

Queen Elizabeth Park Residents' Association (QEPRRA)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 30th June 2010.

Item 1 Welcome

1. The Chairman, Grace Blake, welcomed 56 residents and Nigel Burnand and Martin Nicoll from Hazelvine Ltd to the Meeting. A number of residents had conveyed their apologies for not being able to attend.
2. Grace thanked the outgoing Committee for their work, and also Dick Moody and his Team for again producing the Summer Fayre in September, fortunately in better weather this time. Grace also thanked Esporta and Budgens for their ongoing assistance and particularly, QEP residents for their strong support, comments, and guidance on the major issues the Committee had dealt with and, with residents' support, achieved significant successes.

Item 2 Minutes of the AGM held on the 26th March 2009.

3. The Draft Minutes had been published in a written newsletter sent to all households and on the QEPRRA website. It was agreed that the minutes be taken as read and were approved unanimously.

Item 3 Chairman's Presentation

4. Grace's presentation was informative and at times humorous identifying the successes, the issues requiring input from residents before works are put in hand and identifying some of the estate management issues which need to be worked on. Grace interspaced the serious business with snippets of the history of QEP which were much appreciated by the audience. A copy of the slide presentation can be provided, on request.

Item 3a Chairman's Update

- 5 Significant successes since the last AGM
 - a. there will be no LEAP on the Green (which drew loud applause),
 - b. the Community Facility is in the process of being let to the New Life Baptist Church (NLBC) who would operate it for the benefit of the community,
 - c. the NLBC and the developers have agreed that QEP residents will not have any responsibility for the maintenance of the building
 - d. the long running dispute with the developers regarding the lighting bollards on the Green and the badly eroded footpaths, has been resolved.
- a. The developers, responding to residents' wishes, applied for planning consent to be relieved of the liability to provide a LEAP on the Green and offered the Council a cash payment of £65,000 in lieu, to be used to improve the existing facilities at Tilehouse, Worplesdon Road. GBC Planning opposed the proposal but the Committee responded to the weight of residents' responses and our Ward Councillors support for the proposal and agreed.
- b. The NLBC put forward a proposal which expressed their intention to mitigate as far as possible the concerns which residents' had expressed about having a community centre on the site. They appear to have a competent team and adequate resources to provide a well managed and successful facility.
- c. The prospect of being expected to pay for the external maintenance of the greater part of what had become a commercial property was considered unjust by most residents. The developers offered a cash contribution to the lessee and the NLBC had confirmed their willingness to undertake all maintenance on their part of the building.
- d. Following the discussion at the last AGM and the subsequent consultation with residents, it was clear that the majority of residents agreed that the lighting bollards on the two larger greens should be removed and not be replaced with any other form of lighting. Negotiations with the developers regarding the unfitness of the bollard lighting and the significant erosion of the paths resulted in an agreement that the bollards would be removed, the paths reinstated and a residual cash payment being made by the

developers to the Management Company as a contribution towards future maintenance. The final account is being prepared but the payment is expected to be close to £20,000. The works are complete.

6 QEPRAs Accounts Overview.

Grace reported the current position of the QEPRAs Accounts as having an overall balance of £3019 comprising General Fund £506; Legal fund £169; Fayre 'c/f' £844; Event 'Float' £1500. No questions were asked.

Item 3b Reporting Progress and Seeking Instructions.

7. Grace reported progress on other issues and sought instructions, illustrated with appropriate slides:

a. There are three commercial units on the ground floor of the Mixed Use Building. The only expression of interest currently is for a **Pizza take-away**. GBC Planning have advised that the planning consent for the building permits this use but the operator would need to apply for planning permission for signs, flues and comply with noise limitations. The scope for objections may therefore be limited. The meeting expressed its concern at the prospect of this proposal becoming reality. **The committee will monitor the situation but residents may need to respond strongly with objections if and when the opportunity arises.**

b. **Speeding, road markings at junctions and entrance features.** At the last AGM there had been strong support for some action being taken to indicate that the QEP roads were designed for a maximum speed of 20mph and that certain junctions should be more clearly marked for safety to indicate which roads should assume priority. A consultation involving all residents was carried out after the AGM which showed strong support for the marking of certain junctions with a preference for road painting and as few signs on posts as possible. It was the view that the recommended speed should be shown at the entrances to the development, possibly as part of an entrance feature signifying entry to the development. In certain places, a speed reminder might be painted on the road. These would be non-statutory indications, the consultation showed significant opposition to a statutory speed limit being applied for.

These roads are all adopted. Discussion had taken place with Surrey County Council (SCC) throughout the past year. SCC's requirement had varied from time to time and at one point became unaffordable. Recent discussions have taken a more favourable turn and it now seems possible that the junctions could be marked in a way which does not require signs on posts, that "Slow" may be a substitute for an actual speed being quoted and some standard "Gateway" signs (incorporating a recommended speed) might be adaptable to our needs.

