

# Queen Elizabeth Park Residents' Association (QEPRRA)

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2009

### Item 1 - Welcome

1. The Chairman, Grace Blake, welcomed 54 residents and Sharon Trimby, Debbie McLaughlin and Helen Helsby from Hazelvine Ltd to the Meeting. A further 40 residents had written to give their apologies and provide comments on a variety of issues. The Committee would consider their views alongside those expressed at the Meeting.

2. Grace thanked the outgoing Committee for their work, and also Dick Moody and his Team for producing the Summer Fayre despite appalling weather. Grace thanked Esporta and Budgens for their ongoing sponsorship of the Fayre, and QEP residents for their support, comments, and guidance on major issues the Committee had dealt with.

### Item 2 - Minutes of the AGM held on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007

3. The Draft Minutes had been published in a written newsletter and on the QEPRRA website; and residents had been invited to request a copy in the notice of the AGM. There was no request for the Minutes to be read at the Meeting. The Minutes were approved unanimously.

### Item 3 - Chairman's Presentation

4. Grace reminded residents of what had been achieved in the past four years to improve the quality of life at QEP. The bus route remained off-site; Grange Road would not be one-way; the proposal for access via Goddard Close had been dropped; a teenage hard play area would not take up a large part of the Village Green; the proposed community centre would be housed in the building originally approved for the Town Square; and negotiations regarding the provision of a LEAP on the Village Green continued. Some issues were ongoing and new issues had arisen. The Meeting would be invited to comment on various proposals.

5. Grace spoke on the **ongoing issues:**

a. **Lighting on the Greens.** Vandalism to the bollard lights had cost residents £80,000 to repair over 3 years. Previous AGMs had agreed that having a "dark campus" – no lighting on the Greens - should be tested. As Trinity had failed to transfer funds to Hazelvine at the changeover of managing agents and a cash flow problem had resulted, the lighting had not been maintained. Vandalism had quickly created the "dark campus". The result (damaged bollards) was unsightly but there had been less vandalism and nuisance.

b. Discussions had been taking place for with the Developers for more than two years regarding the unsuitability of the bollard lighting. The Developers had offered 3 options:

- (1) replace the existing bollards with more robust bollards (later withdrawn);
- (2) replace with 15 lighting columns; or
- (3) remove the bollards and pay the Management Company the residue from £20,000.

Grace detailed the pros and cons of each option. Grace also presented evidence gleaned from the Internet of experience elsewhere of removing lighting from such areas.

c. After debate, **the Meeting was asked to vote on whether or not it wished the Greens to be lit at night.** Of the **52 residents** present at the time, **9 favoured lighting; 40 no lighting; and 3 abstained.** **As this was an issue which affected all residents, a consultation paper would be sent to all service charge payers before QEPRRA advised the Developers of the Residents' wishes.**

d. **Eroded (Grunden Gravel) Footpaths on the Greens.** Discussions had taken place with the Developers. They had offered to repair them but had not yet provided details of their proposals.

e. **LEAP - Current Position.** Guildford BC (GBC) had accepted a cash settlement from the Developers to forego the provision of the hard play area on the Village Green. However, they were insisting that the LEAP should be provided. There had been strong opposition to the LEAP and QEPRRA

had represented that to GBC. The principal objections were: increased likelihood of anti-social behaviour in the evening and at night; the prospect of an unsightly enclosure if it had to be secured at night; the space it would occupy on the flat area of the Green; and the **probability that residents would have to pay for its upkeep and maintenance**. The matter would soon come to a head and Residents' views would be needed to confirm whether QEPRAs should continue their opposition or embrace the Proposal and consult residents on their preferred scheme.

f. After debate, **the Meeting was asked to vote on the provision of a LEAP**. Of the **52 residents present, 1 was in favour, 47 against and 4 had no particular view**.

g. The Developers had provided 3 outline proposals for the LEAP, but they were only indicative and the locations were not well defined. If it became necessary to give a view on a favoured scheme, the Proposals would be put on the QEP website with an on-line questionnaire.

h. **Community Centre**. At the last AGM it had been reported that it was proposed that the Community Centre would be housed on the first and second floors of the "mixed-use building" near Budgens. QEPRAs had argued there was no proof of "need" as defined in the relevant regulations governing the use of S106 funds and that a community centre would not be viable. GBC had appointed a consultant to investigate the issues. His report stated a need for a centre but expressed concerns regarding its viability. GBC had decided to proceed and when the building had been completed, it would be advertised as being available to suitable community groups. One of the tests for acceptance would be the sustainability of their proposal.

i. QEPRAs had continued to argue that it was unjust for QEP residents to pay for the external maintenance of the Community Centre especially as part of a commercial building. (QEP residents would be expected bear two thirds of the cost).

j. After discussion, **the Meeting was asked to confirm that it wished QEPRAs to continue its opposition to QEP residents having to contribute to the external maintenance costs and to monitor the process of finding users of the community space. The Meeting confirmed its support for both tasks**.

