

CHALFONT HEIGHTS ROADS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held at the Chalfont St. Peter Cricket Club on
Friday, 14th March, 1975

Present: Messrs. D.A. Bates Mrs. J.K. Payne
 D.R. Brown
 J.H. Luya
 V.J.R. Sutton (Trustee)
 E.A. Wilson (Trustee)

Mr. J.H. Luya in the chair

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs. G.H. Jarvis,
D.W. Clarke, Wing Commander Marchbank, Mr. R. D. Grace and
Mr. Temple.

42 Residents of the Estate attended the meeting besides those
named above.

1. THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a) Introduction

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those present
and explained the date of the A.G.M. had been called for early March
in the hope that more residents would be able to attend.

Mr. Luya then paid a short sincere tribute to Mr. J.R.T. Hooper
whose recent death was a sad event to all who had known him.
Mr. Hooper had been a Trustee since the inception of the Estate,
he had achieved much in his time and would be sadly missed.

The sympathy of the meeting was extended to Mrs. Hooper and her
family and which the Committee undertook to convey.

For the benefit of new residents, the Chairman introduced members
of the Committee to the meeting and outlined their individual
responsibilities. It was noted that Mr. Ted Davis had felt unable
to continue on the Committee having left in February, 1974, and the
Committee wished to place on record their thanks to Mr. Davis for
his valuable contribution over the years. The Chairman recalled that
the work on the trees up until January last year, and the finding
of the present Contractor for the roads was attributable to Mr. Davis.

Continuing, the Chairman, reminded the meeting that we were in
the second year of the Road contract and the Tree programme. In the
latter case Mr. Bishop had been slightly put out by the unreasonable
weather being unable to complete all the work planned owing to the
early rising of the sap in the Silver Birches.

Having worked with both contractors now for two years or so
the Committee were well satisfied that we were very lucky to have
found such conscientious and hard working experts in these two fields,
and who endeavour to be as economical as possible for our general benefit.

The Chairman then proceeded to briefly outline the work of the
Committee and the Trustees over the last fifteen months, referring
first to the development pressures described in the previous A.G.M.
Minutes. Residents would hear from Mr. Sutton how the problem of
"Greenhedges" had been resolved and the original agreement upheld.

This long and tenacious battle had been successfully fought mainly by the untiring efforts of Mr. Sutton, to whom all our thanks are due.

Development of H.2. also presented a new threat to the Heights by a proposed access from Winkers Lane. This was fought successfully and access has been denied - it will now be planned from Denham Lane.

The Committee, together with residents in Lewis Lane had so far thwarted a proposal to demolish and develop property behind the Lane which would have adversely affected residents amenities.

The roads continue to carry three times the traffic normally expected for this type of surface. Wear and tear was becoming a major worry and the state of the surfaces was being aggravated by vehicle speed out of all proportion to common sense and total disregard, apparently, for the safety of others. The Committee were determined to find a remedy before a fatal accident occurs and intend to seek advice from the Police if the situation does not show an immediate improvement.

In the absence of Mr. Hugh Jarvis through illness the Secretary would be outlining the work carried out both in the Tree and Road Programmes.

The Chairman then turned to Gates which although these had been closed at awkward times and at odd intervals during the year, difficulty had been experienced in obtaining volunteers and the work again fell to members of the Committee. In the long term, gates would be provided at both Chiltern Hill and Woodside. The reason for the delay was expense and more important demands upon our limited resources, but these will be installed as soon as possible.

Two signs were shortly to be erected in Sandy Rise disclaiming responsibility for damage and/or injury to those using the unmade portion. The Insurance Company refused to cover this portion of the road in our Policy.

Householders generally were asked to take a brush and shovel to their verges whenever necessary particularly when leaves begin to fall profusely.

The Chairman closed his address by reference to Caravans parked in gardens on more or less permanent sites and visible from the road. Several complaints during the year were received by the Committee from neighbours in this connection and attention was therefore drawn to residents concerned.

b) Road Maintenance

The Secretary reported on behalf of Mr. Jarvis and began by a brief resume of the circumstances leading to the appointment of Skinner and Sons our Contractors who embarked on a programme of bringing all roads up to a certain standard prior to entering upon a ten-year agreement to maintain and surface the roads during that period.

The Contract began in 1974 with the surfacing of Upway and Chiltern Hill at a cost of about £1600. Extra work was undertaken at the personal cost to residents in Sandy Rise and Lincoln Road Spur.

Touching on the plans for 1975, the Secretary reported that a new soakaway had been created in Ellis Avenue to combat the flooding

which has so long been a nuisance. Potholes had been attended to in Winkers Lane, and later this year Ellis Avenue and Lewis Lane will be resurfaced. This would complete the programme for 1975.

