

ALEXANDRA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY 3rd OCTOBER 2022

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Graham Taylor-Russell (Chair) welcomed the large number of members in attendance and thanked them for their continued support of the Association. The current committee members were commended on the work that they had undertaken on behalf of the estate in the last year. Appreciation was expressed to Franco Picco for his continued upkeep of the website and a special mention of thanks was made to Jozef Kubis for again opening The Alexandra Pub, especially for our meeting.

Chris Purcell agreed to process any new membership subs collected during the event.

Graham briefly explained the planned timings of the meeting, agenda etc. and that we expected some of our local councillors to attend for the second part to discuss community concerns.

Attendees were also asked if they would consider donating to a collection for Living Well (our local food bank) later in the evening.

2 APOLOGIES.

Dominic Rathbone, Peter Lindford.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM MEETING HELD ON 20th SEPTEMBER 2021 AND MATTERS ARISING

3.1 The minutes from the 2021 AGM had been approved and placed on the website at <http://alexandracottages.co.uk/agm-minutes>.

UPDATE ON PREVIOUS/OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

It was noted that most of the previous action points were completed or being investigated with the relevant organisations, but that Bromley Council were still slow to respond.

- The Parish Lane and cottage estate roads speed limit was still of concern, and it was noted that nearby Cator Park/Kent House Road had been allowed a 20-mph speed limit.
- The repaired noisy Parish Lane drain covers were holding up but should be reported to FixMyStreet if any deterioration.
- The large overhanging Parish Lane hedges should also be reported to FixMyStreet who would then hopefully raise the issue with the residents or with Dulwich College who own some properties.
- Still awaiting a decision from Bromley in regard to signage to deter inconsiderate parking in the Victor Road turning circle but it is at least now on their list.

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

3.2 ORAL UPDATE ON OPTIONS FOR CONSTITUTING THE ARA

This was discussed at length in 2021 and the committee has continued to keep the status of the association under review. We are currently operating unincorporated which allows flexibility but with liability insurance to protect us. It would be preferable if The Shed could be in community ownership, held by the ARA and not against individual names but this is not possible with the current 'unincorporated' status. While we have been using it long enough for residents to be in a reasonably secure position ('squatter's rights'). Getting the legal position clarified and vesting ownership in current committee members could be desirable but equally might cause us different problems and incur costs.

4 CHAIR'S REPORT

Graham thanked everyone for helping to make ours a vibrant and caring community to live in.

It was hoped that residents would continue to contribute in whichever way they could and suggestions were being sought for new activities to bring neighbours together.

In our wider environs it was noted that Penge had been undergoing a lot of changes recently, most helping make it a great place to live. However, concerns were expressed about the large redevelopment proposed for the Blenheim Centre and it was hoped that the local Councillors attending might be able to give us further information.

5 UPDATE ON THE CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUDITING OF ACCOUNTS.

Graham reported that the current auditor, Peter Lindford, had agreed the previous 2020-21 accounts.

Grazka Kazmierska (Treasurer) provided financial reports for 2021-22 and explained that having raised approx £1000 in subs, socials and Open Gardens, offset against donations and low expenses the finances were currently holding steady. We currently have approx. £2,220. in the bank.

Graham thanked Grazka for taking on the Treasurer role and improving our financial account reporting system.

Graham confirmed that due to the current cost-of-living crisis membership subscriptions would be held at their present £3/5 cost. This will be looked at again next year.

It was noted that this year's accounts would still need auditing and that with Peter Lindford stepping down from the role we need a replacement. Joel Taylor volunteered and will undertake a training/handover with Peter and Grazka.

6 SOCIAL EVENTS

Barbara Winter provided a summary of the events that had taken place since the 2021 AGM. These included;

- The traditional Christmas Carol procession with thanks to Anna and Joel Taylor for leading.
- A Meet the Neighbours evening at the Alexandra Nurseries, which was well attended by residents new and old.
- The Queen's Jubilee Street BBQ which evoked a great community spirit.

- The ever-popular Open Gardens event which was well attended and raised money for the ARA and charity.

Barbara thanked all those that had helped with organising these events and more importantly those that supported them by attending and therefore making them special.

Future Socials;

- The 2022 Christmas Carol procession plans were already underway, provisionally scheduled for 12th December.
- Adrian Rotheray informed the meeting of the next production to be staged by the 'Porcupine Players' would take place on Saturday 4th February 2023. Flyers would be posted and tickets issued.
- A 'Taste of the Cottages' event and further 'Show & Tell' sessions were still under consideration.
- Joel Taylor offered to post on our Facebook Group in regard to the approaching Halloween trick or treat possibilities.
- A Royal Coronation event was suggested but that would be looked into once an official date had been announced.
- Neil Coe would investigate a possible trip to Alexandra Palace, which would be best scheduled when the theatre at the site is available to visit.

