

Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association



Notes of the Annual General Meeting – 17th July 2019

1. Welcome and introductions and apologies

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

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Jill Moar
- Siri Scott
- Gilly Brownsword
- John and Brenda Dearlove
- Maureen Macve
- Tricia Bentley
- Jane Shepherd

2. Question and Answer session with Kevin Cowrie, Project Manager, Bowmer and Kirkland

The Chairman agreed that the Q and A session be brought forward before the formal business of the AGM.

When introducing Kevin the Chairman said that the Association an excellent working relationship has been developed with him. There follows a resume of the questions raised and the responses given:

- 1) Is the project on schedule?
Yes, the north block should be completed late June 2020.
- 2) Assuming we have a good summer and with the students absent will this speed things up?
Yes, it will allow more deliveries (as agreed with the planners)
- 3) Pleased that double yellow lines have not appeared.
We are only using traffic cones when necessary – as agreed with Paul Sparks. Once all the long lengths of steel have been delivered the parking restrictions will not be necessary.
- 4) Is the stone wall on the boundary going to be retained?
Yes
- 5) Parts of the site are prone to flooding, has this been recognised?
Yes, additional drainage has been incorporated into the scheme.
- 6) Never seen Downsview Crescent looking so clean, maybe the street sweeper is being used too frequently, could it be extended to other roads on the estate?
Sorry no, have to abide with planning conditions.

- 7) The road surface in Downsview Crescent is deteriorating, who will make this good?
The road was surveyed before the work started and it will be reinstated to the same condition at the end of the project.
- 8) It was noted that ESCC Highways had been repairing potholes in the last day or two. Any repairs by the contractor are subject to the permission of ESCC – takes 8-10 weeks.
- 9) What are the current parking arrangements for those working at the site?
They are instructed to park behind Tesco. Not all sub-contractors are abiding by this, if they persist they will lose their contract.
- 10) Could a Park and Ride system be introduced for them?
No, sub-contractors start and leave at different times
- 11) Could they use the playground during the summer break?
Kevin will speak to the College about this idea
- 12) Please tell us about the portacabins on the site
There are extensive welfare facilities for the workmen, all designed to be eco-friendly
- 13) The Considerate Constructors Scheme includes a requirement to support the community, how is this being addressed?
Through engaging with the College and Manor Primary – visits by students etc.
- 14) Currently the site attracts a score of 4.5 stars in the Considerate Constructors Scheme, what would need to be done to get the full 5 stars?
Only very large projects can achieve 5 stars where they can afford to devote extensive funding to community projects.
- 15) Noticed that the fencing in the tree protection area has been moved back, why is this?
One tree is dead and necessary for operational reasons – permission has been obtained from the planners.
- 16) What has been the biggest frustration?
Co-ordinating deliveries from suppliers as far away as Sheffield and Northern Ireland
- 17) Will the shrubs along the fence bordering Downsview Crescent be replaced?
Yes, new trees and shrubs will be planted in accordance with the planning requirements
- 18) Will the new school have any additional capacity?
No, this was the decision of the local education authority, not the contractor.
- 19) How are you intending to engage with local residents, for example are you planning to take groups of residents around the site?
For health and safety reasons it is difficult to show people around a working site but happy to accept visitors (by prior arrangement). Will be able to accept small groups in due course once the work has progressed.

20) One question submitted in advance which was not addressed at the meeting asked whether a new pedestrian crossing is included in the scheme – the Association understands that it is not part of the scheme.

There being no further questions the Chairman thanked Kevin for attending the meeting and reiterated what a good working relationship the Association enjoyed with Kevin.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting on 19th July 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings

3. Report from the Chairman of the Association

The Chairman, Paul Sparks, reported:

This has been another interesting and challenging year for your Residents' Association with some very good results.

Following comments at our last AGM regarding confusing street name signs in some parts of Manor Park, we completed a survey to identify where improvements could be made and then worked with Wealden District Council, who are the local authority responsible for street signage, to implement the improvements. Most have now been completed with just a couple outstanding.

We also commenced a new service for residents with a Good Neighbour Scheme to help and support those that are lonely or feel isolated. We can provide help to do small DIY jobs, assist with form filling or just have a cuppa and a chat. Many thanks to those residents that have volunteered to support this new service.

One of the major changes to our local area has been the major developments works for Uckfield College. This was clearly going to have a major impact so your RA became actively engaged from the planning stage and now when the work has commenced we are having regular meetings with the Contractor to help minimise the inconvenience as much as possible. The contractor has been very co-operative and a good relationship has been established.