6. Grace then spoke on some **new issues**:

a. **Speeding and Need for Road Markings**. At the last AGM there had been discussion of residents' concerns about speeding and road markings at certain junctions. Discussions had taken place with a highways engineer from Surrey County Council (SCC). The original design concept for QEP was that the roads would limit speed to 20mph (but not a statutory limit); there would be no road signing to avoid "urban clutter"; and junctions would not be marked to cause uncertainty and increase caution. Nevertheless, SCC was willing to help.

b. Grace outlined the options that had been discussed which included:

- (1) applying for a statutory 20mph speed limit (significant cost and time);
- (2) non-statutory 20mph signs at the entrances to QEP, possibly combined with simple entrance features;
- (3) possibly having repeater signs within the estate;
- (4) "Give Way" signs and marking at the following junctions: Railton Road/Macdownall Road, Henderson Avenue/Whateley Close, Henderson Avenue/Crowcroft Close and Rivett-Drake Close/Macdownall Road.

There was also a problem exiting the car parking area opposite the TA Centre, into Railton Road and measures had been offered which might help. Unfortunately, SCC couldn't fund the whole cost of the works and had proposed that costs be shared (*subject to funding being available at SCC*). If all the works that had been discussed were carried out, the QEP share could be around £5000. Applying for a statutory speed limit would cost around £8000.

c. In discussion, additional requirements and adjustments were suggested. Several were against too much signing and urban clutter. **There was general agreement that action was needed** – although 2 opposed any action. The range of opinions made it clear that **further consultation with all residents was required before any decisions were taken**.

d. It had previously been suggested that there should be **features at the entrances to QEP** to inform visitors they were entering the Development. They would be much simpler than the feature at Forster Road and it had been suggested they could incorporate a sign indicating that a

maximum speed of 20mph was appropriate. More than half those present agreed in principle with only one against. **Proposals would be drawn up and residents consulted.**

e. **Rules for the Use of the Greens and Communal Areas.** It had been proposed that the Rules applying to Greens and Communal Areas should be displayed. The Planning Consent for QEP required that open spaces should be accessible to all. Residents had covenants in their Transfer Documents which governed their behaviour and use of these areas. Visitors did not, and there was no guide for visitors as to what was acceptable activity or behaviour and what was not. The Directors of the Management Company considered the display of some Rules was necessary. This was not to restrict the reasonable use of the open areas but to protect the interests of the Residents who paid for their upkeep. Examples were given of activities that could have a financial impact on residents. Whilst enforcement of rules had problems, most people were likely to respect them. For those who did not, displaying the rules would add authority to the actions of anyone who challenged the transgressors whether police, PCSO or resident.

f. There was discussion about the benefits and potential problems of displaying rules. There was also concern about too much clutter. **30 were in favour or investigating proposals while 12 were not.** Ultimately **it would be a matter for the Directors to decide but Proposals would be circulated to the Residents for comment.**

g. **Lighting on QEP.** There had been comments from residents that the Lighting did not need to be on all night. The hours of lighting on the adopted roads was decided by SCC but could be varied in the managed areas. A majority favoured switching lights off around midnight but it was observed that some lighting might be needed on dark mornings in areas used by residents leaving home early, particularly parking areas. **QEPRAs would formulate proposals and circulate them for comment by residents.**

h. **Anti-social Behaviour.** This was an ever-present problem with quiet periods, sudden flare ups, and particular trouble spots such as the Town Square area and the three LAPs. Compared with many other areas, and based upon Police statistics of reported crime, QEP was not considered to have a serious problem. The Police did take our concerns seriously and had proposed that, if it was possible for them to rent space on the upper floors of the mixed-use building, they would open an office for the use of our local police and police visiting the area.

i. **Residents were reminded that they should report all incidents to the Police Control Room (0845 125 2222).** The suggestion that CCTV might be employed on QEP had been investigated but was considered to be too expensive at present. In the absence of live monitoring it would only be of use after an event if the recorded pictures were good enough. In discussion there was some interest in having regular security patrols but this would have major cost implications. An occasional recurring problem was excessive drinking by groups resulting in noisy behaviour, sometimes in the early hours of the morning. The suggestion, that the Police and Local Authority should obtain powers to prohibit the drinking of alcohol on the Greens and other communal areas in order to deal with this problem, was being actively investigated. There was a need for caution in order to be certain that there weren't any unwelcome implications, such as a total ban on social drinking on the Greens. Mention was made from the floor of the anti-social behaviour problems being encountered in Little Street. **Litter** continues to be a problem costing residents around £15,000 a year to clear up. Residents were urged to pick up litter when they could.

