

Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association

Notes of the Committee Meeting at Uckfield Rugby Club

Wednesday 31st May 2023

1. **Present:** Paul Sparks (Chair), Peter Griggs (Secretary), Gabriella Paterson-Griggs (Treasurer), Belinda Da Silva, Sue Fenwick, Phil Paton, Jane Shepherd, Dorothy Sparks, Sally Major, Jerry Miller

2. **Apologies:** Ric Mears, Julia Brown.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting 5th April 2023 and matters arising**

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

Uckfield Leisure Centre – Paul reported that new District Councillors, Dan Manville and Kelvin Williams are both taking a keen interest in the future of the leisure centre and are hoping to preserve it for use by the community. Dorothy has referred the councillors to an energy saving solution that is being used successfully in a pool in the west country.

Lions Club health initiatives – Paul drew attention to an event in June

Car parking – Phil and Sally advised that two cars in particular are causing problems at Oak Tree Court. It was agreed that a solution would be sort using Operation Crackdown and if that didn't result in an improvement then the Association will pursue the matter with the College's new Principal in September.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

Gabbi reported as follows:

Grants Awarded and Received since last meeting

Uckfield Town Council - £250 match funding for commemoration bench for the late Queen.

Allocated Funds as at 31 May 2023

Wealden DC - £37.27 for Good Neighbour Scheme

AiRS and carry forward from Warm Space - £1335.96 for the continuing Warm Space (now Warm Welcome) project.

Awards for All - £650.25 for Coronation Big Lunch 2023.

Uckfield Town Council Grant - £250 for QEII Commemoration Bench

Income since last meeting

There have been three new subscriptions since the last meeting and four payments received from the Surgery Car Service Scheme.

There have also been the grant monies from the Town Council and a donation from the Warm Welcome collection tin.

The Wealden Community Lottery first payment has been received. These funds will be paid on a monthly basis.

We have also received a payment from Easy Fund Raising which covers June 2022 to January 2023.

Payments since the last meeting

The majority of the spend since the last meeting has been on the Warm Welcome project and the Big Lunch both of which are covered by grants so do not affect the Residents' Association funds.

General MPHRA Funds

The amount of funds available to the Association that is not allocated elsewhere stands at £1461.06, as at 31 May 2023.

Projects for 2023/24

Warm Welcome is ongoing but all costs will be covered by grant funding
Coronation Big Lunch on Sunday 11th June 2023 – all costs to be covered by grant funding.
Commemorative Bench for the late Queen – 50% of cost covered by grant funding
MPHRA to find £250.

Budget 2023/24

An update on the budget will be given at quarterly intervals.

The committee thanked Gabbi for her comprehensive report.

5. Secretary's Report

Peter reported:

- Membership – there are 147 paid up members with renewals still being received.
- Social media - 931 people following our Facebook page, up from 920 in April.
- Correspondence – the College have invited members of the committee to attend a tea and cakes event to mark the retirement of Hugh Hennebry. Gabbi and Peter will represent the Association.

6. Portman Court

Peter advised that it had been suggested that the Association extend its services to Portman Court in Grange Road. However given the current pressure on our volunteer drivers it was decided not to proceed with this at the moment.

ACTION: Peter to try to recruit new drivers.

7. Queen Elizabeth II memorial bench

Peter said that we should see this installed sometime during June.

ACTION: Peter to procure a suitably worded plaque.

8. Tesco Express Steps

Paul drew attention to the deteriorating condition of the brick wall that flanks the steps.

Peter advised that he had taken advice from an ex-colleague at Wealden who had advised that it was most unlikely any authority will take on the maintenance of the wall unless obliged to. (note: the Town Council has previously been approached and although it did undertake some minor repairs it will not take on full responsibility).

There might be an argument that the landlord of the shops and the shops themselves have some vicarious liability as it is their customers that use them.

Gabbi advised that Sussex Police will soon be piloting an "Immediate Justice" project which is similar to Community Payback.

ACTION Peter to pursue this with Sussex Police once the initiative is launched.

9. Southview Drive and Downview Crescent - disrepair

Peter reminded the meeting that it had been resolved to request a meeting with the Cabinet member for Planning and Development, Cllr Ann Newton in order to progress a solution to this longstanding issue.

A meeting was not forthcoming and then the local elections intervened and Councillor Newton is now no longer the Cabinet member.

We have now been advised that ESCC Highways will be undertaking repairs in the summer but we have not been told what this work will entail. Peter has written to ESCC asking for details saying that the Association's view is that complete resurfacing is required for the whole length of Southview Drive and of Downview Crescent from its junction with Southview Drive up to beyond Oak Tree Court.

ACTION Peter to continue progress chasing this matter.

10. The Dene - update

Paul reported that the Town Council's purchase of The Dene from Buxted PC is progressing and it is now just a matter of finalising the legal details. In the meantime the Town Council has cut the grass on The Dene.

11. The AGM

It was agreed that the AGM should be held in September/October. Some thought was given to an invited speaker, ideas included a speaker from the Ashdown Forest Conservators and a speaker from the committee.

The idea of a Question Time was also discussed and it was thought that this might wait until early in 2024. Topics could include the Local Plan and highway maintenance.

12. Big Lunch on Sunday 11th June - arrangements and organisation

Consideration was given to who would undertake the various tasks on the day and to contingency planning.

In the event of Peter and Gabbi being absent, Jerry and Sue (subject to their availability) will take on the role of organisers.

Sally and Jane will run the Information Point.

Belinda and Sue will attend the Bouncy Castle and Ball Pond – both for under school age only.

Phil will look after the PA system.

Action: in due course Peter will circulate the list of tasks required. Various packs are being assembled with the documents, posters, checklists etc that will be needed on the day.

It was agreed that this year Bowel Cancer UK will be the chosen charity.

14. The date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held before the AGM unless urgent business arises in the meantime.