

Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association

Notes of the Committee Meeting at Uckfield Rugby Club

Wednesday 27th July 2022 – 7pm to 8.30pm

1. **Present:** Paul Sparks (Chair), Peter Griggs (Secretary), Dorothy Sparks
Jerry Miller, Sue Fenwick.

2. **Apologies:** Jane Shepherd, Ric Mears, Andy Clews, Sally Major
(Treasurer), Belinda Da Silva, Julia Brown.

3. Minutes of the last meeting on 8th March 2022 and matters arising

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

Peter and Paul updated the meeting on the actions arising from that meeting.

All other matters arising were included on the agenda.

4. Treasurer's Report

In her absence Peter read Sally's report.

In summary the current balance is £1424.00 with £720.00 as available funds.

The Surgery Car Service has a net deficit of £16.00 and the Good Neighbour Scheme a net deficit of £43.00.

The total expenditure for the Jubilee Picnic was £554.00. This was offset by a grant of £299.00 from the Town Council.

There is a total of £704.00 unspent grants.

5. Secretary's Report

Peter reported:

- Membership – we now have 157 paid members.
- Correspondence:
 - a thank you letter has been received from the British Red Cross for the £180.00 raised for the Ukraine Crisis appeal.
 - A thank you letter from Cancer Research for the £50.00 donation made by the Uckulele Band following the Jubilee Picnic was passed to Jerry.
- Social media - we now have 878 people following our Facebook page.
- DBS checks – there are two outstanding DBS driver checks. **ACTION Peter**

6. Jubilee Picnic and Key Worker Tribute

Peter commented on the success of these two events.

7. The Dene

Paul summarised the situation regarding Buxted Parish Council's intention to dispose of the open space that it owns on The Dene.

As some time ago the Association registered this open space as an Asset of Community Value a formal procedure (administered by Wealden District Council) is activated once the owner wishes to dispose of the land. This allows for any community group to 'express an interest'. This step effectively imposes a moratorium (6 months initially) on the disposal of

the land. This is to give a community group time to raise funds for a competitive bid to purchase the land.

It was noted that the legislation provides that the landowner can claim compensation for loss or expense because of the land being so listed.

It was also noted that there is a covenant or charge on the land which states that 'The land is subject to the rights of the user for the purpose of quiet recreation'.

It is understood that Buxted PC intends to sell the land as amenity land, not for redevelopment.

Paul advised that Uckfield Town Council has already formally expressed an interest in the land. The question was whether it would be appropriate for the Association to also express an interest and to start raising funds.

A full discussion ensued with varying views expressed. At the conclusion of the discussion, it was decided to seek further clarification from the Town Clerk and gain the views of all committee members before progressing the matter further. **ACTION Peter**

8. Streatfeild House - planning application

Peter said that a planning application has now been submitted for the redevelopment of this site.

It was agreed that the Association submit comments based on the text of its response to informal consultation but to include in addition its concern that the long green bank fronting London Road is going to be broken into and spoiled by the inclusion of a flight of steps.

ACTION Peter

9. Downlands Farm – planning application

Peter drew attention to a planning application for 424 homes on land at Downlands Farm.

The site abuts ancient woodland and Lake Wood, locations which many of our residents enjoy and would wish to ensure that the ecology is preserved. Lake Wood recently featured in an Association's Woodland Ecology Walk led by Dr Martyn Stenning.

It was agreed that the Association submit comments drawing attention to its concerns about the impact of the proposed development on the ecology of nearby Lake Wood and ancient woodland.

10. Constitution

Peter proposed and it was agreed that an item be included in the agenda for the next AGM amending item 2(a) the Association's constitution to read:

- responding to activities, events or proposals, both within and without the Association's area, which may adversely affect the community.

ACTION Peter

11. Southview Drive/Downsview Crescent update

Peter advised that he was awaiting reply from Wealden's Planners regarding the survey that the developer was due to undertake in June.

Paul advised that the poor condition of these roads was raised at the recent Strengthening Local Relationships meeting when the Town Council met with ESCC Highways.

12. Browns Lane Steps (serving the shops)

Paul reported that Mark Francis the Estates and Facility Manager from the Town Council is in correspondence with the landlord of the shops about the unsafe condition of the brickwork either side of these steps.

The steps do not appear to be the responsibility of any known individual or business, but Mark is encouraging the landlord to repair the steps as they serve the customers of the Browns Lane shops.

Potentially, failure to repair them could result in the steps being closed off.

13. Twittens

Paul referred to the recent successful intervention of the Association when all the neighbours affected by a drainage problem clubbed together to affect a repair and suggested that this will be a useful example when encouraging groups of residents to get together to a repair twittens in poor and unsafe condition.

ACTION Peter

14. Uckfield Green Partnership

Paul described the work of the partnership and the concerns about energy usage.

It was agreed that a speaker on home energy improvements be invited to the AGM in the autumn. **ACTION Peter**

The partnership will have a display at Weald on the Field.

15. Uckfield Dementia Forum

Nothing relevant to the Association to report.

16. Any other business

None

17. Date, time, and venue of next meeting

No date set but likely to be at the end of September or in mid-October