

# Minutes of Herbert Collins Estates Residents Association Annual General Meeting

Held in St. George Catholic College, Leaside Way  
Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 19:30

**Welcome:** Chair Ray George welcomed everyone to the meeting in the large hall of St. George Catholic College. 28 residents signed the attendance sheet.

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Ann Dempsey, Michelle Hickling and Val Laurent.

**Reports:** The minutes of the 2022 AGM, together with all the reports presented at the 2023 AGM were made available on the HCERA website in advance of the 2023 AGM and in hardcopy at the meeting.

## 1. Minutes of Annual General Meeting for 2021- 2022 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the AGM for the year 2021-2022, held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at Hardmoor Early Years Centre, Leaside Way, were proposed by Angela Cotton, seconded by Sandie Dixon and accepted. There was one amendment in item 6 Tree Group Report paragraph 5 line 1, whereby the name Dan Hopgood was replaced by John Dixon.

There were no matters arising.

## 2. Chairman's Report for 2022-2023

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

### a. Carols 2023

This year's carol concert will take place on Thursday 21st December 2023 at 19:00

### b. Thanks to St. George Catholic College

Ray thanked St. George Catholic College, especially Kyle, for their helping in setting up the AGM event.

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

## 3. Treasurer's Report for 2022-2023

The full version of Jackie Donnina's Treasurer's Report is attached. Ray George presented the report on her behalf and emphasised the followed points:

- a. The association's accounting period had been realigned with the fiscal calendar from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, resulting in a short prior period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.
- b. It was noted that the residents of FC had borne the cost of £660 for tree work.
- c. Under "Membership Fees Reconciliation", it was noted that the "% Residents" column referred to households, not HCERA members.
- d. The collection of membership fees remained "interesting", although Ray's experience was that most households pay £5 willingly when asked fact-to-face.

The Treasurer's Report was proposed by Sue Green and seconded by Kathleen Singleton.

## 4. Annual Subscription for 2023-4

It was proposed that the annual subscription should remain at £5.00, in the absence of any pressing need to change it. There were no objections.

## 5. Ethelburt Avenue Road Improvement Group Report

The full version of Dan Hopgood's Road Improvement Group Report is attached. Concerning paragraph 4 about modifications to width of EA to allow tree planting, Dan reaffirmed that the RIG was not willing to get involved in "road politics".

Dan noted some additional considerations:

### a. **Weather**

Dan emphasised the impact of weather, particularly heavy rain, degrading the condition of the EA surface more quickly. The RIG was considering putting in more gullies to conduct water away from the road surface.

### b. **Volunteers**

Dan appealed for EA residents support the road working party volunteers by providing them with refreshments. He also asked to volunteers to help with the verges at the bottom of EA

### c. **Financial Considerations**

Dan noted that although there was currently some £16k in the road fund, it would not take long to spend that amount. Southern Water had not been helpful, so the rainwater gullies would have to be self-funded. Were there to be a sewer collapse in EA, the RIG funds would be wiped out because Southern Water does not appear to know that they have drains there!

It had been decided to keep EA road fund contributions at £35 for the following year.

### d. **Speed Humps**

No work had been done on the speed humps, which were favoured by some residents and not by others.

### e. **Gas Main Work**

The gas main at the top of EA was beginning to fail, resulting in some road work on the right-hand side to replace the main, likely to be in mid-November 2023. The company had asked the RIG to look at the proposals for the work, which had been approved. John Dixon asked whether there would be much excavation in the road itself. Dan replied no, provided that the drawings showed the position of the main accurately.

The RIG Report was proposed by Annie Howard and seconded by Peter Coxon.

## 6. Tree Group Report

The full version of Robert Williams' Tree Group Report is attached. Robert presented the report in lieu of Uta Kohl.

He noted that some trees on the estate were dying as a result of the weather conditions, even though they had been doing well until now. The cypress in FC had some split branches to be removed, for which approval had been granted on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The group were looking at the cost of replacing the Himalayan Birch tree on the green in BGR that had died suddenly.

Concerning funding tree work, Robert observed that, up to now, the RIG had paid for tree work in EA, with HCERA underwriting much of the rest of the estate. The idea of a establishing a tree

fund had been mooted at the 2022 AGM – perhaps this should be deferred for a year? The amount needed would depend on the amount of tree work required. John Dixon asked whether there was any way to estimate the cost over the next five years.

It was observed that the larger trees were all being sorted out slowly and that work on smaller trees could be managed by residents. It was suggested that a tree surgeon could be approached for an estimate of future expenditure so that funding options could be presented at the 2024 AGM. Ray voiced his objection to increasing the subscription. No other comments were made.

Angela Cotton proposed that the £5 subscription could be supplemented by a £5 voluntary tree contribution. However Denise Fenwick noted that there was no official AGM proposal on which residents could vote. Angela also asked whether there was still a reserve of £10k in the general HCERA fund. This would require confirmation by the treasurer. **Action: Jackie Donnina**

The Tree Group Report was proposed by Annie Howard and seconded by Elizabeth German.

