

**Draft-2 Minutes of**  
**Herbert Collins Estates Residents Association**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**Held in St. George's School, Leaside Way**  
**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 19:15**

Welcome: Chairman Ray George welcomed everyone to the meeting to St. George's School.

Apologies: None were received

**1. Minutes of Annual General Meeting for 2020- 2021 and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the AGM for the year 2020-2021, held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021 on Zoom, were proposed by Ray George, seconded by Val Laurent and accepted. There were no matters arising.

**2. Chairman's Report for 2020-2021**

Ray George presented a wide-ranging Chairman's Report. The most significant items included:

**a. Secretary and Treasurer**

During the past year, HCERA found itself without either a secretary or treasurer due to relocation and health issues. Fortunately, Denise Fenwick and Nicola Farnell offered to fill these two posts, subject to confirmation at the 2021 AGM.

**b. Facebook**

The HCERA Facebook group is very active, with 192 members, and is a particularly good source of recommendations for members.

**c. Wild Flower Verges**

Debbie Smith of Bassett Green Road has championed the planting of wild flower seeds in an eye-shaped bed in the verge of Bassett Green Road, beside 2 Leaside Way. Initial results from seeds provided by Ian Bailey, Engagement Officer, Education, Environment and Ecology with Southampton City Council, were disappointing. Subsequently, Ian Bailey provided Debbie with wild flower seedlings, which were planted in September.

**d. 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration**

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2021, the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Gwen Apsey, an Ethelburt Avenue resident for over 60 years, was celebrated with the installation of a bench in her honour, now in the top green. It is believed that Gwen is the first resident to achieve this age.

**e. Questionnaires**

Residents' views have been sought through two questionnaires during the year: one from the Ethelburt Avenue Road Improvement Group and one from the company, Herbert Collins Estates Limited.

**f. Meeting with Historic Environment Officer**

Jon Willetts is the new Historic Environment Officer (formerly Conservation Officer) of Southampton City Council. He visited the estate for a familiarisation walkround in July 2021 and met some residents, which provided an insight to his thinking and approach. Ray reminded those present that the first objective of HCERA is "To advance and protect the interests of the residents and preserve the amenities of the district".

**g. Swaythling Methodist Church**

This Herbert Collins-designed and now Grade II-listed building has been bought by the Southampton Sikh Community Interest Group, Gurdwara Khalsa Darbar, which has started a restoration project. HCERA may be invited to play a role in developing community facilities and give special recognition to the work of Herbert Collins.

Acceptance of the Chairman's Report was proposed by Sandy Dixon and seconded by Kathleen Singleton.

**3. Treasurer's Report for 2020-2021**

Ray George presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Nicola Farnell.

Overall, expenditure had been modest apart from the road repair fund, although road repair income was higher than anticipated because some residents had paid both 2020 and 2021 subscriptions in this accounting year. Ray explained that the fifth HCERA account had been closed by Barclays Bank due to inactivity.

There was a discussion of the benefits of consolidating the accounts into a smaller number and Andy Fisher proposed that this was done, seconded by Verity Robson. A resident asked whether the interest-bearing accounts were safer than current accounts and therefore should be retained. A motion to close the premium (interest-bearing) accounts was defeated. Nicola Farnell agreed to investigate the options with the bank. **Action**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021, the balances were:

HCERA general account	£5,512.06
HCERA interest account	£2,395.48
Ethelburt road repair general account	£4,251.85
Ethelburt road repair interest account	£12,671.66
Total income for the year	£4,798.00
Total expenditure for the year	£3,057.45

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Angela Cotton and seconded by Val Laurent.

**4. Annual Subscription for 2021**

It was proposed that the annual subscription should remain at £5.00: there were no objections. Nicola Farnell reminded residents still paying £4.00 online to increase their standing orders.

**5. Ethelburt Avenue Road Improvement Group Report**

Dan Hopgood presented the RIG (Road Improvement Group) report. The most significant items included:

**a. Working Parties**

Dan reported that three working parties had taken place and been well-supported. The May working party added topsoil banks to either side of Ethelburt Avenue, at the Stoneham Lane entrance, to prevent parking on the verges. A buried gully was also restored as part of a plan to improve drainage and reduce surface water damage.

**b. Survey About Current Maintenance Road and Future Priorities**

The RIG conducted a survey of residents to obtain their views on the current standard of

maintenance and priorities for the future. There was strong support for retaining the gravel road surface, with most residents being content with the existing condition of the road. It was noted that the current level of contributions is now insufficient to meet the cost of the routine maintenance being executed, therefore the RIG proposed an increase in the road fund contribution from £30 to £35 per house for 2021-2022, in order to keep pace with inflation and create a small surplus.

Excessive vehicle speed was the biggest concern identified in the survey, as noted by 89% respondents. Various types of signage were being considered: if static signage did not prove effective, then the RIG would consult residents on the installation of a reactive sign.

Dan Hopgood also noted that 65% respondents were prepared to pay an increased contribution to the road fund if that resulted in improvements and not just maintenance. Ray gave a figure for 2021 income of £2,130, compared with expenditure on road repair of £1,918. The RIG had some £16k in hand at present, however £8k will be needed to retarmac the ends of the road.

