

HURST PARK ESTATE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

AGM 2022

7.30pm on Sun 24 April 2022

Via Zoom

Present:

Committee Andrew Milbourn (chair), Nicky Webb (secretary), Sophie Musson, Yung-Chin Oei, Michael Page, Mary Pountain, Barbara Thomas, Tony Willoughby

Plus around 60 residents from 43 households who logged in to the meeting.

1. Introduction and Welcome:

Andrew Milbourn welcomed residents to the meeting and suggested using the chat function for questions or simply asking questions.

2. Minutes of 2021 AGM

There were some questions arising from the minutes of the 2021 meeting:

- A resident enquired if there had been any progress on the digital display in Orchard Avenue and was informed that a post has been erected but so far there is no digital display. Barbara Thomas added that the display was intended to be one that moved around. She will make enquiries about the status of the display after the elections.
- A resident asked if anything had come of idea of an overall parking strategy for Cambridge. AM answered that the GCP has an aspiration for all areas of the city to have their own parking schemes, subject to approval by each area. However still no overall strategy for the whole city.
- A resident asked if there been any progress in developing a village design document for the estate. AM confirmed that this is the case, but the subject will come up later in the agenda.

The Minutes of the 2021 AGM (25 April 2021) were agreed and signed.

3. Chairman's report

Andrew Milbourn presented his report to the meeting.

General context

As before, the major issues facing our estate – and the whole city – are as a result of the growth of Cambridge. Without this level of growth there might not even be a residents' association. In AM's personal opinion, there are many unanswered questions about the reasons for this growth, which is greater even than the government requires, and which will impact upon the whole city, bringing increased pressure on housing, facilities, roads, green space and our quality of life.

AM questioned whether there is any evidence that the city will be able to cope with this level of growth, or that the measures taken to try to cope with increased population will be sufficient to cope. Although the City Council does much good work, it's left to Cambridge's only independent councillor, Sam Davies, to ask questions about strategy.

Our priorities

Our priorities are all based around one aim: 'to strengthen the community and protect and enhance the physical character of the estate.' In the past year we have tried to involve more residents in matters that affect us all, and especially to engage more people through community events and activities designed to foster resilience and community cohesion.

In the past year we have tried to give the committee members more defined and more subgroups responsible for different areas such as community engagement or gardening, and to involve more people who aren't on the committee.

Andrew introduced members of the committee and their responsibilities.

A major development recently has been the construction of a new website – thanks to Nicky and Tony for building and to Luke Tunmer for the original site helping with the transition.

Community Engagement

Once again there have been various projects designed to strengthen links in community, including Playing Out which has been popular with adults as well as children, the History Trail, the Advent Windows. Much energy has also gone into maintaining and improving the border at the bottom of Hurst Park Avenue, as well as the new hedge beside the cycle path in Arbury park and the roundabout at the top of Highworth Avenue.

We mounted a campaign to try to prevent the Milton Road library from being sold. We did not succeed in this aim, but the protest, petition and resulting press coverage helped achieve a lengthening of the lease to 45 years. We need to encourage community use.

We organised some charitable appeals for the food bank.

A new initiative, Resettle Chesterton, has been set up in the neighbourhood to resettle a refugee family here. This is a separate organisation to HPERA, but with some cross over in terms of those involved.

Planning

We made sure residents were aware of the implications of two significant planning applications at 4 and 45 Highworth Avenue. Both could have a major impact on the neighbourhood.

Architectural historian and Highworth resident Jeremy Musson has written a character statement about the estate which can be found on our website. Although this carries no formal status, it is intended to articulate the characteristics of our neighbourhood in order to help planners and developers know what sorts of features we would like to see and what is at odds with the area.

Roads and transport

The proposal for a trial of a traffic filter on Arbury Road has been quite controversial. A new proposal is now under discussion which would allow local residents to use the road freely, but prevent through traffic coming into or leaving the city by means of Arbury Road.

Works on Milton Road are scheduled to begin in May, beginning with the south side of the road. Trying to achieve a better redevelopment was the original reason for forming HPERA. We have expressed concerns around how this work is being planned, and will continue to push for better communications and better scheduling.

There is a proposal for the improvement and part-pedestrianisation of Mitcham's Corner, though this is only likely if the congestion charge is introduced.