j. **Phase 9 (Miller Homes) Transfer Issues.** These Issues had still not been resolved. The Phase 9 Transfers have been incorrectly drafted and consequently Phase 9 was still not being maintained by the Management Company. It also meant, currently, that Phase 9 residents were not contributing to the maintenance of the communal areas and open spaces of QEP as a whole. The deficit was being made up by the residents in Phases 1-8. Linden Homes had sold the land to Miller Homes with the correct covenants in place and were pressing Miller Homes to remedy the situation. Until this situation had been remedied, the Management Company could not be handed over by the Developers to directors appointed by the Residents.

k. **Management Company Accounts 2007/8 year.** The Accounts for the first under Hazelvine's management, were nearing completion. The Expenditure would be covered by the Budget so there would be no extra demand from Hazelvine for 2007/8. The Accounts for Trinity's final year (2006/7) had

yet to be completed but it was clear that Expenditure had exceeded the Budget for that year and a demand for additional payment would be necessary. Hazelvine coped well with the cash-flow problems that arose from Trinity's inability to hand over the Reserve Funds at the time of changeover and it was expected that the situation would be resolved soon. It had been agreed that all outstanding moneys will be collected by Hazelvine.

#### Item 4 - Treasurer's Report

7. As the Treasurer was unable to be present, the Chairman presented a summary of her report advising the current financial position of the Association.

Total funds held by the Association were £2645 comprising:

a.	General Fund	£506;
b.	Legal Fund	£169;
c.	Fayre & other social events	£470;
d.	Event 'Float'	£1500.

**The Treasurer's Report was accepted.**

#### Item 5 - Estate Management.

8. The Representatives from Hazelvine presented their Report which is at Annex A.

#### Item 6 - Resolution

9. The General Committee proposed an amendment to the Rules as follows:

**Rule 5 Management. Add new Rule 'c'. Code of Conduct for QEPRA Committees.**

##### **Conduct Generally**

- Members should not bring the Association or the Committee into disrepute.

Members should not speak or write externally on behalf of the Association or Committee except with the agreement or mandate of the Association or Committee. Any correspondence sent on behalf of the Association or Committee should be copied to the Secretary who shall make it available to all members of the Committee. Press and similar enquiries should be directed to the Chairman.

- Members of the Committee should at all times work within the rules laid down in the Constitution.
- Members shall support the principle of collective responsibility for committee decisions
- Members of the Committee shall inform the Chairman or Secretary if they are pursuing, in a personal capacity, any matter which affects residents generally.

##### **Conduct of Committee Meetings**

- Members of the Committee shall follow the guidance of the Chairman in the conduct of the Meeting.

Members shall be courteous to each other at all times and allow each other to speak. Strongly felt disagreements and passionate arguments are often elements of the most effective committees (and genuine debate). **Please note that arguing for an unpopular viewpoint is not grounds for committee dismissal** - But if a committee member *consistently* disrupts meetings or prevents the organization from working well, removal may be appropriate..

Members shall remember that the purpose of the Meeting is to benefit residents generally and not specific individuals.

##### **Conflicts of Interest**

Members shall disclose any interest, whether personal or on behalf of any group they represent, that they consider could affect or influence their approach to the matter under discussion.

##### **Breach of the Code of Conduct**

- If a member of the Committee does not abide by the Code of Conduct they will be warned by the Chairman that if they break the Code again the Meeting will be adjourned. (The Member transgressing may also be invited to leave in order to allow work to proceed).
- If the person refuses to leave the Meeting after being invited to do so by the Chairman the Chairman should adjourn the Meeting.

- A complaint, that a committee member has failed to abide by the Code of Conduct or has committed an act that is considered to be gross misconduct, shall be tabled at a committee meeting called for this purpose only. All parties shall be notified in writing in advance and care must be taken to ensure that all concerned parties are given a fair hearing. The Committee, at a special committee meeting for that sole purpose may, at its discretion, remove any member by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members of the Committee who vote.

**Vacancies-Removal** *Vacancies in offices due to death, resignation, or other causes shall be filled for the balance of the term by a majority vote of the Committee at any Regular or Special Meeting.*

- A member who fails to attend three consecutive general or committee meetings, without submitting an apology for absence, shall be removed automatically as a member of the Committee.

