

Minutes of HLRA committee meeting 16.03.2021

Attendees: Roger (Chair), Grace, Tamatha, Gilly, Kim, Silvana, Oliver, Jess, Steve, Judith, Hertha, Grazyna, Fran, Jane, Josh and Lise (Secretary).

Apologies: Jay, Lisa, and Alison.

Minutes of last meeting: approved.

Matters arising: Roger reported that at the DMC meeting on 2nd March we obtained in writing that our roofs will be inspected twice a year. Officers will arrange a walkabout with us to inspect roofs once the pandemic has eased.

Cllr Oliver Lewis replied to Roger that he would look into the planning permission for the bin shed by the Sheltered Housing. He queried whether Chris Slater was still working at the council; Roger confirmed with the council that he is but on compassionate leave.

Gardening

Roger summarised the gardening meeting held on 17th February: Tamatha set up the Edible Gardening Project and the Polytunnel some ten years ago; The Saturday Gardening Group began three years ago. There has been some friction between these two groups and the idea is to get them working together under the auspices of the HLRA in a democratic way. Tamatha said she did not wish to merge the two groups and expressed concern at the idea of opening the management roles to a vote, (all officer and rep. roles are open after the AGM). Jane agreed to continue running the Saturday Gardening Group. Tamatha is happy to carry on running the Edible Gardening Project.

Gilly and Silvana would prefer to merge the two groups. Gilly felt we had backtracked on decisions made at the Gardening Meeting. Josh said the point of the gardening meeting was to make the running of the polytunnel open to anyone on the estate and accessible to everyone. This year it will be run by Tamatha; Gilly requested a light administrative touch. After the AGM, a decision will be made about whether to merge the two groups and the leadership will be democratically decided by the new Committee, as are all officer and rep. roles.

Grace mentioned that last year the HLRA sent an email from Tamatha to our list asking people to contact her if they wished to have a plot in the Polytunnel. So, Tamatha was the best person to continue managing the Polytunnel at present.

Gilly queried whether Fran was still using her plot. Tamatha said Covid-19 has raised many health and safety problems with regard to running the Polytunnel and people should be given time to get back into gardening.

Jess noted that perhaps one year is not enough to be able to run projects. Roger said it is essential we have better communication between the two groups to avoid misunderstandings; this means Tamatha and Jane should try to come to meetings.

Judith queried if both groups had the same Camden Officer contact. It was confirmed that the Ground Maintenance Officer is Jevaughn Bailey, 07798 580558, jevaughn.bailey@camden.gov.uk.

Fran expressed her unhappiness at the clearing of some of the conservation area by the Highgate Cemetery fence which is a wildlife and wild plant habitat. Roger agreed that Jevaughn Bailey had said this should not be cleared but left wild. Fran was also not happy about the noise made by the Saturday Gardening Group in the vegetable plots by her flat. Jane said she had never heard anyone else complain but it would be taken into account.

Food co-op

Grace reported that she was approached by Cooperation Town who said that if people were interested in running a food co-op on the estate, they would give advice. She was **not** suggesting this should be run by the HLRA but we could set up a Zoom meeting for anyone interested.

Tamatha ran a food co-op after starting the Edible Gardening Project. She had keys to an empty property from Camden to store food but with regenerating the flats this was lost. Tamatha asked if the Community Centre could be used but Roger said there is not the space. However, he would see whether the unused Mobility Sheds, which belong to Sheltered Housing, could be repurposed for this.

Roger informed the Committee that Mike Towers, the Community Centre part-time manager is leaving at the end of the month and Len Lauk will be taking over. Roger will talk to Len about the Co-op idea and invite him to the Zoom meeting. Tamatha will share what she has researched and found out about food co-ops.

Gilly thought this is a great idea, as it uses food which otherwise would be wasted. She said that experience showed 20 people, with everybody having a role, putting in 30 minutes to an hour every week, could run a food co-op. Storage space is an issue. The National Co-op shops have a budget to sponsor the community food projects and will sell products at wholesale price.

It was agreed that the HLRA will send an email to our list and set a date for a Zoom meeting. The food co-op could be set up when people are allowed to meet in person again in groups over 30. Gilly and Grace will speak to the contact at Cooperation Town.

Fran noted that if there was a way to take on a role for a set period of time, say for a couple of months, and pass it onto somebody else, it would allow people who cannot commit in the long term to join. Fran also shared her experience with food co-ops in South Africa and was invited to join the meeting in order to bring in her experience.

Fire exit and roof access

Roger had an update from Suket Patel who said that next week he would deliver a presentation about the choice of fire doors, colours and fixtures. This would go via email to the HLRA list, via letters to all residents, and also a laminated folder in each block. Residents will be balloted on a block by block basis on what they want.

The day before the meeting, Steve had circulated a draft survey designed to establish residents' understanding of the Fire Safety Works process. He said that the HLLA had received written correspondence from Camden, cc'ing Councillors, claiming Leaseholders are all informed and happy with the Fire Safety Works. The Survey was designed to establish the facts about this.

He brought it before the meeting for consideration, advising that the HLLA was going to send it out so it seemed a good idea for the HLRA to do the same.

Roger noted that many of the questions in the survey would be answered shortly when Suket provided information. Steve said that Jessica had had several conversations with Suket suggesting that his information would not be out for at least another week (in fact, it was another month as the suppliers struggled to fulfill the detailed requirements for the bespoke doors).

Grace was concerned about the way the survey mixed the contentious issue of locking the roof exits with issues such as fanlights and moulding. She feared that asking about locking the roof exits in this way would cause anxiety amongst residents. Jess noted that the two stages of the individual fire doors and the roof exits will be separated in the Works.

Roger queried the wording of some of the questions, such as asking people whether or not they felt locking the roof exits is 'important'. Does a 'yes' answer mean they are for or against locking the fire exits?

There were positive views expressed about the Survey from Hertha, Jessica and others. Grace agreed that we needed to establish that the process was a consultation and not an engagement.

Steve and Jess wanted the survey sent out as soon as possible, for the Committee to decide at the meeting, or to provide feedback on the draft questions the day after. Lise and Grace said this was too short notice as a lot of us work full-time and will not have time to reflect on the questions, and also the survey might need re-drafting after reviewing Suket's information. It was agreed that comments on the draft survey from the Committee members should be provided within the next few days following the Committee Meeting.

Subsequently, it was decided that the HLLA would send out the Survey but the HLRA would not.

Easter celebrations

Grace and Oliver proposed organising an Easter Egg Hunt for the children of Holly Lodge; this can be done in line with government guidelines for Covid-19. This was enthusiastically agreed.

Next meeting: 20 April 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.