

Manor Park and Hempstead Fields Residents' Association

Notes of the Committee Meeting (held using Zoom)

Thursday 20th May 2021 – 7.30 to approx. 8.40pm

1. **Present:** Paul Sparks (Chair), Peter Griggs (Secretary), Sally Major (Treasurer), Dorothy Sparks, Julia Brown, Jerry Miller, Dominic Tarn.

Apologies: Jane Shepherd, Ric Mears, Andy Clews, Belinda Da Silva.

2. **Minutes of the last meeting on 15th January 2020 and matters arising**

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

Peter advised that the number of people following the Facebook page had risen from 630 to 764 (687 Likes).

All other matters arising were included on the agenda.

3. **Treasurer's Report**

Sally's report showing a breakdown of spending and grants received is attached.

The committee agreed that Sally could submit the necessary documentation to the auditor for the annual audit of the last two financial years.

4. **Secretary's Report**

Peter reported as follows:

- Membership – at the end of April we had 149 member-households. Reminder emails and letters sent and social media messages posted to remind members who have not renewed.
- Browns Lane steps (from Downsview Crescent to the shops) – ownership and responsibility for these steps is uncertain and it seems likely that nobody is legally required to maintain them. A loose handrail has been repaired voluntarily by the Town Council, but further maintenance is required to the brickwork. A letter suggesting that the shopkeepers get together to agree an ongoing maintenance arrangement had not sparked any response. It was agreed that as there was no immediate danger that the situation be kept under review.
- Newsletter – it was agreed that the next newsletter would be sent by email (85% of members use email) and that a hard copy be placed on the Tesco noticeboard. In the future we will look at one hard copy distributed to every household each year with email newsletters sent to members periodically.

ACTION Peter

5. **Good Neighbour Scheme and Surgery Car Service (SCS) update**

The precautions introduced by the UK Government together with the Association's own risk assessment resulted in suspension of all face-to-face services.

With the future still far from certain it was decided to explore reintroducing the Surgery Car Service but continue with the suspension of the general Good Neighbour Scheme. Peter to liaise with the volunteer drivers to obtain their views.

It was noted that the Uckfield Good Neighbour Telephone scheme was receiving very few requests although useful contact was being maintained with certain vulnerable residents proactively by Paul and Sally.

It was agreed that a review be undertaken of the current call-handling arrangements with a view to combining the two systems.

ACTIONS Peter

6. AGM

After some discussion it was agreed that a combined 2020 and 2021 AGM be held in September or October. Given that the building work at Uckfield College is due to be completed in October it was thought that this might be a useful venue and it could include a tour of the complex.

ACTION Peter

7. The Dene

Dorothy said that it was necessary to renew the Dene's Asset of Community Value status and that an application was with Wealden DC. Peter advised that Wealden had asked for a list of members names and addresses and that any data supplied would be subject to Data Protection laws.

ACTION Peter

8. Community Safety

The Town Council had asked whether the Association knew of any community safety initiatives on our patch. Paws Watch and Neighbourhood Watch were mentioned.

The former which was launched three or four years ago seems to have lapsed and the latter was no longer as effective as informal local social media groups where information about suspicious activity etc can be widely distributed almost immediately.

It was decided to take no further action for the time being but to wait for any further information from the Town Council that may arise from the Town Clerk's meeting with Sussex Police.

9. Cherry Trees

Dorothy said that she was looking for a location to plant a group of flowering cherry trees on a site on Manor Park or Hempstead Fields. These would be an attractive addition and that Peter had suggested that they could form a tribute to key workers who had served the community through the Covid crisis. The cost might be met by people, groups of people or businesses sponsoring a tree.

The Town Council has been approached to obtain permission to plant three to five trees on the land at the bottom end of Downsview Crescent – known as The Rockery.

The Town Council considered the request but are holding a decision in abeyance until a review of allotment holdings is completed. Dorothy asked Paul if he could ask the working group's chairman to expedite a decision regarding The Rockery as we will need to plant the trees in September.

ACTION Paul

10. Woodland Walks

Peter floated the idea of organising Woodland Walks in Views Wood. These would be relatively short walks and should be led by someone who could talk in an interesting way about the flora and fauna.

The pandemic had seen an increased interest in the natural environment and it is known that engaging with nature can be of benefit to one's mental health.

Two names were put forward as potential walk leaders.

It was agreed that Peter would float the idea in the next newsletter to gauge the level of interest and see if there would be a sufficient number of people to make it viable.

ACTION Peter

11. Events

Whilst there is some doubt whether the remaining legal restrictions will be lifted in June, it was thought appropriate to look ahead to identify potential community events. Various ideas were put forward and will be investigated:

- An afternoon tea, possibly at the Luxford Centre.
- Big Lunch in the autumn – but the Rugby Club field will not be available then due to Rugby practice and matches. Currently no more than 30 people can meet outdoors for this kind of event.
- A community event when the Cherry Trees are planted.
- Coach trips to a place of interest in the autumn - members have previously suggested trips to the Wings Museum and the Knepp Rewilding nature preserve.

12. Any other business

- The committee was pleased to hear that a very badly maintained tarmac close to where Julia lives has been levelled and tarmacked.
- The Great British Spring Clean will be supported again this year although last time, despite early interest, only a few residents participated on the day.
- The planters are about to be replanted – the committee expressed its thanks to Dorothy and co for making the planters such an attractive feature.
- As previously mentioned, the reconstruction work at the College is due to be completed in October – several months earlier than expected.
- Paul and Peter reported that they had attended a meeting at the College to discuss parking in the roads around the college, the primary school and the nursery school. Whilst the college site can accommodate teaching and ancillary staff neither Manor Primary or Twiglets have sufficient parking. Cllr Dowling advised that parking that causes a serious obstruction or is dangerous such as on a bend or a junction can be reported online to the Sussex Police <https://www.sussex.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/asb/asb/antisocial-behaviour/nuisance-parking/>

13. Date, time and venue of next meeting

To be decided, probably mid-July and possibly at Roman Way.