Projected work for 1976 included resurfacing Lincoln Road and Woodside Hill. Mr. Bates reminded residents that certain roads on the Heights were ex-Contract and in general these were end spurs or roads with small housing density. They were, however, not being ignored but when work on these roads is required it will be carried out, but will be the subject of a separately negotiated price. For the benefit of new residents it was explained that the separation of the larger roads from the side roads for the purpose of the Contract, was made in order to keep costs down to a minimum. The major roads carried the most wear and tear and were all used by residents.

c) Tree Maintenance

In the spring of 1974 Mr. Bishop tackled the trees in Woodside successfully completing a programme which extended the top of Woodside to just below Lincoln Road. This work was generally approved and admired so our faith in Mr. Bishop had fully justified itself. The Autumn of that year we were able to complete Woodside and tackle the lower half of Chiltern Hill.

The programme for this Spring concentrated on the whole of Lincoln Road where the trees are shaped and trimmed with the same degree of care and expertise. Some difficulties were experienced by Mr. Bishop when the sap started rising early in the Silver Birches which have been left until the Autumn.

As far as possible we do try and notify residents when trees are to be severely pruned or felled, the latter being carried out after very careful consideration and only as a last resort. We regret to report that there were one or two instances when unpleasantness occurred during this operation.

Therefore, residents are respectfully asked to note that the Committee alone are responsible for their actions on your behalf in approving the Tree programme, therefore any criticisms should be levelled through the Secretary in writing and not directly to Mr. Bishop. The Contractor is an acknowledged expert and his advice to the Committee is either accepted or rejected after discussion with him and so, interference with him while carrying out his duties either by attempting to influence him or in any other way, is unwelcome.

d) Gates and Verges

Having covered most of the points in his introduction, the Chairman supported Mr. Wilson's plea for volunteers. The problem of parking on verges once again was highlighted as it was felt that it was a disagreeable and unsociable practice which particularly was dangerous at night. All residents were asked to observe this restriction and to encourage guests and other residents to do likewise.

2. TRUSTEES REPORT

Mr. Sutton referred to the great amount of work undertaken by Mr. Jack Hooper in the past and how sadly he and his fellow Trustees would miss him both as a colleague and a friend.

Mr. Hooper, recalled Mr. Sutton, started his work for the Estate as a Committee member in the early 1960's and was appointed a Trustee in 1965. Mr. Sutton reiterated the meeting's sympathy for Mrs. Hooper and her family.

Mr. Sutton reported that it had been a quiet eighteen months or so probably due to financial reasons. There were only ten applications for minor developments and of those eight had been approved, one rejected and one passed after amendments had been agreed.

The application refused in Ellis Avenue would have had a fundamental affect upon the neighbouring property, despite approval from Amersham R.D.C. the Trustees were firm in not allowing the work to proceed.

As indicated by the Chairman, "Greenhedges" had been resolved to the satisfaction of the Trustees after long negotiations with the developer. The property had now passed to a private buyer. The building plot situated on the upper portion of the Hill is unsold and in the present climate could remain so for some time.

Again for the benefit of new residents, Mr. Sutton asked that applications for building work of any description should first be routed through Mrs. Clifton who acts as the Committee's agent in these matters.

A vote of thanks to Mrs. Clifton for her work on behalf of the Estate was warmly approved.

Mr. Sutton amplified the Chairman's remarks concerning Caravans in gardens. The Trustees were reflecting the general opinion of residents on the Estate who object to Caravans parked on permanent sites in residents gardens, or where they interfere with neighbours or may be seen from the road. In any case, they should be screened.

Mr. Sutton ended by saying that he had secured two films which would be screened at the end of the meeting, one was a directly linked with our effort to preserve our environment and the other an exciting film about North Sea Oil Rigs which was included for good measure.

Mr. Sutton's report was received with warm applause.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

a) Presentation of Accounts

A copy of the audited statement of accounts was circulated to the meeting.

The Treasurer opened his report with a plea for prompt payment of subscriptions, as the main recipient of the money - the Roads Contractor - was due for payment on the 1st June each year.

Mr. Brown explained that due to the change in the Financial Year, the accounts presented covered nineteen months, resulting in a seven month period when no income was forthcoming. The 1973 subscriptions had been stretched to cover nineteen months. This was made possible by the healthy balance position at June, 1973.

Expenditure, of course, had continued and the amounts spent on Trees and Roads, etc. totalled £1,500 and were reflected in the accounts. In 1974 however, the roads and trees constituted about 96% of our expenditure. The trees accounted for £328.00 (this does not show in the accounts as they cover expenditure up to and including 1st December, 1974), and £113.00 due for part of last year's work has been debited to the 1975 accounts.

The subscriptions were now due (January 1st) and the Treasurer thanked those few residents who having read the previous A.G.M. minutes had paid up on time without any reminders. Income from subscriptions was forecast to amount to £2,100 for 1975 supplemented by £55.00 in payments for arrears, £50.00 interest on deposits and £20.00 from Capital repayments in all totalling £2,225.00.

Estimated expenditure included \$1,500 for Roads, \$400 Extras to Contract, \$700 for trees (including \$113.00 for earlier work), and Insurance and Administration \$120.00 totalling \$2,525.00 - a budget deficit of \$500.00.

