

Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association



Notes of the Annual General Meeting – 19th July 2018

1. Welcome and introductions and apologies

The Chairman, Paul Sparks opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Cllr Peter Waldock
- Dorothy Sparks
- Andy Clews
- Julia Brown
- Mark Maloney
- Dee Maltby
- Paula Scott
- Dorothy Geering
- Phil Paton
- John and Jill Moar
- Siri Scott
- Gilly Brownsword
- Gabriella Paterson-Griggs

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Peter advised that it had not been possible to progress the original idea of installing an additional handrail at the Browns Lane shops due to the cost. An application had been made to the Town Council for a grant but this was not successful. Subsequently a resident had very kindly offered his service to install a handrail but the landlord had not responded to this offer despite reminders and so at the moment the project was stalled.

Peter also said that negotiations with ESCC have continued over the last 12 months regarding a solution to the damage caused by cars parking on the grass verge near to Manor Primary and that we are currently waiting for ESCC to advise us of the options available.

3. Report from the Chairman of the Association

The Chairman, Paul Sparks, reported:

" This has been another steady year for your Association with our core activities such as the Surgery Car Service and the Big Lunch, performing well. However, little progress has been made with our two long running fundamental issues of the poor condition of our footpaths and the inconsiderate parking of vehicles particularly in the Downsview Crescent area.

The footpath/twittens issue is an extremely difficult one in view of the multi private ownership of these paths and the considerable expense to bring them up to adoptable standards. However, we will continue to explore all options for resolving this.

The Walk and Talk initiative has had some impact around Manor Primary School and we are now hoping that County Highways will introduce measures to stop parking on the grass verges.

I have been disappointed with the appearance of our neighbourhood recently with overgrown grass verges and weeds in the kerbs. However, our planter outside Tesco Express is a welcomed bright and colourful addition and I am pleased to see that our bench is in frequent use.

We have a potentially difficult issue to tackle in the future being the redevelopment of the buildings at UCTC. We will engage actively in the planning application process to stress the need for additional onsite parking and to also ensure that during the construction period some sensible restrictions are in place to minimise the disruption and inconvenience to local residents.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow officers, Peter Griggs and Sally Major, for all their wonderful support over the past year and look forward to having another successful year working with them."

4. The Treasurer's Report for Financial Year ended 5 April 2018

Sally Major, the Association's Treasurer reported:

"We ended the year with a deficit of £266 for the year in question and a bank balance of £1,364.

Income for the year totalled £1,877 including £680 in subscriptions and £640 in advertising and sponsorship. We received £165 from our Surgery Car Service. Also included is a grant of £350 from The Big Lottery Fund for the Big Lunch in June.

Expenses this year totalled £2,143 and include expenditure on Insurance, Newsletter production, Venue Hire, Web Hosting. Expenses for the Car Service amounted to £113 resulting in a surplus for this service of £52. This year we have spent £442 on advertising our Walk n Talk initiative".

5. Report from the Secretary

Peter Griggs, the Association's secretary reported:

"Membership and income

The Association's membership continues to represent over one in ten of the 1400 households on Manor Park and Hempstead Fields with 141 member households

There are no plans to increase the membership subscription which will remain at only £5 per calendar year. An amount which can be quickly recovered once you take advantage of the Shoppers Discount Scheme we operate with several businesses in the town.

The Association's bank balance continues to benefit through the sponsorship provided by our generous local businesses. This includes those that advertise in our newsletter (which covers the whole cost of the printing) and those businesses that defray the full cost, or provide their services free, at The Big Lunch. We also obtained a grant from Awards for All to cover the costs of this year's Big Lunch.

The committee and volunteers continue to provide their services without payment of course and we would like to thank in particular those volunteers that help Dorothy and Paul with the daunting task of hand delivering 1400 newsletters twice a year.

Communications

On top of our paid membership, we have a very healthy social media following - this tends to cater for the younger families in our community.

Our Facebook page goes from strength to strength and we broke the 500 barrier now having **516** followers, which is 72 more than this time last year and our Twitter account now has 276 followers, which is an increase of 17 over last year.

We also have our website of course, where you can find copies of our committee minutes, constitution and other Association documentation.

Surgery Car Service

This service continues to be highly valued by its users. Last year we told you that we were in talks with the Church Coombe Community Association about extending the service to include their residents but in the end Church Coombe decided not to proceed with the partnership at this time.

Some other items of news

Over the last few months we have been in discussions with 'Action In Rural Sussex' regarding a new initiative for our residents. This is the Good Neighbour Scheme which you may have read about in our last newsletter which we hope to launch in September. I have provided some copies of the newsletter which includes a form for you to complete if you would like to support the initiative. I won't go into the detail now but please have a chat with me after if you might help or if you know someone that might benefit from the scheme.

Do you remember all those emails that you had a few weeks ago about General Data Protection Regulations? Well I am pleased to say that 90% of members responded positively and so have been retained on our email contact list. The Association's Privacy and Data Protection policies can be found on the website or are available upon request.

We have registered our interest in learning more a renewable heat feasibility study that Forest Row Energy Co-op is planning in Forest Row and the surrounding towns and villages, including Uckfield. The aim of the project is 'to identify a cost effective approach to supply renewable heat to residential properties in the area that will bring community benefits'. At the moment we are not sure what this entails but we thought it a good idea to express our interest and see what develops.

Our annual Big Lunch was held in June and over £200 was raised for charity. I am keen to ring the changes and offer something different next June and I would welcome your ideas.

August will see us joining the Sussex Horse Rescue Trust in a WW1 Remembrance event up at Hempstead Farm – more details to follow, so keep an eye on your emails and on the noticeboard in Tesco Express”.

6. Election of Officers

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer were proposed, seconded and voted into office unanimously:

- Chair – Paul Sparks
- Treasurer – Sally Major
- Secretary – Peter Griggs

7. Election of the Committee

The following were proposed, seconded and voted into office unanimously:

- Andy Clews
- Belinda Da Silva
- Dorothy Sparks
- Jane Shepherd
- Jerry Miller
- Julia Brown
- Ric Mears

8. Any other business.

A resident pointed out that the house numbering in Jeffreys Way can be confusing and asked whether the road signs could be improved. Peter offered to pursue this with Wealden District Council.

Paul advised that the Uckfield Rugby Club has offered to donate £100-150 to the Association to support a community project. It was suggested that this might help to defray any costs that WDC may impose for improving the Jeffreys Way signs.

Following a question Paul gave an update on WDC's refuse collection contract and the problems that are arising.

Finally, thought will be given to organising another 'Question Time' with a panel comprising those that have a role in key local matters such as the proposed development at the Uckfield College, the refuse collection service, verge cutting etc.

The meeting closed and was followed by a most interesting talk presented by Simon Norris-Hughes about the KSS Air Ambulance Service.