NW Cambridge development

We have continued to apply pressure and some progress has been made ie reducing building height, and increased green space. We do have some concerns. The 'core site' (mainly on area of sewage works) is very dense and only accounts for about 15% of the total area of the development. Facilities paid for through the development don't necessarily benefit this area – for instance money allocated for a swimming pool has been diverted to build one in Newnham!

Green initiative

We have begun to think about what we might as a neighbourhood do in response to climate change. How do we deal with increased temperatures? How can we work together to reduce carbon emissions? Y-C is leading on this and we are intending to form a study group to look into best options.

Getting Involved

Andrew encouraged residents to get involved, and stressed people don't need to join the committee. We need volunteers for Playing Out if it's to continue and other events, and would welcome your ideas for improving the estate.

Thanks to everyone who has helped this year!

Q&A

Various questions were posed by residents, on a variety of subjects including the flats above the library, whether there will be a street party this year, and the Milton Road works.

4. Treasurer's report

Anthony Willoughby (treasurer) presented the accounts for 2021. There have been a few small expenses mainly for printing, website costs, but nothing major. At present there is nearly £1000 in the account, which had been earmarked for a noticeboard at last year's AGM.

5. Election of Committee and Officers for 2022/3

Andrew proposed a vote of thanks to outgoing founder member Mary Pountain for all her work on behalf of HPERA.

Robin Standring (Leys Road, and local trader) is willing to join the committee. Nicky Webb proposed, Michael Page seconded. An electronic vote was held, with 100% in favour of Robin being invited to join the committee.

The remaining committee members have all agreed to stand again, and a vote was unanimously in favour of all members being re-elected. The committee now comprises: Andrew Milbourn (Chair), Nicky Webb (secretary), Anthony Willoughby (treasurer), Sophie Musson, Yung-Chin Oei, Michael Page, Robin Standing, and Barbara Thomas.

6. HPERA funds

There was a discussion about how the funds in the HPERA kitty should be spent. The idea of repairing the railings around the roundabout at the top of Highworth Avenue was discussed, and installing a noticeboard or boards in the estate.

Some residents felt that it would be better to wait until the cut through between Highworth Ave and Leys Road has been restored in case of damage. Another idea would be to create better planters to replace the concrete ones that keep being damaged by lorries reversing into them. However GCP may pay for that.

Many voices in favour of noticeboard(s) in the estate and suggestion that we should go ahead rather than wait for council to pay for one. However others felt we should wait and see what might be needed.

7. Residents' Parking Scheme

AM outlined background to issue and the process underway now. There is currently an 'informal engagement' to gauge if there is any support for the idea of a scheme in our area. If so, plans will be drawn up and there will be a referendum. If not, there will be no scheme for the foreseeable future, particularly as the political power in Cambridgeshire may revert to Tories who always vote against schemes. Much depends on the detail, and on future development in Cambridge ie growth of Cambridge will mean more commuters who will want to park here if there is no scheme.

AM outlined some of the many issues that we all need to consider and emphasised that the committee is neutral on this issue but will try to make sure everyone understands the implications of what is proposed. Ultimately the residents will decide.

There were various questions and observations from attenders about things like hours of operation, signage etc.

8. Green Study Group

Yung-Chin Oei introduced the idea of setting up a green study group. It's clear that society needs to change and that domestic energy consumption is responsible for 1/3 of total emissions, and domestic cars and other personal vehicles for 1/6 of total emissions. So the choices we make as individuals can have a huge influence.

In context of HPERA, what can individuals do? And what is government responsibility? How to address problems with existing buildings – can't concentrate only on new builds. And how to encourage neighbours to join in.

Could we work together? Please get in touch if you have any interest in this area. Expertise is abundant here – but even if you don't have expertise and are interested or good at driving change, it would be great to work together.

9. Resettle Chesterton

Nicky Webb introduced the project. Some members of HPERA committee are part of this group, but it's not a HPERA project. Local people working together to help one family. The group is working towards submitting application to Home Office. Currently waiting for consent letters from the local authorities. Neighbours can find out more via Facebook page or newsletter.

10. AOB

A vote of thanks was offered to the committee for all their work during the year.

There are various social events coming up:

- Street Party organised by Karrie Fuller and Tim Gillett.
- History talk by Jim Smith at the technology museum about our estate on 9 May.

11. Close of AGM

The meeting closed at 9pm.