

Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association

Notes of the Committee Meeting at Uckfield Rugby Club

Tuesday 11th February 2025 – 7.30 to 9.00pm

1. Present

Paul Sparks (Chair), Peter Griggs (Secretary), Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Treasurer), Sue Fenwick, Belinda Da Silva, Jane Shepherd, Phil Paton, Cllr Daniel Manvell, Cllr Kelvin Williams.

2. Apologies

Jenni Povey-Meier, Julia Brown, Dorothy Sparks and Hattie Camsell.

3. Proposal to co-opt Jenni Povey-Meier onto the committee

In view of Jenni's unavoidable absence, it was agreed that this item be postponed to the next meeting (the AGM in May).

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2024 and matters arising

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Peter referred to the item about the Hedgehog Highway and reported that this initiative has not been progressed as there are doubts about how much support this will attract.

Other matters arising were included on the agenda.

5. Alan Baisden

Paul told the committee about the sad passing of Alan and spoke of the tremendous work he did supporting the Association's Surgery car Service. Everyone agreed that he was a true gentleman and that he will be greatly missed.

The funeral will be at the Horam Crematorium on 19th February.

The committee agreed that a donation will be made to Alan's chosen charity, the RNLI.

Action Gabbi

6. Treasurer's report

Gabriella presented her report:

Budget 2024/25

Grants Awarded and Received 2024/25 as at 31st August 2024

- A National Lottery grant for £6,700 was successfully applied for to continue Warm Welcome for another two years from January 2025.

Allocated Funds as at 31st January 2025

- National Lottery Awards for All - £6,242.21 for Warm Welcome January 2025 - 2027

Income received 2024/25 as at 31st January 2025

Income from the following sources has been received this financial year:

- Subscriptions £655
- Grants £6,700 (Warm Welcome)
- Wealden Community Lottery £666.50 (£1676 since started)
- Easy Fund Raising £85.34

- Surgery Car Service £152
- Warm Welcome collection tin £430.17 (£981.42 since started)
- Walking Car Boot Sale £200 (all donated to Chestnut Tree House)
- Other Donations £65
- Bank Interest £45.95

Payments made 2024/25 as at 31st January 2025

Good Neighbour Scheme £84.36 (Phone Service)

Car Surgery Scheme £138.72 (Phone Service + equipment)

Public Liability Insurance £77.02

Donation to KSS Air Ambulance £235 (from Big Lunch 2024 collection)

Donation to Chestnut Tree House £200 (from Walking Car Boot Sale)

DBS Checks £67.25 (new car surgery scheme drivers x 4)

Big Lunch 2024 £633.08 (offset by £500 donation received from Midsummer Festival)

Events £163.88 (Volunteers Evening + Volunteers Fair)

Subscriptions £40 (Wealden Volunteering)

Poppy Wreath £29.49 (Uckfield Remembrance Service)

Venue Hire £71.75 (not Warm Welcome)

General Admin £49.08

Warm Welcome £2310.05 (all grant funded)

Gifts £32.27 (for Internal auditor)

General MPHFRA Funds

The amount of funds available to the Association that are not allocated elsewhere stands at £2607.78 as at 31st January. Note: This excludes the Warm Welcome donations.

Savings Account

The National Lottery grant was transferred into the savings account when it was received. The Warm Welcome donations and Wealden Community Lottery funds continue to be transferred into the savings account when received.

Projects for 2024/25

- Warm Welcome is ongoing but all costs will be covered by grant funding (until end of December 2026)
- Flagpole – this will be funded from the general monies
- Verge Sign – this will be funded by monies received from the Wealden Community Lottery

Budget 2024/25 – Q3 update

- The current position at the end of Q3 is that we are still within the budget for the general MPHF funds (this does not include Warm Welcome which has its own budget).
- The projected outcome for 2024/25 is -£2.54

7. Secretary's report

Peter reported as follows:

Social media presence – there has been a further increase in those following the Association's Facebook page which now has 1120 followers, an increase of 34 since September.

Membership – at the time of the meeting the membership totalled 142 fully paid-up members, this compares to 167 at the end of the last membership year in December.

Reminders are being sent to those that have not renewed their membership.

8. Decriminalised parking

Cllrs Daniel Manvell and Kelvin Williams attended the meeting to speak to this item.

Paul introduced the background explaining that Wealden is one of only a very few District councils (five or six) in the country where decriminalised parking has not been introduced and where charges for on-street or off-street parking have not been introduced (with the exception of Alfriston and Pevensey Bay).

Because decriminalised parking has not been introduced Sussex Police will not enforce parking violations (other than for incidents of serious obstruction).

If Wealden introduces decriminalised parking the cost will have to be met by introducing parking charges which could include on-street parking, off-street parking, residents' permits schemes.

Decriminalised parking would be administered by the County Council and would apply to the whole district, not selected towns.

Cllrs Williams and Manvell said that the issue is now overshadowed by the Government's devolution of local government proposals which will lead to a two-tier system comprising County Councils and Town/Parish Councils, with District Councils being phased out, probably by 2028.

In the circumstances it seems very unlikely that decriminalised parking will be progressed by Wealden in the interim but that it may well be applied across the whole of East Sussex by the new Unitary Authority. The latter will comprise all the local authorities in East Sussex and be led by a mayor. The other two Unitary Authorities serving the county will be Brighton with Hove and the local authorities in West Sussex.

There ensued a wide-ranging discussion with committee members expressing their preferences and the pros and cons of each option. This included the introduction of residents parking to address hot spots, the balance between 3 hour and 10 hour parking bays in parks and the potential effect on High Street trade etc.

The committee thanked the councillors for their input.

9. Good Neighbour and Surgery Car Scheme – activity and call handling in 2024

Peter said that during 2024 the Good Neighbour Scheme had helped nearly 20 residents with befriending, form filling, IT problems, odd jobs, free lifts and referrals to other support groups.

These 20 interventions actually resulted in dozens of interactions by our volunteers, most of whom had gone the extra mile. Their compassion and kindness is much appreciated by those that they helped.

The Surgery Car Service continues to grow and now averages over 16 trips per week.

10. Progress reports – Warm Welcome, dropped kerbs, flagpole, verge sign

Peter advised:

The Tuesday Warm Welcome - is growing in its popularity and it may soon be necessary to look for a more spacious venue. Paul read a note from Dorothy thanking Peter for his work on this initiative.

Dropped kerbs – there are indications that County Highways will be including Downsview Crescent, from its junction with Browns Lane up to the College, in its 2025/26 work programme.

Flagpole – the licence to use the land has been agreed, we now await the landlord to decide the fee which his agent has told us will be ‘moderate’.

Verge sign (Welcome to Manor Park and Hempstead Fields) – a quotation for an engraved oak sign was much higher than anticipated and Peter is now approaching another company that supplies metal signs.

11. Coronation Place – invitation to residents

Residents will be invited to attend a tour of the new development in March or April, date to be decided, the Association to organise.

12. Community events in 2025

It was agreed that we will pause the Big Lunch this year but look at other community activities such as the Walking Car Boot Sale, a children’s treasure hunt etc.

13. Amendments to policies – privacy, data protection, safeguarding

The committee agreed that these policies can be subject to a simple amendment to the wording to include the visitors to the Tuesday Warm Welcome.

14. Any other business

Paul advised that in May Dorothy will be planting new plants in the planters.

It was agreed that the AGM be held on 13th May.

15. Date and time of future meetings

13th May AGM, venue to be decided, 7.30pm

12th August Committee meeting, Rugby Club, 7.30pm

11th November Committee meeting, 7.30pm