A resident asked what proportion of households actually pay their road fund contribution. The response was that, for 2021, approximately 35% households had not paid, although Ray observed that some funds were still trickling in until the accounts closed at the end of August. It was noted that residents were not refusing to pay, however they needed repeat "encouragement" to actually make their payments. Changes of ownership resulted in inconsistent dates of payment. In addition, an increasing numbers of houses are rented and it is unclear whether the owners or the tenants are responsible for paying the road fund contribution. Nicola Farnell confirmed that there is no reduction in council tax for an unadopted road.

Dan Hopgood acknowledged that it was news to him that 35% households are not paying their road fund contribution and that a tighter grip on non-payment was needed. Nicola Farnell asked for a list of defaulting households and suggested that they should receive a note about non-payment, with a reminder of the payment details.

Dan Hopgood offered to withdraw the Rig's proposal to increase the road fund contribution, however it was put to the vote, proposed by Ali Howard and seconded by Andy Fisher. The proposal was carried, 12 votes for and 0 against, with the remainder abstaining, presumably because they are not EA residents.

## **6. Report of the Tree Subcommittee**

Andy Fisher presented the report of the Tree Subcommittee.

He began by appealing for residents to join the Tree Subcommittee, as a way of getting to know other residents, similar to joining the Road Improvement Group. It was noted that, in the EA RIG survey, most residents were keen to have more trees on the estate. He asked residents to email their concerns about trees to HCERA. He commented that the pine trees on the EA bottom green needed attention, observing that the trees were the responsibility of Abri and it was down to Abri to get a professional in to deal with them, and that any work on them would require approval from Planning (the council's trees team). However, while sap on cars and needles in the gutter were indeed a nuisance, neither constituted sufficient reason to fell a tree. Andy invited the four set of residents affected to provide coordinated input on how the issue affects them.

A LW resident pointed out that a small tree on that green had been almost ripped out and asked who is responsible for fixing this. Andy offered to find an answer for this. On the BGR green, the trees are funded by the surrounding houses. **Action:** Andy Fisher

**7. Election of Honorary Officers**

Ray George explained that no nominations for honorary officers (chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary) had been received. Equally, none of the current officers planned to stand down. The current officers were re-elected en bloc, with no votes against.

**8. Appointment of Honorary Auditor**

Ray George informed the audience that a new honorary auditor was required – any qualified accountant could volunteer. Ray offered to invite Andy Sharvill to take on the job.

**Action:** Ray George

**9. Election of Street Representatives and Helpers**

Ray George explained that no nominations for committee members (street reps and delivery/collection helpers) had been received. Equally, none of the current officers planned to stand down. An additional street rep for EA was needed and Benjamin Davey kindly volunteered. The current officers were re-elected en bloc, with no votes against.

**10. Election of Director of HCEL**

No nominations for this position had been received.

**11. Report of Herbert Collins Estates Limited**

John Green presented the report of HCEL.

He touched on the streamlined process for paying ground rents, with a plea for residents to set up standing-orders as it is a fixed amount, to reduce the associated admin. He discussed work to draft an update of the policy on alterations, inherited from Woodhill Properties, taking into account the views of the residents as expressed in the questionnaires which were returned by one-third of residents. A meeting of HCEL members was planned for the new year to involve residents and share the results of the survey. Members would also be involved in agreeing the policy.

John commented on the visit of Jon Willetts, the new Historic Environment Officer, and his involvement in alterations to the front and side elevations of properties which need planning permission. These will be considered in light of the Appraisal and Management Plan and how materials have changed over time. The overall message was that residents should seek advice about proposed alterations in advance.

It was noted that Jon Willetts does not consider conservation areas to be museums and he was expected to attend the HCEL members' meeting.

Denise Fenwick asked John what the £50 charge, for requesting an alteration consent from HCEL, was intended to cover. No specific answer was forthcoming.

Naomi Hitchin asked about double glazing for existing metal windows. No specific answer was forthcoming.

Verity Robson asked for the HCEL directors to be introduced to the meeting: these were John Green, Ben Whinnett, John Dixon and Ray George. There was a further question about what experience was needed for a person to become a director. The HCERA AGM may appoint one director per year and the directors may appoint additional directors. Interested applicants should contact the company via [hcel@herbertcollins.co.uk](mailto:hcel@herbertcollins.co.uk) which is also the contact point for membership enquiries.

## 12. Any Other Business

No other items of business had been lodged with the secretary in advance of the meeting. However, the following were presented ad hoc.

- a. Ben Whinnett raised a question on behalf of his wife, who was not present, as to whether there was a conflict of interest in having an HCEL director who was also an honorary officer of HCERA. Dan Hopgood suggested that it was the other way round and asked why all residents were not members of the company. A vigorous discussion followed covering questions on:
  - i. whether a grievance process had been established for cases whether planning proposals get rejected
  - ii. whether residents automatically became HCEL members and what their responsibilities would be if the company failed
  - iii. whether the same restrictive covenants on leasehold properties also applied to freehold properties

John Dixon asked for examples of potential conflicts of interest to be submitted to the company. Dan Hopgood suggested that this question be considered at the HCEL members' meeting, agreed by John Green. It was suggested that the next HCERA newsletter should include information about becoming an HCEL member.

**Action:** John Green

- b. A LW resident asked who to contact regarding the problem of cars being parked on the grass verges and what could be done to stop this practice.
- c. Ann Howard, Michelle Fisher and Wendy Boulter offered to help with deliveries in EA.

The meeting closed at 21:08

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