A contractor is preparing proposals and when these are received residents will be advised, with the costs which will have to be borne from Management Company funds. The works will need to have SCC's approval and SCC will be asked to adopt the highway markings on completion.

c. **Rules for the Use of the Greens and Communal Areas.**

The committee had taken account of the comments made at the last AGM regarding the proposal that basic rules for the use of the greens and communal areas. Taking into account the arguments for and against, it remained the committee's view that such signs were necessary. Grace showed examples of the types of signs that were being proposed, larger text signs to be placed at strategic points and smaller symbol signs that could be used locally which were relevant to a particular issue at that location.

Whilst some concerns were expressed and acknowledged, most present did not object to the proposals. **The proposals will be put to the directors of the Management Company for their approval of the content and decision.**

There were calls for more police intervention. Grace advised that this was unlikely as police resources are very limited and directed where most trouble occurred which made it essential that residents report any incidents to the police control room (0845 125 2222)

d. **Lighting in Management Company areas.**

Following the suggestion made at the last AGM that the lighting in the communal areas may not need to be on all night, Nick Holloway had investigated the possibilities. He had identified the control points for each area of the estate. This had revealed that the current time switches, which require manual adjustment throughout the year are unsuitable. **The meeting agreed that the clocks should be replaced.**

As a test, the lighting in one area had been switched off between midnight and 6am. Because of the way the cables ran or had been connected this had caused the lighting in car parking areas to be switched off along with the footpath/area lighting. This had led to adverse comments from some residents who needed to walk to their cars in the early morning.

It is Nick's intention to identify further what switching is possible in each area and then to seek a representative in that area who will discuss with neighbours to the hours of lighting they would find acceptable.

A comment was made that lamps in some of the bollard lights were excessively bright. **Nick agreed to investigate whether a lower wattage lamp could be used.**

The hours of lighting for the columns (those with numbers) on the roads which have been adopted SCC are decided by SCC.

e. **Grange Road speed tables.**

Grace reported the representations which had been made to SCC regarding the new speed tables following residents' complaints. The official SCC line is that they are the same as before (greeted with laughter!) and they are reluctant to take any action. The issue has been raised by QEPRA representatives at the two most recent SCC Local Committee meetings. On both occasions, consultation meeting have been promised but have not materialised. **It was clear that the meeting wished Jim Blake and Nick Holloway to continue to press the issue on behalf of residents.**

f. **Grange Road and QEP parking restrictions.**

Grace advised the meeting that QEPRA had submitted comments which strongly opposed the proposals to introduce parking restrictions in Little Street. Also, opposing the draconian restrictions proposed for Grange Road which would lead to displacement parking, probably into QEP, and suggested less severe measures. The proposals for parking restrictions at the Grange Road/Railton Road junctions were not opposed as inconsiderate parking at the junction was of concern to residents in that part of Railton Road. QEPRA had also expressed concern about the very restrictive proposals in the roads around the Woodbridge Hill doctors surgery which would inconvenience many QEP residents needing to visit the surgery. **The actions met with the approval of the meeting.**

g. **Routine maintenance and repair.**

Grace showed a number of slides to illustrate that some of the installations on the estate, particularly wood and paintwork, are in need of repair and/or treatment. Where this is the responsibility of the Management Company, Hazelvine will be asked to get it done. **Owners of property were reminded that the covenants on their properties require them to ensure that paintwork and wood treatments are refreshed every 4 or 5 years.**

h. **Proposal for a Boules/Petanque terrain.**

A resident had proposed that, as a measure to increase social contact on the development, consideration be given to the construction of a petanque terrain within QEP, possibly on the main Green. A lively debate ensued with the meeting being divided 50/50 on whether the matter should be pursued further. It was clear from the discussion that there is likely to be strong opposition to it, or anything else, being located on any of the Greens. **The committee will try to identify other possible locations and will consult with residents again if a potentially suitable site is found.**

Item 4 Summer Fayre,

A small committee had formed and proposed to hold a Fayre on the main green on the 11th September. This can only happen if sufficient residents volunteer to help, particularly on the day. **Residents were urged to confirm their support now.**

Item 5 Estate Management.

8 Hazelvine Report.

- a. Martin Nicoll, Hazelvine's estate manager introduced himself and his Managing Director, Nigel Burnand, to the meeting and presented the Managing Agents Report, which is attached. Martin requested that residents register on the Hazelvine website www.hazelvine.com which amongst other things enables residents to access their individual account information, make payments on-line and report faults.
- b. QEPRA had expressed concern about a high level of debtors. Martin presented a current statement (attached) which indicated that Hazelvine's recent actions to recover debt had had some effect and they were now taking aggressive measures to recover long term debt. [Any resident that finds themselves unable to pay their service charge when demanded should contact Hazelvine to discuss an acceptable arrangement].

9 Gardening Committee Report

The report of the Gardening Committee was presented by Dinah Bisdee and is attached to these minutes. It covers the things that have been done, things that are in hand and plans for the future. It draws attention to unauthorised removal of plants from front gardens and seeks the assistance of residents in keeping the development looking good.

The Gardening committee was aware that some residents were concerned that trees had been removed (due to death or disease) and not replaced, Dinah assured the meeting that a tree planting programme would be implemented in the appropriate season this year.

