

# Minutes of Herbert Collins Estates Residents Association Annual General Meeting

Held in Hardmoor Early Years Centre, Leaside Way  
Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 19:30

**Welcome:** After the well-received introductory cake and cold drinks, chair Ray George welcomed everyone to the meeting in the Hardmoor Early Years Centre. It was noted that this may indeed be the 30<sup>th</sup> AGM of the association, which Ray will check. **Action: Ray**

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Nicola Farnell, Roger Goddard, Val Laurent, Verity Robson, Kathleen Singleton and Robert Williams.

**Reports:** The minutes of the 2021 AGM, together with all the reports presented at the 2022 AGM (except the report from HCEL), were made available on the HCERA website in advance of the 2022 AGM and in hardcopy at the meeting.

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

The minutes of the AGM for the year 2020-2021, held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at St. George's School, Leaside Way, were proposed by Angela Cotton, seconded by Tim Williams and accepted. There were no matters arising.

## 2. Chairman's Report for 2021-2022

The full version of Ray George's Chairman's Report is attached. Ray noted some additional items:

### a. Treasurer

Nicola Farnell had tendered her resignation as treasurer, so Ray made an appeal for a volunteer to fill this important position, without which HCERA would cease to function.

### b. Litter Pick

As advertised in the autumn newsletter, there will be a litter pick on Friday-Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> November and volunteers are needed to support this event

### c. Carols 2022

This year's carol concert will take place on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December at 19:00

The Chairman's Report was proposed by Angela Cotton and seconded by Elizabeth German.

## 3. Treasurer's Report for 2021-2022

The full version of Nicola Farnell's Treasurer's Report is attached. Ray George presented the report on her behalf.

Overall, expenditure continued to be modest, apart from the road repair fund, although this still had a reasonable balance.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Angela Cotton and seconded by Sandie Dixon.

## 4. Annual Subscription for 2023

It was proposed that the annual subscription should remain at £5.00: there were no objections.

## 5. Ethelburt Avenue Road Improvement Group Report

The full version of Dan Hopgood's Road Improvement Group Report is attached. Dan noted some additional considerations and answered residents' questions:

### a. Weeds

Applying additional gravel has not slowed weed growth significantly, so a decision about using weed killer or other methods to control the growth is needed urgently.

### b. Lack of Volunteers

The number of volunteers helping with working parties has decreased: there were only eight at the last session which is not enough to tackle the work required. He appealed for EA residents to help out actively. The next working party was scheduled for Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November and Dan will circulate a note to request participation.

### c. Costs of Materials

The cost of quarried aggregates was increasing, making it more expensive to add more material to the road surface. In addition, the quarry which had supplied the material is now worked-out, which has implications for what to use to keep the road looking good.

A resident asked whether plastic "crates" filled with gravel could be used in the worst sections of the road. Dan replied that, while crates drain well, it does not prevent potholes or mud pools and the grid will show through eventually.

Ray George asked about the ends of EA, noting that the section by SL was deteriorating badly. Dan replied that quotes to resurface the area were proving very expensive and would soak up most of the rainy day fund. The current members of the RIG were ambivalent about making repairs and Dan felt the situation – and expenditure – was not urgent.

## 6. Tree Group Report

The full version of John Dixon's Tree Group Report is attached. JohnD started by pointing out that he was not a member of the Tree Group but had stepped in for Andy Fisher who had had to resign as leader. It was noted that Peter Coxon was active for group in BGR and FC but that, currently, there was no Tree Group representation in EA (two people needed), SL or LW.

JohnD advised that he had arranged a tree survey as an HCEL initiative and to inform HCERA. The survey had confirmed two major issues – the Monterey pine in FC and ash tree in SL, as described in his report. Peter Coxon updated the meeting on work done on 17Oct22 in FC, which consisted only of removal of dead wood because council permission would be required for anything more extensive. If granted, the work should be completed within 3-6 months. At least three other trees were identified as needing significant work within two to three years. The council would require any felled trees to be replaced.