Commenting on this Mr. Brown explained that he was allowing an increase in the cost of Roadwork mainly because he felt it prudent to do so although the Contractor had agreed to no increase in yearly costs - provided his own costs did not exceed 7% over a predetermined limit, and with the present situation this seemed very likely.

The extra expenditure above contract included a new soakaway already constructed in Ellis Avenue - a vital necessity - and the work carried out on the trees this year (\$180.00). Budgetting for a deficit for 1975 was possible because of some \$700.00 in our deposit account and this would enable us to keep subscriptions to the same level as last year but only until the end of 1975. Subscriptions will have to be increased for 1976.

The Treasurer also appealed to those residents who were paying by Bankers Order at the old rate - would they please amend instructions to their Bank and save so much trouble.

Mr. Brown also reminded the meeting that Mr. Herniman, a past resident on the Heights, had very kindly audited the books for many years now, and understandably indicated that this would be the last year he acted as such. An appeal therefore, is made through these minutes to any resident willing to undertake this task which does not require professional qualifications in this instance but is simply to verify on behalf of the residents that the books and records have been properly kept.

On the subject of non-payers, Mr. Brown paid tribute to the former Treasurer (The Chairman) who during/term of office had made tremendous impact on the list that now there existed but a small number of non-payers. Needless to say it was these residents who in general misused the amenities on the Heights. Two more households in Sandy Rise had now agreed to contribute and the road made up to include these properties, but it was regretted that we were still unable to make headway with those lower down the road. An explanation may be that these residents in Sandy Rise were under a misguided impression that they were not considered part of the Heights. This is not so, and residents who may be acquainted with householders in Sandy Rise (lower part) should take the trouble to explain to them that they are part and parcel of the Heights and, indeed, use the Heights roads in order to gain access to the Village.

Concluding, the Treasurer informed the meeting that there were one or two cases where payment of full subscriptions would cause hardship. In the past the Committee had used its discretion, either waiving all or part of the subscription. So far he was aware this had been inherited by the Committee but no formal authority for this had ever been approved at an A.G.M., Mr. Brown therefore, requested approval of the meeting to continue to exercise this discretion sparingly. This was unanimously approved.

In thanking Mr. Brown for his report, the Chairman commented that it really was unseemly that on an Estate of this size, with the size and quality of the Houses that a volunteer Committee should have to resort to pleading for subscriptions to be paid. The amount of valuable time and money spent on collecting from wayward subscribers was out of all proportion to the amount involved.

In reply to a question from the floor asking why names of non-payers should not be published in the minutes, the Treasurer explained that there were legal implications and that the subject has been discussed much in Committee and the intention to publish being defeated by a narrow majority each time it had been raised. The Committee were rapidly approaching the

stage when if the list of non-payers persists then perhaps those who do pay will be published.

The Statement of Accounts was approved by the Meeting.

Proposed By

seconded by

b) Action Committee's Accounts

Mr. Finch, as treasurer of the Action Committee, (Minutes of previous A.G.M. refers), reported that following a meeting called on September 1st, 1972, in order to offer opposition to development of land adjoining the Heights a fighting fund of £555.60 was founded by the resident

Expenses had amounted to £179.04, and on December 31st, 1972, £400.00 was placed on deposit account and this had since earned interest amounting to £70.21. Therefore, original capital plus interest totalled £625.81 and this less expenses realised a credit balance of £446.77.

The Chairman of the Action Committee (Mr. E. Malandine) had arranged to meet Mr. Finch when the former returned from Norway in about ten days, so that all the paper work could be handed over for safe keeping to the Roads Committee.

In conclusion Mr. Finch said he was very pleased to have had the opportunity to do this work for the residents that although he now lived in Amersham he would be willing to do anything to help in the future.

Mr. Finch was warmly thanked for his report and for his contribution to the success of the Action Committee.

4. QUESTIONS

Mr. Allen raised the question of the advisability of budgeting for a deficit in 1976.

It was explained that the present healthy balance would enable the Committee to carry out its promise at the previous A.G.M. not to increase subscriptions this year.

Mr. Allen asked if the Treasurer would like to forecast the increase in subscriptions for 1976, but Mr. Brown refused to be drawn on this subject saying with rates of inflation fluxuating so much - who can tell?

It was then proposed from the floor that the subscriptions remain the same level this year and this was approved by the meeting.

Mr. John Laurie made a strong plea for the verges on the Heights to be re-established as walk-ways. Too many residents had incorporated these into their property albeit with the best of intentions to care and maintain them, but in doing so had destroyed the nature of the Heights in this particular connection.

There followed a lively discussion upon this, the Trees and the Roads and it was the feeling of the meeting that the verges should be kept tidy, but not over trimmed and that the boundaries of properties should be marked by flowers or some other natural way. Footpaths should be re-established where they existed before and car owners should be prevented from parking on verges day or night.

5. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Col. Dickson in proposing a vote of thanks to the Committee for their work throughout the year, also proposed that they be re-elected en Bloc this was seconded by Mr. John Laurie and carried unanimously.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business to discuss the proceedings then terminated.

The films supplied by Mr. Sutton were then shown and enjoyed very much by everyone.
