

ALNWICKHILL PROPRIETORS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD WITHIN THE LIBERTON KIRK HALLS, KIRKGATE, EDINBURGH ON THURSDAY 28th MARCH 2013

PRESENT:

Louise Wrightson	Chairperson
Sally McGregor	Secretary
Archie McCue	Treasurer
Moira Rose	Committee Member
Fiona Knight	Committee Member
June Thorburn	Committee Member
Claire Monk	Committee Member
23 Proprietors	

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ian Murray MP
Kenny Macaskill MSP
Cllr Nick Cook
P.C. Chris Cairns
Sgt. Stephen Hagart
Chris Bell Trading Standards

APOLOGIES: Cllr Bill Cook

The meeting was opened by The Chairperson, Louise Wrightson, who introduced herself and welcomed the members and guests to the 2013 Annual General Meeting. She intimated that 68 proxy votes had been received and thanked those present for attending the meeting. The Chairperson also introduced the committee members and took the opportunity to publicly thank them for their work. Moving on to the business of the meeting

1. Minutes of AGM held on Tuesday 3rd April 2012: Issues arising;

The only action arising from the previous year's AGM was to deliver a copy of the Constitution to every house on the estate and this was completed in May.

There were no corrections/amendments required.

Moved: Helen Preston, 16 Howden Hall Park
Seconded: Bill Brown, 10 Alnwickhill Loan

2. Chair's Report

The Chairperson advised that she would like to give an overview of the last twelve months and confirmed that things have continued to run smoothly on the estate with no big issues needing to be addressed. As reported last year it was agreed to no longer use Spring Professional Services for the collection of the annual assessment fee and this has worked well. The percentage of payments received was incredibly high, both this year's and also those outstanding from previous years.

Landscaping and Tree Report:

As with previous years we continue to work closely with our gardening contractors but have been at the mercy of the weather. This year has been the wettest for 100 years which presents new problems. E.g. wet, long grass does not cut well, weeds are rampant and paved areas could not be sprayed as often as usual.

In addition to the landscaping, the following works were undertaken:
Filling and seeding of areas where trees were removed. Unfortunately the seed did not take well and some areas will need re-sowing with the cost of this to be borne by Greenfingers.

In August, the Tree Surgeon carried out an inspection of the trees in the estate, paying particular attention to trees in areas where residents had raised concerns. As a result, extensive tree work was undertaken and the planting, where appropriate, of new, more suitable species of trees undertaken. This will be ongoing as there are still a number of issues throughout the estate.
A handrail was installed this week at the sloping pathway at the top of Howden Hall Loan/Park which has raised some negative feedback.

Additional work planned for this year include;

Treatment of grass areas (weather permitting)

Removal of dense shrub areas.

Landscaping of paved areas at Alnwickhill View and Alnwickhill Crescent subject to residents approval.

Further tree work. Residents asked to notify committee of any concerns.

There have been problems with water running off the large park area to rear of the properties at Howden Hall Crescent which will have to be investigated further. Professional help may be needed and should this prove expensive, may need to ask for a one off payment to cover it.

Website:

Cath Hault and Des Reid continue to run our website www.alnwickhillpa.org for no fee. Louise publicly thanked them for their efforts and welcomed any contributions. An email account has also been set up which is proving popular with residents as a means of communication. Address is alnwickhillproprietors@gmail.com

Current Issues:

Parking:

We continue to receive a high level of concern regarding inconsiderate parking. Main issues are drivers parking on corners thus obstructing other drivers' view, parking over driveways and cars parked in driveways obstructing pavements.

Dog Fouling:

Louise asked for residents help in tackling this by reporting areas where it is a persistent problem. By email to env.wardens@edinburgh.gov.uk or phone 0131 529 3030

Dog Barking:

Complaints have been received about dog barking from a number of areas around the Estate. Issue to be raised in next Newsletter but can be dealt with by owners ensuring their dogs do not make excessive noise over long periods. If problem persists, the council works in conjunction with Police with regard to antisocial noise. Operate a 24/7 service but needs to be reported at the time so they can come and assess noise.

Cold Calling:

The estate is now designated a "No Cold Calling Zone" and we have notices on lamp posts throughout the estate advising this. With us this evening is Chris Bell from trading standards who will cover this in more detail later. Louise concluded by thanking the guests for their help and support and also thanked those who help deliver leaflets and newsletters.

