

Minutes of Holly Lodge Residents Association Committee Meeting,

19th February 2018

Apologies: Roger Elliott; Deborah Froome, Shannon Francis

Present: Andrea Westall, Hertha Koettner-Smith, Grainne Ennis, Sally Davies, Alan Matthews

1 Heating and hot water

Grainne reported that a response had come back from Camden to our comments on the option appraisal. The consultant had responded to some points, but not others, particularly those that could only be answered by Camden Council. Overall, the response has not changed our position, which is that there is currently not enough adequate information on which to base an appropriate decision. We are also concerned that the Whittington site, to which one option proposes that our heating system is linked, is experiencing ongoing problems.

Shannon Francis had emailed to say that Lana Lewin had spoken to Roger Vessey about whether or not he could provide independent advice on the heating options.

There also a discussion in the meeting about the need to get a rough (free) and fast valuation (before paying for a full quote) on the sale of the land on which the boiler house currently sits. This valuation is required because the proposed sale value of £1million is a core part of the rationale for linking the heating and hot water system on the Holly Lodge Estate to the Whittington boilers, and we need to know whether or not this estimate is realistic.

Action: Andrea to follow up with Roger Vessey to talk about independent advice, and see what was possible either for him or others, and how any parallel analysis might be best done to be most effective.

Action: Hertha to contact Lana Lewin about whether or not her father could do a rough and free appraisal of the sale cost of the land on which the boiler currently sits.

2. Security

Grainne reported that the meeting held on 22nd January to explore security issues on the Estate, particularly in relation to the adoption or otherwise of a private security patrol by the ploholders, and to which all residents on Holly Lodge were invited, had a very high turnout of residents, mostly ploholders. Nothing was decided at the event. Its purpose was to hear views. The general feeling at the meeting seemed to be against the use of private security patrols.

Action: Andrea to report back to the next meeting about any actions arising from this meeting which are to be discussed at the joint Holly Lodge Committees meeting on 26th February.

3. Fire Safety

In Grace Livingstone's absence, Andrea reported that it was unclear whether the previously proposed work on the walkways between blocks was going ahead, as well

as clarity over whether or not the fire escapes to the roof would or would not be shut. It was decided to push again on this issue.

Action: Andrea to follow up with Grace

4. TRA Hall

Andrea reported back on the meeting with the Holly Lodge Community Centre Committee on 22nd January, and Camden TRA office Hugh Boatswain. The responsibility for the Community Centre was transferred to the HLRA through a Tenancy at Will with Camden. A Memorandum of Understanding between the HLRA and the Community Centre was signed such that the Community Centre charity continues to run the Centre on behalf of the HLRA.

Hertha reported that the local councillors will continue to pay for use of the hall for their surgery; and that Camden had waived their rent for the last year which helps with ongoing running costs

It was decided to arrange a joint committee (as agreed in the MoU) to look at strategy for the Community Centre going forward. This would take place at the same time as a normal committee meeting with half an hour for general business and then one and half hours for the workshop.

Action: Andrea to contact Barbara Smith about arranging a joint meeting.

It was agreed by all voting members present (4) that a TRA Subcommittee would be set up. The initial members are to be Hertha, Roger Elliott and Grace Livingstone. Because Hertha and Roger Elliott have been co-opted this year, Grace Livingstone will be the first Chair of this Committee since she is eligible by virtue of being an elected and fully voting member of the Committee.

5. Gardens

Sally read a report written by Deborah Froome (see below) about ongoing developments and activities. There was a discussion about the use of Glycophosphate in the gardens.

Action: Sally to ask for a temporary stoppage of the use of Glycophosphate until more information was available about its short and long term effects.

There was also a discussion about the kinds of trees to be planted in the pools of water in the 'main gardens'. It was decided that the residents most affected by this decision should be asked for their views.

Action: Sally will design a poster asking for comments on the suggestions made. Andrea will arrange for the posters to be printed and distributed.

6. Bike storage plans

Action: Grainne to link Grace with some members of the HLLA who have interest in this area.

7. Bin provision

The Estate Manager had been in contact to arrange a walkabout to look at existing bin location and other related matters.

Action: Andrea will send a doodlepoll round to see who might be available.

Action: Grainne to provide any information from previous years

Report on gardens, Deborah Froome

- We have a new Static gardener to replace Roy: Alison. She has a BA in horticulture, 3 yrs apprenticeship, and decades of experience. There is already evidence of her careful work, pruning roses and shrubs, and removing invasive species.
- We did a walkabout with Riccardo Arnone our Tree officer (Feb 15th). We agreed his planting proposals for this season to replace lost trees:
 - 2 betula to be planted outside 55-78/89-101 HLM
 - 1 betula behind 377-398/345-364 HLM
 - cornus behind 277-294 HLM
 - replacement castanea sativa at top of main gardens [where dead tree is]
- Riccardo also proposed new salix x 2 planting in the main gardens by the round shrub bed, to replace trees lost to the flooding/waterlogging. **Please discuss!**
 - salix will take up water and help the lawns/shrubs be less damaged by annual flooding
 - they will replicate the pattern of planting
 - they will survive where cherries (prunus) have not
 - we discussed choosing them for winter colour (red/orange/yellow) see photo
 - Riccardo proposed pollarding them once the trunk gets to the right thickness (which would be after about 3 years growth)
 - we have a pollarded willow on the lawn outside 9-16 Langbourne Mansions - please go and look - it has been pollarded this week - it grows back with winter coloured stems and then summer (deciduous) leaves
- Sally and I suggest we could plant willow arches over the benches in the pools of water in the main gardens where there are currently roses
 - move roses elsewhere, if they can be saved
 - choose willow whips for coloured stems (purple, white, coloured)
 - manage the pruning with the help of the gardens team/residents
 - *there used to be arches that the roses grew over but now - with the flooding - willow might be a forward thinking way to manage this area and provide amenity colour and shade on 2 of the benches in summer*
 - http://www.willowworks.co.uk/html/willow_varieties.html#Prices - see ideas, colours
- Victoria Whaley gardens officer suggests using herbicide (glyphosate) to kill invasive bramble on inaccessible banks/areas: **please discuss:**
 - this would save manpower
 - glyphosate if used carefully should not spread
 - however residents are concerned about wildlife/cats
 - much of the bramble is in among shrubs eg forsythia which may preclude spraying and have to be dug anyway
- Victoria has done a general standards walkabout. The contractor idVerde is on a non-Rectifiable Defects Order, ie the gardens must be brought up to standard.
- Victoria has instructed that invasive species (brambles, self-set saplings, razor-grass) should be removed wherever found.
- Very overgrown rhododendrons/elderflowers on the lawns below Traitor's Knoll (ie the round rose bed in the main gardens) will have some restorative pruning.
- There is overhanging and some dead wood from trees in the Hillway gardens bordering our top paths from the CC to the Family Centre. Potential problem with falling deadwood? Liability? Camden has before bounced this back to the TRA to address. We are waiting for works by the houses requested by TRA this spring.