## **7. Facebook Group Report**

The full version Michelle Hickling's Facebook Report is attached. There were no comments.

The Facebook Group Report was proposed by Ray George and seconded by Dan Hopgood.

## **8. Election of Honorary Officers**

Ray George reported that no additional nominations for honorary officers (chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary) had been received and none of the current officers wished to stand down. The current officers were re-elected en bloc, with no votes against. This was proposed by Ruth Hogben and seconded by Sue Green.

As the position of vice-chair had been vacant for some time, Angela Cotton proposed Mike Farrelly, seconded by Denise Fenwick. The honorary officers resulting were:

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

## **9. Appointment of Honorary Auditor**

Ruth Hogben kindly offered to continue as honorary auditor. This was proposed by Annie Howard and seconded by Peggy Gow.

## **10. Election of Street Representatives and Helpers**

Ray George reported that no additional nominations for committee members (street reps and delivery/collection helpers) had been received. Equally, none of the remaining officers planned to stand down, although an additional street rep for EA was needed because Benjamin Davey had stood down. The current officers were re-elected en bloc, with no votes against. This was proposed by Ray George and seconded by Elizabeth German.

Street Rep EA 1:	Verity Robson (12-month sabbatical May 2023-May 2024)
Street Rep EA 2:	Robert Williams
Street Rep EA 3:	position vacant
Street Rep SL:	position vacant (Martin Buckley will kindly do deliveries)
Street Rep BGR:	Mike Farrelly

Street Rep FC: Elizabeth German  
Street Rep LW: Val Laurent (Lord Mayor of Southampton May 2023-May2024)  
Street Rep SG: Angela Cotton

[During refreshments following the AGM, Ben Catten was recruited as the third Ethelburt Avenue Street Rep.]

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**

Ray George reported that no nominations for this position had been received.

## **12. Report of Herbert Collins Estates Limited**

The full version of John Green's HCEL Report is attached.

John drew attention to the level of income received by HCEL, which amounted to only £1,164 from fixed ground rents plus a little from freehold sales and alterations and is not keeping pace with rising costs. This is causing concern about the long-term financial viability of the company and solutions being considered include imposing a service charge for leasehold properties and/or increasing the cost of approvals for alterations.

JohnG reported on a recent meeting with Jon Willetts, Historic Environment Officer for Southampton City Council, who came to review alterations made in the estate. JohnG noted that JonW's perspective was different from that of HCEL: while both use the same management plan, JonW looked at the front of the house and the overall appearance of the road whereas HCEL considered both the front and back aspects. JonW inspected alterations to determine whether they differed from the planning permission granted. Minor infringements would not attract enforcement action, however any variations would be noted for solicitors to pick up in the event of a sale.

Consideration was given to how the estate might (have to) change with the requirements of net zero and climate change e.g. allowing double glazing on new wooden and metal windows. JonW said that the Planning Office's view has meant that, on occasion, owners are prevented from implementing best practice, although he acknowledged that this may have to change.

JonW was looking at how the estate had developed; Robert Williams' book about the estate showed the phases of development such as changing tiles and rainwater goods. JonW planned to produce a spreadsheet of significant features and asked for HCEL's help to identify them. He was also anxious to collate the details of appropriate tradespeople – there is no such list at the moment. He is keen that HCEL and the planning department operate in agreement; similarly, HCEL wants to keep an open dialogue with JonW. JohnG took the opportunity to reinforce to any residents considering making alterations that they should obtain HCEL approval before applying for planning permission, suggesting that applications would be more likely to succeed if accompanied by HCEL approval.

Dan Hopgood asked about solar panels which are not permitted on main roofs but are acceptable on outbuildings. JohnG said that this policy needs to be reviewed, along with electric charging points for cars. Dan posited that the success of the estate will depend significantly on

people wanting to live in it, in modern times and further observed that it looked like the company's draft policy was holding the estate's progress back. JohnG countered that the draft policy could be changed.

This discussion is directly relevant to the following AOB item and a request to the company to look at putting solar panels on rear roofs. It was agreed that this would be put on the HCEL agenda for the meeting the following week. **Action: HCEL**

Peter Coxon asked about the company's view of having double or triple glazing on replacement windows. While JohnG answered yes, this would be permitted, Peter pointed out that he had already obtained Jon Willett's agreement but that the company had not responded to the request since April 2023.

Peter Coxon asked when, if a resident submitted architectural drawings for an alteration to HCEL, the resident could expect a response? In addition, he asked where it was written down that a resident needed to instigate a preliminary discussion with the company before making any submission. John Dixon agreed that the process needed clarifying and suggested a meeting with Peter. **Action: HCEL**

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

Angela Cotton presented the only other item of business which had been lodged with the secretary in advance of the meeting. Residents had asked her for a discussion on the issue of solar panels. See item 12 above.

The meeting closed at 20:48

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