Peter advised that work on the trees would cost in the region of £10k in the next couple of years, which brought up the question of deciding now how this would be funded. A vigorous discussion on how to fund the tree work ensued. Robert Williams suggested increasing the residents' annual subscription to cover it.

Dan Hopgood asked whether HCEL or HCERA was responsible for the trees e.g. who owns the land on which the trees sit. John Dixon supported this point. Clarification was also needed on who actually owned some of the trees. John Dixon opined that, if the tree work were to be funded by subscriptions, that would imply that HCERA had assumed ownership which did not sound correct legally. It was noted that responsibility for the road(s) – but not the trees - was specified in the leases. John Green suggested that EA residents were responsible for the verges

in front of their houses, which would include any trees.

Dan Hopgood proposed that HCEL should minimise the number of large trees on the estate. He suggested that, if someone would volunteer to organise the work, there would be a number of residents willing to help with smaller trees. Robert Williams offered to support the Tree Group, excluding organisation or heavy work. It was noted that part of the work included watering trees during drought conditions, a point that the tree surveyor emphasised repeatedly.

It was observed that the company had about £3k in the bank and the only asset was the freehold of the land which could obviously not be realised. It was not known whether Woodhill Properties paid for any tree work when it owned the land.

Dan Hopgood suggested that the RIG could contribute to tree work, although this would only be relevant to EA.

A resident asked whether a resolution could be passed to add £5 tree fund to the £5 annual subscription at this AGM. Ray George explained this could not be done as no advance notice of a subscription change had been given to residents. Another resident supported the £5 tree fund contribution but asked whether it would generate enough funds, given that a significant number of residents were not HCERA members. Another suggestion was for a one-off £50 contribution.

A question was asked whether a subscription increase could be introduced between AGMs: this would have to be put to a general meeting of HCERA. Denise Fenwick pointed out how long it would take to generate any funding from increased subscriptions. A resident asked whether a “loan” could be made from existing funds. Maurice Drake asked whether an appeal for donations could be made; it was agreed that this was a possibility. A concern was expressed that the actual amount needed to fund of all the tree work was unknown.

Angela Cotton suggested that residents should be warned of the impending costs via the HCERA newsletter. It was also noted that some residents have no trees in their road that aren't already the responsibility of the council, or another body, so may be reluctant to bear additional costs. A resident asked for clarification of the principle of whether residents should only pay for what affects them directly or whether they should share costs in building the future of the estate.

Sue Green raised the issue of climate change bringing more extreme weather and the increased risk of trees falling which would necessitate additional tree work. John Dixon noted that the large trees on the EA bottom green grow on land rented by Abri but could potentially fall on houses in the estate. Ray George responded that he had been pushing Abri to take action over the trees in the tennis club corner, so far without result.

It was suggested that HCERA should hold an EGM, via Zoom to reduce costs, to vote on the action needed. Several residents expressed support for this approach: a written request signed by 25 members is required to call an EGM. The conclusion of the discussion was that the next step would fall to the leader of the Tree Group, a position for which a volunteer was sought. Ray George was pleased to add that Uta Kohl had recently volunteered to join the Tree Group.

There was applause for John Dixon's presentation.

## **7. Facebook Group Report**

The full version Michelle Hickling's Facebook Report is attached. It had been a successful year.

## 8. Election of Honorary Officers

Ray George explained that no additional nominations for honorary officers (chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary) had been received. Equally, with the exception of the treasurer, none of the current officers planned to stand down. The current officers were re-elected en bloc, with no votes against. This was proposed by Ray George and seconded by Angela Cotton. It was noted that position of vice-chair had been vacant for some time.

Ray renewed his appeal for a resident to stand as treasurer and, after a brief conversation about the work involved, Jackie Donnina, who is an accountant by profession, kindly volunteered.