**The Resolution was approved.**

#### **Item 7 -Election of Officers and Committee Members**

10. **The following were elected:**

Chairman: Grace Blake; Secretary: Bill Perkins; Treasurer: Josette Pipe.

General Committee Members: Michael Andrews; Colin Bayman; Robin Clinch; Emily Dyason; Mark Harding; Nick Holloway; Linda Keane; Jane Moore; Eve Moreve; Sharon Stokes. Kath Whitehead.

11. Although there was one more nomination than allowed under the Rules for General Committee Members, the Meeting agreed unanimously that all the nominees should be elected.

#### **Item 8 - Closing**

12. Whilst questions had been taken during the Presentations a lack of further time prevented a Q&A session at the end. In response to a suggestion from the floor, **it was agreed that more information would be provided on certain issues with consultation wherever appropriate** (recorded in the foregoing minutes). Grace thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at about 10.30pm.

Bill Perkins  
Secretary, QEPR

**A copy of the PowerPoint presentation can be provided on request.**

Queen Elizabeth Park  
Managing Agent Report from  
1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 to date

**Gardening and Landscaping:**

Over the past year we have established regular meetings with Redfield's, the contracted firm responsible for the grounds at QEP, and the Resident Association.

The purposes of the meetings are to ensure the grounds are being maintained to an acceptable standard. The overall opinion appears to be that the majority residents are happy with the service that Redfield's provide. However some residents have experienced problems which generally relate to the recent snow and cold weather, lack of replanting and areas that have been missed.

In addition we have received some complaints regarding pruning and trimming, Redfield's are aware of these complaints and will be looking to rectify these areas in the next few weeks. We will continue to monitor Redfield's performance and we would appreciate resident's feedback with regard to the grounds maintenance.

A number of residents have again raised the issue of replanting, as a result Redfield's have recently produced a Replanting Report which the Resident Association will be reviewing, and deciding a programme in which work will be undertaken.

The Resident Association will also be looking with us at individual one-off projects in the future, such as Tree maintenance and re-landscaping small sections or replacing soft landscaping.

**Green issues:**

Hazelvine believe Green Issues really are fundamental to ensure our children will have a world that is fit to live in. We are passionate about minimising our impact on the environment and have recently established the Hazelvine Green Standard which sets out initiatives we would be keen to introduce. We would like to find a 'champion' from among the residents to co-ordinate and promote the benefits at site level.

The Hazelvine Green Standard - Our Green Commitment to our residents

- Access to recycling bins.
- Water butts - for watering flower beds and washing cars.
- Compost heaps or composters for leaves and cuttings - to be managed by our gardeners.
- Combined shopping deliveries - through our secure message board.
- Car sharing - through our secure message board.
- Secure storage for cycles and promotion of local cycle routes.
- Easy access to local bus and train timetables.
- Free - cycle/Swap Shop area on website message boards.
- Promotion of local car clubs (if appropriate).
- Travel Plans - and to act as Travel Plan Co-ordinator.
- Identifying areas on our developments where vegetables or herbs can be grown by residents.
- Promotion of local farmers markets and shops supplying local produce.
- Replacing, progressively, blown light bulbs with low energy bulbs.
- Maximising our use of email and communication thorough our website, to reduce the amount of hard-copy mail and postage.

Should you be interested in becoming a 'champion' or being involved in the green issues please contact [Debbiehazelvine.com](mailto:Debbiehazelvine.com) Tel: 01628 529765

**Flats Only - Maintenance Works:**

Annesley House

As per the terms of the lease, the internal redecoration was due this year. However, we feel that

the internal condition of the property is very good and therefore the redecoration is not currently required, we will review this situation at the end of 2009. We had no objections from residents who wished for the terms of the lease to be upheld

#### Rivett-Drake Close

There have been repeated problems cars parking on the paved areas outside Block 15 - 22 causing the slabs to crack. We are now looking to tarmac the area.

#### **Financial Report:**

As I am sure many of the residents are already aware, when Hazelvine took over from Trinity Estates as the managing agent, there was a large deficit on the account. Trinity previously has kept control of chasing those arrears and legal proceedings against those who have still not paid. The decision has been made that any outstanding debts incurred during the period Trinity managed the Estate will be passed to Hazelvine to collect.

We have now prepared draft accounts for year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008 which are currently being reviewed by us and your committee and will be sent to you in due course. Please feel free to visit our website [www.Hazelvine.com](http://www.Hazelvine.com)

Hazelvine answered a number of questions from the floor relating to individual issues.