval of the Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the 2020 AGM were approved (The 2021 AGM had been cancelled due to Covid restrictions).

Secretary's Report and Review.

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

Treasurer's Report

Paul Farmer introduced the financial statement, part of the published AGM pack, explaining the year-end financial statement that were in good order with the establishment of a reserve fund.

Election of the Committee

Fifteen minutes having elapsed, the new Committee was appointed. There being one one more nomination than seats, Sian Thomas offered to stand down from the Committee. Sian was thanked for her valuable contributions. The remaining outgoing Committee members, plus the two new nominees were appointed without a vote being necessary. Committee members for 2022/23 are: Paul Farmer, Sue Gollifer, John Hinchliffe , John Hird, Neil Smith, Amanda Papadopoulos, Chris Carter-Pegg and one other.



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GENERAL MEETING

General Business

1. Adoption of new Constitution

Neil Smith introduced the constitution document, explaining the rationale for its introduction. The discussion raised several points, mainly on specific clauses including:

- a. that it was inconsistent to need a two-thirds majority vote to change the document, given that a simple majority is needed to approve it;
- b. that parts of the document contradict parts of the East Sussex Act by giving the Committee powers not defined in the Act (such as raising a Levy and parking control)
- c. that the sanctions for non-payment of the Crescent Levy (withholding of parking permits and of an AGM vote) were 'dystopian'; that such sanctions had been part of the Parking Regulations for some years; that such sanction does not apply to those who do not have a RP; that the allocation of permits is unfair to those in houses with multiple flats; that no account is made for people's ability to pay the Levy, that these are the only sanction the Committee has.
- d. that the document has no standing in law;
- e. that the Constitution was essential in order to clarify the role and responsibilities of the Committee and provide greater transparency.

After the discussions it was agreed:

- that the document be amended to require only a 'simple majority' to make changes to the Constitution;
- that the document should make explicit the current practice - that in collecting the Levy or considering the sanctions for non-payment, account will be taken of any exceptional circumstances affecting the ability to pay the Levy.

Subject to the above changes, the Constitution was approved by a show of hands.

2. Bi-Centennial Garden party 5th June

Becky Simpson set out plans for the afternoon. Several activities are planned, with food and drink. Some money has been allocated by the Committee for basic provisions and residents are asked to bring additional food and drink to share. Several people offered to help set up the event in the morning, and also to help with the Crescent tidy-up on the Saturday.



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3. Garden and Tree Maintenance

The new garden gates seem to be having a positive effect in reducing anti-social behaviour, planting along the associated wire fences continues. The new wild flower beds are in place and some planting is now showing. Residents are encouraged to let the Committee know of suggestions they have for improving the garden.

Tree maintenance work has continued. This year some major work was done, but in previous few years very little work was done. The AGM had previously agreed a budget of up to £1500 a year for tree maintenance. It was proposed to replace this cap with 5 year budget of £5000 to be spent as when required.

This was put to a vote and approved by a show of hands.

4. Parking

There was some discussion of parking issues as a part of the discussion on the Constitution above.

It was reported that some car owning residents in nos. 23/24 are unable to get permits to park on the Crescent even for essential car use, because the allocation in those buildings is already taken. Though potential owners should be aware of restrictions on issuing parking permits, it is still felt that the allocation of permits is possibly uneven.

The understanding has been that Crescent residents cannot apply for Council permits to park outside the Crescent. It was reported by North Lodge that it was in fact possible to get a Council permit if there is proof that a Crescent permit was not available and that the Committee could issue formal letters to confirm this.

The Committee was asked to look again at the Resident Permit allocation, and also to follow up on the availability of Council permits.

5. Major Infrastructure Projects

5.1 Recommendation for installation of Electricity Supply in the Garden

Neil Smith introduced this proposal that was approved at the 2020 AGM but re-introduced with a more accurate budget requirement of £16,000. The installation of the supply is intended to enable any future installation of electric car charging points, street lighting and other services.

Points made during the discussion included:

- a. That subsidies from the Council could be more thoroughly researched; that some grants may be available for car charging units, but not for installing an electricity supply.
- b. That an EV infrastructure would have an upwards effect on property prices



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- c. That the cost was too high; that the proposal is not justified unless accompanied by charge points for cars, and that there were too few electric vehicles (EVs) in the Crescent to justify expenditure now; that future government policy is uncertain; that future technological options are uncertain and investment now was too risky; that the proposal was premature.
- d. That the Committee keeps finding new ways to spend residents' money; that the committee wishes to spend £20k (sic) on lighting a Christmas tree.
- e. That even if there are technological changes in how cars are charged, or changes in government policies, an electricity supply would still be required; that the introduction of electric vehicles was already a reality, for instance with company's introducing EV only policies; that the need to install EV charge points in the Crescent is unavoidable.
- f. That it would not be good to rely on having electric cables across the road from houses in order to charge cars; that the increased presence of more public charge points on nearby roads would be inconvenient.
- g. That EV charge points may be unsightly.
- h. That not making the investment in the infrastructure now will raise problems in future as use of EV's becomes necessary.

In a vote, the proposal was rejected by 14 votes to 12.

5.2 Phase 4 of Wall Repair

The final phase of the repairs to the wall is proposed with a budget of £9500. Points made during the discussion included:

- a. That Brighton Council are the freeholders and if the Garden Rate is insufficient to fund the costs of maintaining the wall that Brighton Council, as owners of the wall, should be paying the shortfall. Neil Smith said that the Crescent was solely responsible for repairs.
- b. The necessity of the work was queried; that the full work specifications should be provided to all residents so that they can evaluate the need for the work.
- c. That the work is the last part of a long-term project and will help avoid future ad hoc repairs as parts of the wall degrade further; that the cost is good value for money; that considerable savings have been made over the original quotes received for the repair of the wall; that the quality of the work by the preferred contractors is excellent.

The proposal was approved after a show of hands.

6. Crescent Levy for 2022/23



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The recommendation from the Committee had been to raise £17,500 for infrastructure projects. However, with the rejection of the electricity supply project it was proposed that £8,750 would be sufficient to maintain the reserve fund at £30,000 whilst still going ahead with the wall repairs.

This proposal was approved on a show of hands.

(Note: Before future AGMs the Committee will provide additional information on proposed infrastructure projects if requested)

7. Any Other Business.

Rubbish collections continue to be unreliable with recent collections occurring seemingly only after the Committee Chair has contacted our local councilor on several occasions. It might help if all residents reported missing collections each week via the Council web site. It was suggested that we could propose communal bins outside the Crescent somewhere; it was suggested that we consider a private collection (and then bill the council for it) but there was not much support for these ideas.

There was a request that we look at improved **bicycle parking**. It is acknowledged that the existing racks are unsuitable and untidy. The Committee had previously polled residents to see if there was support for us to latch on to the existing Council Cycle Hangars, but given the costs, few were interested. The Committee was asked to look at more options for providing a better facility.

There was a suggestion that we could install permanent table tennis tables on the lawn. This received little support.

There was a query about the use of the **compost heaps** in the garden. These should not be used for any form of cooked food waste, and woody materials that do not compost easily should not be left in the garden. It was suggested that the Committee look to placing a sign as to what can be left in the compost heaps.

The Chair thanked everyone and Neil Smith thanked Karl Simpson of Mojo's Cafe for his hospitality and Leanne Allan for chairing. The Chair closed the meeting.

JH 1/June/2022