Chair:	Ray George
Vice-Chair:	vacant
Treasurer:	Jackie Donnina
Secretary:	Denise Fenwick

## 9. Appointment of Honorary Auditor

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

**Action:** Ray George

## 10. Election of Street Representatives and Helpers

Ray George explained that no additional nominations for committee members (street reps and delivery/collection helpers) had been received. Equally, none of the current officers planned to stand down, although an additional street rep for EA was still needed. The current officers were re-elected en bloc, with no votes against. This was proposed by Angela Cotton and seconded by Sandie Dixon.

Street Rep EA 1:	Verity Robson
Street Rep EA 2:	Robert Williams
Street Rep EA :	Benjamin Davey
Street Rep SL:	Roger Goddard
Street Rep BGR:	Mike Farrelly
Street Rep FC:	Elizabeth German
Street Rep LW:	Val Laurent
Street Rep SG:	Angela Cotton

Other current helpers include:

EA deliveries: Wendy Boulter, Ann Howard, Jackie Williams

RIG: Dan Hopgood, Mark Farnell, John Scoates, Noel Waterston, John Dixon

Tree Group: Uta Kohl, Robert Williams, Peter Coxon

## 11. Election of Director of HCEL

No nominations for this position had been received. This was most disappointing since the opportunity for HCERA to appoint a HCEL director is the point of interlock between the two organisations. An appeal for volunteers was made. A resident asked for a presentation on the role of a director to be given to the residents. **Action: HCEL**

## 12. Report of Herbert Collins Estates Limited

John Green presented an update from HCEL - no separate report was provided.

Since the last AGM, Ben Whinnett had resigned his directorship and JohnG recorded the thanks of the company for all of Ben's hard work in establishing a payment system for ground rents etc, which was working well, provided that residents set up their standing orders. Tim Williams had taken over from Ben, working alongside John Green, John Dixon and Ray George to monitor the estate, discuss and agree on alterations, collect ground rents etc. John Green noted that the company needed younger people involved.

An HCEL members' meeting was held on Zoom on 10May22 but, sadly, was not well-attended. JohnG reminded residents that there was no joining fee and residents had only to request membership. An explanation was provided of how the questionnaire, which was distributed to residents in April 2021, had been used to develop HCEL policy on alterations etc. JohnG pointed out that it was still a draft policy which was being modified continuously. A resident asked for the next meeting to be in person.

JohnG appealed for residents to help the company out with a range of tasks such as financial administration and a survey to capture the differences between houses such as tiles, downpipes, colours etc. to establish a standard for the estate. The company had received a couple of offers to assist by forming a working group and Robert Williams agreed to participate. Christopher Tier offered help with sourcing suppliers of appropriate materials.

A resident asked what ground rents were used for. JohnG replied that most of the receipts were used to buy insurance, which was a major expense. He asked for a volunteer to help recommend the types of insurance that HCEL needed. It was noted that just under half of the houses are now freehold, so the contribution to HCEL is not balanced across the estate. Angela Cotton asked whether it helped HCEL if residents bought their freeholds. JohnG noted that the cost to HCEL of a solicitor is paid by the purchaser of the freehold.

Michelle Hickling asked whether information about HCEL is provided in the residents' welcome pack. The answer was yes and membership forms are included. She pointed out that the company does not use the Facebook group at all and that this is a missed opportunity to communicate with the residents. **Action: HCEL**

It was suggested that a link to the Facebook group should be added to the website HCEL page. **Action: HCEL**

Ray George commented that he had received a request for the process of applying for membership of HCEL to be explained on the website. It was not known whether membership application forms were available on the website. **Action: HCEL**

### **13. Any Other Business**

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

A resident asked about the validity of a leaflet from Transition Southampton on retrofitting insulation that had recently been put through his door. Angela Cotton kindly responded with an explanation of the role of Transition Southampton and description of the talks on offer, details of which would be published in the HCERA newsletter.

The meeting closed at 20:56

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