

Minutes of the Eleventh Annual General Meeting of the HOME Residents' Association Held at Mulberry Lane on Sunday 7 June 2015

Welcome

Mira welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked all those involved in planning and preparing the Big Lunch event, which had taken place so successfully. She thanked Gavin Barwell, MP, for taking the time to visit the event before having to leave for another engagement. She reminded the meeting that Gavin organised weekly tours of the Houses of Parliament for his constituents. These were very worthwhile and anyone interested should make contact with him. It had been hoped that the Mayor of Croydon, Addiscombe councillor, Patricia Hay-Justice, would be able to attend for a while but this had apparently not been possible and apologies were received later that afternoon. Apologies for absence had also been received from Steve O'Connell, Mark Watson, Kate and Erith Davies, Phil Emson and Brigitte Addison.

Minutes of the previous AGM and matters arising

The minutes of the 10th AGM were approved by a show of hands. The following matters arising were dealt with:

Street-lighting

New street-lighting was being introduced throughout Croydon, with specific designs being available for conservation areas. Current information indicated that the new street-lighting for the HOME area was due to be installed some time later in the year. There had been complaints from some areas, however, that the new lighting was too high and causing unwelcome light pollution. This is something that needed to be addressed and the aim was to deal with this through consultation with Gavin Barwell and Skånska, the company responsible for installing the new lighting.

Potholes in Ashburton Road

The surface of Ashburton Road was still causing concern. One resident thought that the speed humps were a major cause of the problem as heavy vehicles rushed over them causing damage to the surface on the other side of the humps. Maybe it would be better to remove the speed humps as well as restricting access by such vehicles. Vehicles over 7½ tons were not supposed to use the HOME roads as through-roads but some wilfully ignored this restriction. Perhaps better sign-posting at each end of the roads was required as well as some monitoring. HOME had written to the local councillors about the state of Ashburton Road on a couple of occasions but had yet to receive a reply.

Estate agents signs

Following consultation with local estate agents there had been a marked improvement in this matter, but there was still a problem with signs indicating "Managed by..." and "Let by..." and this needed to be monitored and dealt with. HOME had been advised that sales signs should remain no longer than 2 weeks. The same needed to apply to the other signs mentioned here.

Report from the Chair

Mira began by saying that the inclusion of Ashburton Road, Close and Gardens had strengthened the Residents' Association, giving it new energy and ideas. She then reminded the meeting of the aims and objectives of the Association and outlined some of the achievements and events of the previous year, including the planting of new trees in Ashburton Road, the removal and repositioning of satellite dishes, consultation with the Council regarding improvement of the Narrows (though some of the adjoining gardens remained shamefully neglected), Home in Bloom, the New Year Social and the MacMillan Coffee Morning.

She reminded the meeting that one of the most important activities of HOME was the monitoring of planning applications. These ranged from the unobjectionable to the highly objectionable. In the latter category was another attempt by the owners of Mead Court in Outram Road to construct an additional storey on top of the existing building. A previous attempt to do this had been objected to by residents and refused by both the Council and the Planning Inspector when it had gone to appeal. In the present case, the Council had again turned down the application and the applicant had again gone to appeal though nothing of any consequence whatsoever had changed in the meantime. It was hoped that the Planning Inspector would come to the same conclusion as previously. Other current applications within the HOME area related to 95 Outram Road (15/01751/P), 4 Elgin Road (15/02144/P). The latest application regarding the erection of a building on the land adjacent to 59 Outram Road had been withdrawn for reasons as yet unknown. Just outside the HOME area was an application to erect a two-storey building in the garden of 181-183 Lower Addiscombe Road. This property was used as a hostel and the new building was designed to include 11 additional hostel rooms of a standard that did not appear appropriate to

the area. This application was brought to the attention to Chase Residents' Association but HOME residents were urged to look at it and object or comment (15/01695/P). Details of these application could be found on the HOME website and <http://publicaccess.croydon.gov.uk/online-applications/>

To end with, Mira mentioned HOME's involvement in such broader bodies as the Stronger Community Partnership, the Addiscombe Residents' Associations Planning Group and the Mid-Croydon Conservation Area Advisory Panel.

At the end of the report, Mira received a vote of thanks for all her efforts on behalf of HOME. She, in turn, thanked her colleagues on the committee for their efforts, too.

Treasurer's report

Deirdre circulated the accounts for the period 16 June 2014 to 7 June 2015. She explained the accounts, stating that the most significant expenditures remained the social events, the website and the local competitions. She also pointing out that the HOME financial year was now taken as being the period between AGMs. Some members had paid twice for the same period and would be receiving refunds. She thanked Sam and Ellen for their work on the website and expressed her thanks to the 1st Croydon Scouts Association for the loan of the tables and chairs for the event, and to Cameron and Simon for transporting them. The HOME committee had agreed to make an appropriate donation to the Scouts Association in appreciation of their assistance.

There was then some discussion about what use HOME's funds could be put to. Mira mentioned that there was some merit in having a certain amount in reserve in case there was a need to seek professional legal advice in the future. Other suggestions made by the meeting included the purchase of specimen trees for appropriate places within the HOME area and the erection of discrete notice boards publicising the conservation area. Deirdre mentioned that the committee had written to the local councillors regarding the erection of conservation area signage for each end of the HOME roads but had yet to receive any response. Peter Hopkins asked whether we could not do it ourselves. He knew an iron forge in Tilford and another supplier who might be able to supply professional street signs for the HOME area. He was invited to look into it and come up with some ideas. Peter also said that, if agreement could be reached with the owners of the properties where they would be planted within the HOME area, he could dig up and supply some beech trees.

