



ALEXANDRA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2021

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Graham Taylor-Russell (Chair) welcomed those in attendance and thanked them for showing continued support for the ARA. A special mention of thanks was made to Jozef for opening The Alexandra Pub, thereby making it possible for us to hold the meeting locally and to follow it with a showing of the film '*Thank You Very Much*' made on the estate in the summer of 2020.

2 APOLOGIES Robin Middleton and Emma Dickson.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM MEETING HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER 2019

Graham explained that no AGM took place in 2020 due to Covid restrictions. A virtual meeting had been scheduled but then postponed because the number of 'attendees' would have been too small to be representative.

The minutes from the 2019 AGM had been approved, hard copies circulated and placed on the website at <http://alexandracottages.co.uk/agm-minutes>.

MOVEMENT ON PREVIOUS/OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

It was noted that most of the previous action points were completed or being investigated with the relevant organisations.

- The Parish Lane and estate roads speed limit was still of concern but Bromley Council, having been approached on previous occasions with regards to ways of reducing dangers, appeared reluctant to act.
- There had been some improvement in the maintenance of the noisy Parish Lane drain covers but these would need monitoring and reporting again should the need arise.
- Dulwich College also appear to be better at maintaining the larger Parish Lane hedges but may need reminding in the future.
- The missing heritage street light dimmer panels had finally been installed in Victor Road.
- The overly large Cypress trees backing onto some Victor Road gardens had been dealt with by residents liaising with the occupier of the property in Tennyson Road.
- The issue of inconsiderate parking in the Victor Road turning circle had been raised with Bromley (via Fix-My-Street) who are now considering appropriate signage.

Fix-My-Street was recommended as an efficient way to report issues around the estate. Residents without the necessary technology to use it or those just needing further ARA support were advised to speak their road rep in the first instance.

4 CHAIR'S REPORT

Graham paid tribute to the late John Parker, founder of The Alexandra Nurseries. He expressed condolences to the family and observed that John, his contribution to and enthusiasm for our community would be sorely missed.

Graham acknowledged that our community had responded very strongly to the pandemic situation and that good people had looked out for and supported their neighbours. He gave special mention to Paul Field for coordinating a telephone support-line and running errands for neighbours that were unable to shop for themselves. Although it proved a difficult time for many, it was good that there was such a positive response to the social/community events that could be organised, for example VE Day, NHS Thursday Clapping and the already mentioned film production.

Graham also commented on the (Covid risk assessed) and very well attended Victor Rd Curry event and thanked Himalayan Kitchen for providing the food and Adrian Garratt the street violinist who provided the entertainment.

5 UPDATE ON THE CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUDITING OF ACCOUNTS AND HANDOVER TO A NEW TREASURER

Graham provided financial reports for 2019/20 and 2020/21 and explained that the finances were currently proving steady year on year. We average £400 per year in membership subscriptions and pay out approx. £200 for liability insurance and the costs of assorted events and committee activities. This year we had some extra income from the hire of shed equipment and a donation from the film production company. We currently have balance of a little over £2000 with £1741 in the bank and the balance in cash. We are expecting to start spending over the next few months and have not yet accounted for the AGM meeting expenses, the refreshing of planters on the estate and forthcoming social activities.

Peter Lindford agreed to undertake the annual audit again.

Graham was pleased to announce that a new resident had agreed to join the committee and take on the role of Treasurer. Grazka Kazmierska and Graham will arrange an official handover with Peter in attendance as auditor.

Grazka asked if we should invest any of the £2000 but with concern about the possible future costs involved with The Shed, both legal and maintenance wise it was agreed to keep the money on 'easy access'.

There was consideration given to raising subs in future years to £4/£6 but this was felt to be an awkward amount to collect in cash. It was agreed to delegate to the committee the amount for 2022/3 subscriptions (up to a maximum of £5/£10).

The possibility of more efficient electronic/on-line payment was discussed and would be considered in the coming year.

6 ORAL UPDATE ON OPTIONS FOR CONSTITUTING THE ARA – Dominic Rathbone

Dominic Rathbone commenced his update by inviting anyone with Property Law expertise to let the association know if they might be able to offer advice.

The ARA is currently an unincorporated organisation which has been satisfactory to date but means:

- it has no legal status that could allow it to own property, as in The Shed.
- The committee members are legally individually liable under law (though hopefully indemnified through our insurance policy).

The ownership of The Shed currently lies with the heirs of four members of the committee from the 1960s in whom ownership was vested. To regularise the situation it would be highly desirable to find the descendants of these 'owners' and ask them to relinquish rights. Even if this is possible, the options open to us are all complex. Setting up as a Charity would be unlikely to be permitted, becoming a Community Interest Company would involve submitting annual accounts, paying legal fees and incurring other duties.

If we go down the route of legally taking over from the original four owners, then The Shed could possibly become the property of the Chair but we would need to go to court every time the Chair changed hands. All options require legal assistance and will incur, possibly considerable, financial costs. A change of status would necessitate revising the constitution and articles of the association.

Chris Purcell queried what would happen if the ARA disbanded due to lack of active members. Dominic replied that if we were a CIC we would have to hand over to another charity.

It was noted that even if we did nothing to change the arrangements for the Shed there were still likely to be maintenance costs as fences etc. will need repair.

Taylor Green from Albert Road offered to help the association develop instructions should we move to engage a solicitor.

Graham explained that we should continue to keep under review; if substantial decisions are needed an Extraordinary General Meeting would be necessary. It was noted that some expenses could be incurred seeking legal advice in the coming year.