Comments from residents emphasised the need for trees in the common areas of the Park to be replaced and possibly increased. One resident was also concerned about the removal of trees from private gardens. The meeting was reminded that the removal or reduction in the canopy of a tree required a planning application and consent from GBC. This would be the case until 2013 at the earliest.

The Gardening committee was thanked for its work.

10 Neighbourhood Watch Report.

Robin Clinch, Neighbourhood Watch coordinator spoke briefly about current issues affecting the development and particularly asked residents to be aware that opportunistic burglars are about, particularly during the warm weather when doors and ground floor windows are often left open.

11 Phase 9 Transfer Issues – Impact on Phases 1-8.

Residents have been told previously of the fundamental error in the Transfer documents of the Phase 9 properties which wrongly define the "estate". The consequence is that Phase 9 is not contributing to the maintenance of the open spaces as a whole, as intended, and consequently the shortfall is falling on the residents of Phases 1-8. There has been regrettably little progress in the past year. The fault appears to lie with Miller Homes and their solicitors and they have failed to rectify the problem. Following recent discussions, Linden Homes, who sold the land to Miller with the correct covenants, have decided to seek financial recompense from Miller on behalf of the Management Company, based upon costing information provided by Hazelvine, with the intention of spurring them into action.

It is in everyone's interest that this issue is resolved as the Management Company can insist that the Transfers are corrected when the properties come up for sale. A time which may not be convenient for the seller or purchaser.

12 **Covenants and planning consent.**

Grace reported that from time to time residents have complained or enquired whether their neighbours are breaking the covenants on their properties or whether planning consent is required for additions or alterations to a property.

A number of slides were shown illustrating breaches of the covenants, of note were examples of wheelie bins and other receptacles for rubbish being left in view from the adjacent footway and satellite dish locations which would not comply with planning rules. **The Management Company will be writing to all residents shortly to remind them of the covenants that apply to all properties.**

Grace reminded residents that there were planning constraints on the development and that any additions or alterations to their properties, including significant lopping of trees or their removal, are likely to need planning consent. GBC Planning department should be consulted.

13 **Damage to Front Gardens.**

The Gardening Committee report refers to the unauthorised removal of plants from front gardens.

The front gardens of all homes are maintained by the Management Company and is paid for from our annual rentcharge. When plants die, they will in due course be replaced. The purpose of this is to maintain the overall appearance of the estate and thus protect the investment of all owners. Some of the planting provided by the developers' has proved to be unsatisfactory and some owners have decided to pre-empt replacement by the Management Company and replaced it with plants of their choosing. Providing the plants chosen are in keeping with the character of the estate, there is no objection to this.

However, a small number of residents have removed the existing planting, in some instances leaving the ground bare, in others introducing materials, a style or plants which are not in keeping with the estate as a whole. **Grace sought the views of the meeting which overwhelmingly agreed that in such cases the cost of restoring the gardens to their original style should be charged to the resident/owner of the property.**

Item 6 Resolutions.

14 Amendments to QEPR Rules. Proposed by the General Committee.

The proposed amendment to the Rules had been circulated to all residents registered to receive email and copies were available at the meeting.

The amendments proposed by the General Committee were approved by the required majority.

A copy of the revised Rules is attached to these Minutes and is available from the Secretary.

Item 7 Election of Officers and Committee Members.

Grace displayed a list of all the residents, elected or co-opted, who had participated in the General Committee since the last AGM and expressed her thanks to them.

15. **The following were elected:**

Chairman: Mark Finnegan; Secretary: Jim Blake; Treasurer: Ulrika Dykstra.

General Committee Members: Michael Andrews; Helen Belkhoodja; Dinah Bisdee; Grace Blake; Robin Clinch; Nick Holloway; Eve Moreve; Steve Nankervis; Bill Perkins; Josette Pipe.

Item 7 Questions and Any Other Business

- a. A questioner asked whether it was the intention to oppose the introduction of statutory parking restrictions anywhere within the development. Grace expressed her concern, and that of the outgoing committee, that should parking restrictions be introduced at any location there would be displacement parking and thus a need for more restrictions. Since the shortage of parking space

is a problem across the development such restrictions would be likely to lead to more problems than they solve.

- b. A resident expressed his concern that trees had been taken down and not replaced, thus adversely affecting the character of the Park. He was assured by the Gardening Committee representative that at least an equal number to the trees removed to date would be replaced this coming winter, their locations may not be identical since some of the trees had been removed due to disease and the location may still be affected.
- c. A further resident expressed his concern that the vista had been adversely affected by the removal of certain trees, possibly earlier than really necessary. The point had been noted and again assurances were given regarding replacement.
- d. A resident reported the the GBC recycling collection frequently missed his house. Other residents had had similar experiences. **Residents were urged to report all missed collections to The Recycling Hotline**, Telephone: +44 01483 444499 Email: recycling@guildford.gov.uk

Michael Andrews then surprised the retiring Chairman and Secretary with some very kind words of appreciation for their efforts since QEPRAs was formed and presented flowers which were much appreciated.

Grace thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at about 10.00pm.

Bill Perkins
Secretary, QEPRAs.
July 2010.

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