Barbara was thanked for all her work as Social Secretary as she stepped down from the role and Jenny Czezowski was welcomed in as her replacement.

7 NOMINATIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE 2022/23

7.1

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

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

Jenny Czezowski (Social Secretary)

Robin Middleton

Chris Purcell (Edward Road Rep)

Dominic Rathbone (Victor Road Rep)

Adrian Rotheray

Debbie Taylor-Russell (Secretary)

Graham Taylor-Russell (Chair)

Barbara Winter (Albert Road Rep)

Hassan al Omari (Princes Road Rep)

Grazka Kazmierska (Treasurer)

7.2 NOMINATION OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Attendees were invited to contact the committee should they be interested in joining it.

8 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 could be notified via the Facebook Group. The Shed area was needing some maintenance and volunteers were invited to help on Sunday 9th October.

9 ADVISORY PANEL ON CONSERVATION AREAS REPORT/UPDATE ON PLANNING AND CONSERVATION ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Neil Coe reported that planning applications were relatively quiet across the estate but that if any residents had plans that they would like to discuss he would be happy to offer advice.

Further afield Neil noted that large scale plans were still being put forward in Orpington.

The project at the Crystal Park Subway was proceeding well and looking good.

The plans for the Blenheim Centre were at an early stage and could hopefully be influenced by residents attending meetings and submitting comments etc. He did think that they had a good sustainable ethics architect involved which might help.

Graham thanked Neil for his continued support of our estate and wider borough conservation issues.

10. MEMBERS CONCERNS/MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

- Members remain very concerned about the Parish Lane speed limit. Perhaps the councillors attending the meeting could advise how best for us to get some action taken.

10.1 GREEN INITIATIVES AND ENERGY SAVING

Greening the Cottages

Nigel Peet kindly gave a presentation of three areas of sustainability (water, energy and transport) that could be utilised across the estate based on work undertaken at his cottage.

He had also produced an information sheet which Franco would upload to the cottage website and it was suggested that we create a sustainability area there so that other residents could research or share what they are doing.

- Water: Water storage butt, garden watering system
- Energy: Solar panels. Disadvantaged due to being in a conservation area and having to adhere to street scene regulations. Panels could go at rear or on sheds/garden rooms. There are ones which resemble slate tiles which we are allowed to use on street facing elevations but they are more costly and not as energy efficient. Nigel suggested we need to weigh up the aesthetic with the need to be sustainable, and that it may be time to review Conservation Area rules.

Nigel stated that basic panels can be installed DIY for approx. Cost c£500. They are low maintenance and initial cost payback could be within c4 years.

- Heat pumps were mentioned but apparently a not very efficient and expensive option.
- Transport: Car charging points. For those with driveways it was a grey area about installations visible from the street. For those having to park on the street where trailing cables are not permitted then lamp post chargers installed by LB Bromley are a potential alternative. The closed end of Princes Road was suggested as a good position for some kind of charger installation for the community.

Nigel invited interested neighbours to visit his cottage to see what it all looks like/how it might work.

10.2 LOCAL PLANS AND THE FUTURE OF PENGE

The meeting was pleased to welcome our Penge and Cator Councillors:

Kathy Bance who has been Penge and Cator ward councillor for 13 years. Kathy sits on groups overseeing licensing and gambling applications and sits on the Environment Committee. Kathy undertakes the majority of the casework that arises within the Penge and Cator Ward.

Kevin Kennedy Brooks. Committee member for adult social care services, health & retirement. Also leads on development control in Penge

Simon Jeal. Labour group leader charged with overall scrutiny of the council.

10.3 Councillors' Introductory Remarks

There has been a big cost of living impact in Bromley and, as it's a commissioning borough, services are outsourced and need paying for. The borough has a high elderly demographic and so we need to protect care services in particular.

Blenheim – there will be an environmental impact assessment and there's no planning application as yet. Recommend that residents attend consultation meeting and comment/object as necessary. Bromley not so supportive of parking issues as they see Penge as having very good transport links and are therefore trying to discourage car use in the first place. Traders are concerned about losing custom to other areas if no parking available for shops.

Graham said that the ARA would circulate information about any meetings.

Graz mentioned 20mph zones. Kathy responded that Bromley do not accept that they work and are unable to police them when drivers ignore speed limits. Apparently, Penge and Cator has one of the highest level of accidents but not specifically around Parish Lane. Kathy has requested a 'heat map' which shows accident hot spots. Bromley need to be kept informed of accidents as they will only act on data. Can email angus.culverwell@bromley.gov.uk when serious incidents occur.

Graham raised the issue of currently cancelled train offerings, asking if there was any idea if they'll be reinstated as that is impacting people's choice to return to work. Simon responded that as Southeastern Rail was currently in government control these decisions were the responsibility of the Department of Transport

The councillors all commented on the good meeting attendance and emphasised how important Resident Associations are and that they work!

After a lively debate the meeting closed at 10.20pm