Website update

Ellen reported on developments regarding the website, thanking Melanie for providing the information on planning applications. She urged HOME members to consult the website and take the opportunity to comment on any of the applications. Mira commented on the new HOME Mulberry tree logo which had been designed by local artist, Beverley Jones.

Neighbourhood Watch

Melanie thanked all those now accepting emailed versions of the Croydon Eye. If others in their household would like their own copy of the newsletter emailed to them, they were invited to give her their email addresses to add to the HOME database.

Fortnightly updates from the Croydon Borough NHW Association were available on the HOME website. These contained information about current and / or local scams, trading standards information and advice about staying safe.

Melanie now also sat on the Addiscombe Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel that met quarterly to discuss relevant issues with the local police SNT. The current priorities for Addiscombe were Burglary and Youth Anti-Social Behaviour. Addiscombe had had two 48hr dispersal orders in recent months.

Fire Safety – the good news was that deaths from household fires had dropped significantly and now the Croydon Fire Brigade was called out to more Road Traffic Accidents than actual fires. They also had a scheme to register elderly residents and those with mobility issues – particularly if they smoked at home. This meant that, in an emergency, the attending team would know of the issues in advance and therefore more able to help more effectively. If any HOME member was in one of these groups, they were advised to consider referring themselves for a free fire safety visit.

She then outlined what residents could do to help the neighbourhood:

- 1) Report fly tipping to the council;
- 2) Look out for vulnerable neighbours (e.g. lots of repair work being carried out – seeing if the contractors were legitimate);
- 3) Be careful about opening the door to people they did not know;

- 4) Call 101 to report it if they thought they had been a victim (this alerted the police and also helped to protect neighbours);
- 5) Do not open emails or click on links or attachments from unknown people;
- 6) Volunteer as a NHW road co-ordinator. Our watch would be more effective if the HOME area was divided up into separate watches for each road. Anyone interested was invited to let Melanie know.

HOME in Bloom and museum tour

Margaret said that HOME in Bloom was now in its third year. It seemed to be having a good effect as improvement in at least some of the front gardens had been noted. Judging for the current competition would take place in early July and she urged members to let her have their nominations in good time.

Margaret also mentioned that the Council had a new Borough Archivist who was keen on getting the community involved in local history. One way of doing this was by arranging tours of the archives and museum. Margaret was in the process of organising such a tour on 19 September of the current year, starting at 11 am. There were still some places available on the tour and anyone interested was invited to contact her.

She also reminded the meeting that she was the editor of the HOME Newsletter and invited members to let her have any items of potential interest and relevance.

Car parking in Ashburton Road, Gardens and Close

Ken Marriott explained the problems being experienced in these roads, as he saw them. Basically, because the rest of the HOME area had controlled parking, commuters from outside looking for parking spots and others not wishing to pay for controlled parking used parking space in the Ashburton roads to the detriment of residents. He also pointed out that a significant number of vehicles parked in Ashburton Road tended to be commercial ones which were left overnight and at weekends. Sometime they were left for two weeks or more while their owners presumably went on holiday!. He thought that some form of controlled parking could be a solution.

Tim Duce spoke from his own experience elsewhere. He said that one needed to get Transport for London on board to make any sensible progress regarding parking. [Secretary's note: Parking in Ashburton Road etc has nothing to do with TFL; it is a Croydon Council matter. TFL deal with main roads]. He also warned that with controlled parking schemes residents usually ended up with fewer parking spots and the problem was simply exported to the nearest roads which did not have such controlled parking.

Mira asked Tim to send her a resumé of his thoughts on the matter. She also agreed to contact the Council to see if they had any current proposals for Ashburton Road etc. She also proposed the HOME committee prepare a flier for residents of Ashburton Road, Gardens and Close seeking their views.

Election of officers

All present officers, except Stan Goron, were prepared to stand again for election and were duly elected by a show of hands. A replacement Meeting Secretary would be sought as a matter of urgency. In the meantime, Stan would continue to fulfil that function

Open session

In the absence of Gavin Barwell, Steve O'Connell and the local councillors there was no discussion of the wider issues affecting Addiscombe or, more generally, Croydon. Instead, Frank Akoako raised the question of how HOME could better involve people that had tenancies in the HOME area as well as home owners. He said that such tenants were often not here for very long and were not necessarily told by the letting agencies / estate agents how they should and should not behave in the area nor about the Residents' Association and how it might be able to help them. Peter Hopkins suggested HOME should produce a welcoming letter that estate agents etc could give to tenants when they started their tenancy. It was also agreed that Frank should be invited to attend the HOME committee meeting that next dealt with the matter.

Deirdre asked members to check that she had their up-to-date email address. This applied in particular to anyone who thought they were on the email list but who were not getting any HOME messages; they could contact Deirdre at deidrerrainbow@hotmail.com.

Carol mentioned the community fair that was due to take place the following Saturday at St. Mary Magdalene Church and invited HOME members to attend and participate.