7 SOCIAL EVENTS – Barbara Winter

Barbara provided a summary of the events that had managed to take place since the 2019 AGM, including summer BBQs, a Christmas carol procession, Street Curry Party and two very successful Show & Tell sessions held at the Goldsmiths.

It was hoped that, Covid regulations permitting, we would now be able to get back to arranging more regular traditional events and take on any suggestions for new ones.

It was hoped to run a season appropriate monthly plant/seed swap stall by The Shed.

Volunteers were called for to lead further Show & Tell sessions, either covering their own specialist areas of interest or local/community interests.

The Christmas carol procession had proved popular in the past and plans were already underway for it to take place again mid-December.

It was suggested that we re-run of the enjoyable Taste of the Cottages event from a couple of years ago, hopefully a winter version. Barbara explained that this had involved households opening their doors to neighbours, for a set time period, during which they would be provide either a starter, main or dessert course. To aid security tickets would be issued and numbers restricted to allow time for everyone to visit all the participating properties. Barbara asked for 10/12 households to volunteer to make the event viable.

It was planned for the cottages usually biannual Open Gardens event to take place in summer 2022.

All social events information, dates etc. will be notified to residents via Newsletter, flyers, e-mail and our Facebook group.

8.1 NOMINATION FOR THE COMMITTEE 2021/22

The current committee members (noted below) were nominated and confirmed as members for the coming year.

Neil Coe (Vice Chair with responsibility for Planning & Conservation)

Jenny Czezowski

Robin Middleton (Hardings Lane Rep)

Chris Purcell (Edward Road Rep)

Dominic Rathbone (Victor Road Rep)

Adrian Rotheray

Debbie Taylor-Russell (Secretary & Princes Road Rep)

Graham Taylor-Russell (Chair)

Barbara Winter (Social Secretary & Albert Road Rep)

8.2 NOMINATION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Grazka Kazmierska was nominated and seconded to committee with a view to taking on the Treasurer's role.

Hassan Al Omari was nominated and seconded to committee to represent Princes Road.

The first meeting of the Committee will confirm roles as in previous years.

9 MEMBERS CONCERNS/MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- Members were still very concerned about the Parish Lane speed limit and would like some form of mirror/camera set up at the dangerous junctions at Hardings Lane and Penge Lane to enable safer pedestrian crossing and vehicle access. Graham agreed to contact Bromley council again and also to see if Ellie Reeves could offer any assistance.
- The issue of 'cold calling' on the estate was raised by Tim Walby. Has the Estate been designated as a 'No Cold Calling' neighbourhood? Graham responded that he had not been able to find anything about such designation on the Bromley website. Tim suggested we make further enquiries.

10 MEMBERS SUGGESTIONS FOR EVENTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES; OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY GARDENING AND OTHER MATTERS.

- Members were invited to join in with any community gardening projects taking place on the estate, these would be notified via the Facebook Group.

Judith Sidaway expressed her thanks to those residents (Paul Field, Alison Lodge and Robin Middleton) who did an excellent job at clearing the overgrown & tired large planters at the Princes Road/Alley way junction.

- The Alexandra Friday Group asked to be remembered in the next Newsletter to encourage attendance at their last Friday of the month meetings in the Alexandra Pub.

11 ADVISORY PANEL ON CONSERVATION AREAS REPORT/UPDATE ON PLANNING AND CONSERVATION ISSUES AND CONCERNS – Neil Coe

Neil said that planning applications were relatively quiet across the estate and the following points were discussed.

- Due to changes in working arrangements because of Covid it had been noted that there were more interest in building 'Garden Rooms'. Neil explained that although these were normally acceptable within 'permitted development' rules (subject to size and intended use) it was important to seek advice and to consider the ethos of the conservation area. It was noted that structures should not be visible from the front (or in some cases side) aspects and should not be for permanent living accommodation. If in any doubt seek advice before starting work.
- There were queries into planning options for the estate to go greener in the future. For instance, where could solar panels and electric car charging points be best positioned? Neil said that currently the advice is to avoid a front facing (road visible) position and that Bromley Council should be approached for further information.
- Green (living) roofs should also only be installed at the back and could need planning permission.
- Side window replacements were ok if sympathetic to the building.
- Following a query asking which external paint colours were allowed for window frames, Neil explained that while it was desirable to maintain consistency across the estate the Supplementary Planning Guidance did not specify particular colours. In contrast stone plinths can only be painted using a limited range of specific colours. Residents were directed to Neil's excellent estate architectural handbook (held on the ARA website alongside the Supplementary Planning Guidance) for further information.

Neil said that he found it very positive that most residents were still approaching the ARA for planning advice. Slightly further afield Neil had also been working on other conservation issues.

- He reported that an extensive redevelopment planning application for above the Alexandra Pub had been refused following input from the ARA.
- Jozef used this opportunity to inform the meeting that he would again be seeking planning permission to development the green space behind the pub/railway bridge into a beer garden. He asked if the association was willing to support this to which the meeting assented.
- The on-going refurbishments at Penge East Station are continuing to cause concern. Network Rail had previously agreed to address some of the issues identified in their original application, through using better materials and plans more in keeping etc. However, they have continued to seek to cut costs and to use inappropriate materials like plastic. Superficially it may look ok, but the approach is really not good enough for a Grade II listed building. Neil with the backing of the ARA where needed will continue to support calls for enforcement to get the work upgraded.

Graham thanked Neil for all his time spent and expertise used in supporting our estate and wider borough conservation issues. m

12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Meeting adjourned to watch the film 'Thank You Very Much'.