One of the highlights of the year was the opening of our " Lest we forget " bench in Southview Drive. This is a stunning design and a very attractive feature on that entrance to our estate. We are also placing a new planter at our other entrance in Browns Lane to provide a colourful approach and complement our other planter outside of Tesco's.

Our well-established surgery car service continues to go well providing a valuable service to our residents. I would like to thank our drivers and the volunteers that take the phone calls for all their help and support. We are also very fortunate to have an excellent committee that manages our activities including our outstanding secretary Peter Griggs and Treasurer Sally Major.

I am sure the coming 12 months will have its share of challenges for us but I hope we can continue to work together to build a community spirit and a pleasant place to live.

Paul invited any questions arising from his report:

- The ground under the Lest We Forget Bench is muddy during wet weather can this be rectified please? Yes, we will put a hard surface down under the seat.

- How was the bench paid for? Through a grant from the Town Council, a donation by CPJ Filed Funerals and from the Association's own funds.
- Would it be possible to have another bench near the Water Tower? That's a good idea, we will look into it.
- What can be done to prevent infill – this exacerbates the ongoing street parking problems? Town Council can object but it is a District Council decision. At present the restrictions imposed to protect the Ashdown Forest are limiting any development.
- If the Town Council object can the District councillor ensure the application is considered at a full committee meeting and not delegated to the planning officer to decide? Yes, but there have to be genuine planning reasons for this to happen.

4. The Treasurer's Report for Financial Year ended 5 April 2019

Sally Major, the Association's Treasurer reported:

We ended the year with a deficit of £589 for the year in question and a bank balance of £988.

Income for the year totalled £1,913 including £745 in subscriptions and £250 in advertising. We also received £250 from CPJ Funerals towards the cost of the Memorial Bench on Southview Drive plus £300 from Action in Rural Sussex towards the cost of the Good Neighbour Scheme and £100 from Uckfield Rugby Club which has been used towards installing a new planter at the Browns Lane entrance to the estate.

After costs, the Surgery Car Service yielded a surplus of £70.

Expenses this year totalled £2,502 and include expenditure on Insurance, Newsletter production, Venue Hire, Web Hosting, Admin.

This year we have spent £419 on The Big Lunch, £1,115 on the Memorial bench and £248 on setting up the Good Neighbour Scheme

The accounts were then duly adopted.

5. Report from the Secretary

Peter Griggs, the Association's secretary reported:

Membership and funding

The Association's membership continues to represent around one in ten of the 1400 households on Manor Park and Hempstead Fields with 138 member-households

There are no plans to increase the membership subscription which will remain at only £5 per calendar year - an amount which members can be quickly recover once they 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).

As Sally mentioned, this year we also obtained a grant from the Town Council and a donation from CPJ Fields, the Funeral Directors group, towards the cost of the remembrance bench and a donation from the Uckfield Rugby Club towards to cover the costs of the new planter in Browns Lane plus a grant from Action in Rural Sussex towards the Good Neighbour Scheme. These generous donations and grants enable us to keep the membership fee so low and undertake more work in the community.

We are extremely grateful to all the businesses and organisations that support us.

Communications

On top of our paid membership, we have a very healthy social media following which tends to cater for the younger families in our community. Our Facebook page for example now has nearly 600 followers.

Those that do not use social media or email are kept up to date via the noticeboard in Tesco Express.

We aim to continue to produce and deliver at least two printed newsletters per year.

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

Volunteers

I would like to add my thanks to the new volunteers that stepped forward this year to support the Good Neighbour Scheme, not forgetting those who support the Surgery Car Service and those that help Dorothy and Paul with the unenviable task of hand delivering 1400 newsletters twice a year.

Good Neighbour Scheme

Paul has already told you about this new scheme and you will find copies of our flyer about it dotted around the hall – please take a copy home, or several copies if you wish, as we are keen to spread the word about the scheme. Maybe you know someone that might benefit from it?

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
Dominic Tarn (co-opted)

8. Any other business.

A resident of Oak Tree Court asked whether a speed limit could be introduced in Downsview Crescent. She also referred to inconsiderate and unsafe parking and an incident that had occurred that morning. Paul advised that this had been raised before but it seems speed limits can only be reduced if there is a history of road traffic collisions.

Another resident commented that 20mph speed limits and speed reduction schemes were common on new developments. Paul said he understands that speed humps may in due course be removed because they add to vehicle emissions.

The question of introducing more double yellow lines was considered but Paul said with the current lack of local enforcement this was probably not a viable solution.

A resident asked what had happened to the advisory speed limit signs in Browns Lane. Paul said that ESCC only displayed these for a limited time as after a while they are no longer effective.

Paul thanked all those that had attended and closed the meeting at 8.40pm