The Chair report was approved and adopted:

Moved: Colin Cruikshank, 20 Alnwickhill Gardens

Seconded: Christine Carson, 23 Howden Hall Gardens

3. Treasurer's Report:

Copy accounts were provided to everyone.

The Treasurer, Archie McCue, reported a healthy audited bank balance of £33,000 as compared to £27,000 last year. However with proposed extra works to be undertaken, expenditure would be increased by an estimated £13,000.

Collection of Assessment has been excellent. At this point there were only 5 non payers with 4 being taken to court. Archie pointed out that this process can have an adverse effect on people's credit rating.

Setting of Assessment 2013/14:

As assessment has been frozen for 4 years a small increase was proposed. A payment of £60 per annum due by 30th June 2013 with a £10 reduction for payment received by 4th June 2013. Increase is required to ensure that we cover basic costs and we believe that this still represents excellent value for money.

Approval was asked for and all in agreement.

Assessment Fee Collection Method.

The changes made to the collection methods have worked well and we propose to continue with them.

There are 3 options and full details will be provided with the assessment notice.

Payment can be made by cheque to a nominated committee member.

Pay into any branch of the Bank of Scotland using pay-in slip which will be provided to you.

Transfer direct to Association account by bank transfer. However if payment is from Bank of Scotland account will need to use pay- in slip with unique number.

Treasurer's report and setting of assessment was approved and adopted

Moved: Thomas Harper, 12 Alnwickhill Grove

Seconded: Joan Wilcox, 18 Howden Hall Gardens

4. Election of Officials:

We continue to seek new members. It is not an onerous task, involves approximately 6 meetings a year and is very rewarding.

Open to meeting for volunteers. None forthcoming.

Taking account of the period of service as per the constitution, 6 out of the 7 committee members are retiring this evening, leaving Claire sole remaining committee member. However the present committee are willing to put themselves forward for re-election in the absence of new members.

Approval sought and granted for these nominations.

Moved: Margaret Wilson, 3 Howden Hall Gardens

Seconded: Cath Houtt, 5 Alnwickhill Crescent

6. Any Other Competent Business:

One issue raised. Development within the Scottish Water Treatment plant on Howden Hall Road.

Claire responded to this as she had been looking into it. At this point there is no final bidder. There is outlying consent which the council are minded to grant.

Ian Murray also commented to clarify the process involved. There are 3 stages to the process and at present it is still at stage 1.

A question was posed as to why this development was being accepted whereas the proposed site on Alnwickhill Road was not.

Explained that Scottish Water site was Brown field while Alnwickhill Road is green belt.

Guest Speakers;

The Chairperson handed over to the guest speakers at this point.

Police: Sgt Stephen Hagart spoke about the change to a single force, Police Scotland on Monday 1st April. He assured everyone that although it involved many changes behind the scene, it would continue to be Business as Usual.

The new police chief is placing particular emphasis on local policing and the investigation of domestic violence.

P.C. Chris Cairns spoke as a member of the local Safe Neighbourhood Team. He stressed that this is a very safe neighbourhood with only 6 cases in a year, with 1 burglary within the estate. There are 4 designated officers for the Alnwickhill and Inch area who will be carrying out regular walkabouts. He emphasised that should people have any concerns or see someone or something suspicious to contact the police. If you ring 101 your call will be transferred to the local station. A question was raised with regard to the manning of the Howden Hall Station. The front desk is manned 8 – 8. However there is a bell at the front door which will summon assistance outwith these hours.

Trading Standards: Chris Bell informed everyone that there are now 44 No Cold Calling Zones in Edinburgh. Feedback from these zones is that 90% say situation has improved and that people have greater confidence in challenging cold callers. There has been prosecution of offenders, resulting in seizure of assets or vehicles and in 1 case imprisonment.

This is an area which is attracting more attention and at present Trading Standards is working with Neighbourhood Watch Scotland on a pilot scheme. There have also been debates in the Scottish Parliament.

An updated list showing all No Cold Calling zones is sent to traders each month. He suggested that personal recommendation is always best when getting work done. Also Care and Repair Edinburgh have a list of tradespeople and details about them. Ian Murray brought up an issue which many are finding is becoming an even greater nuisance than cold callers is unsolicited phone calls. He asked people to email him any details they had of these. He also drew to our attention that BT has developed a new phone that blocks these unwanted calls.

The chairperson closed the meeting with thanks to the guests and those who had attended.

The meeting closed 8.05pm.