

Draft - HPERA Strategy Review 2020

Context

HPERA was created 4½ years ago to counter the threat of an ill-conceived project to re-develop Milton Road. Working with other organisations we were able to achieve a much better outcome which was a major success. However, the estate is affected by the increasing development of the Cambridge area. There are aspirations to double the size of Cambridge and a dysfunctional local government structure struggles to mitigate the effects of this.

<https://www.fecra.org.uk/docs/Supersize%20Three.pdf>

Visible issues include commuter parking, traffic through the estate and in-fill development, such as plans for 10 flats at the end of Highworth Avenue. We can expect much worse problems with through traffic when Histon Road is temporarily closed. Longer term, the North East Cambridge Development adjacent to Milton Road will have a population the size of Ely. We need to think ahead to anticipate and mitigate the impacts in advance.

More recently, there has been good work to help with the community aspects of the estate, such as assisting people during the lock-down.

Mission and Objectives

We will continue to deal with these kinds of issues in line with the existing objectives in the constitution and our overall mission will be:

“To strengthen the community and protect and enhance the physical character of the estate”.

It would be desirable if we could spend more time on positive improvements as a lot of effort goes into defensive actions. These could include improving the landscaping and making the roads more people friendly. There is scope for facilitating more village style social activities. There are synergisms between improving the environment, e.g. preventing through traffic, and facilitating community activities.

Structure

We will define roles in HPERA a bit more explicitly <https://tinyurl.com/y2fsu9fd>. This does not preclude others being involved in these issues. The designated people would take a lead on these matters and use their initiative to progress things, consulting with the rest of the committee when appropriate.

We will also engage non-committee members of the estate as supporters by forming sub-groups. Estate Gardening may be a candidate for this approach. It would be good if we could engage some younger people, indeed people of absolutely all ages. The talents of other residents are probably the best asset we have. Needless to say, communication is key between those dealing with such issues and those dealing with local government matters which might have an impact.

A list of projects may be useful, i.e. <https://tinyurl.com/y63mdxhj>. This is another example of using shared google documents for co-ordination.

Decision Making

We have generally operated by arriving at consensus within the committee. Although this is always the ideal there may be situations where a majority vote is required. There is no harm in experimenting with things as long as the cost of failure is low and there are no legal or safety issues.

Communications

We have been moving in the direction of using email as the main form of communication, although there is recognition that we need other means to communicate to those without email. We will try and use physical notices to help with this. The website has a key role as a document repository to be referred to. Twitter will still be used sparingly although this now comes under Public Relations. There is a Facebook page but this is more for general chat as the coverage is not wide enough for key communications.

External Organisations

As our previous Chair demonstrated, it is key that we maintain and develop good relationships with other organisations such as nearby RAs, FECRA, local councillors and The Cambridge Cycling Campaign etc. There is an issue as to how much effort we put into wider Cambridge issues which affect us indirectly, although FECRA is our main mechanism for this. There is no feeling that we have got the balance completely wrong, but it will change in the light of circumstances.

A.Milbourn 6.6.2020