

CHALFONT HEIGHTS ROADS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE

NINETEENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held at the

Chalfont St. Peter Cricket Club

on Friday, 28th September, 1973

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Present: Messrs. D.A. Bates  
E.C. Davis  
G.H. Jarvis  
J.H. Luya  
V.J.R. Sutton (Trustee)  
E.A. Wilson  
In Attendance: Mrs. J.K. Payne  
Trustees : J.R.T. Hooper  
B.W. Clarke

Mr. J.H. Luya in the chair

41 Residents of the Estate attended the meeting

1. THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a) Introduction

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those present and introduced the members of the Committee to the residents at the same time outlining their individual responsibilities.

Mr. E.C. Davis and Mr. G.H. Jarvis had undertaken the work connected with the Roads and the Trees; Mr. E.A. Wilson had organised the Road closures, and Mr. V.J.R. Sutton as Secretary to the Trustees had devoted himself to the task of controlling development.

The Committee had invited Mr. Hooper of the Trustees, and Mr. Malandine ( Chairman of the Action Committee) to address the meeting at a later stage of the proceedings.

Continuing, the Chairman expressed the great regret of everyone at the death of Mr. Simons who had been one of the original members of the Roads Committee and who was appointed a Trustee at the time of the take-over from the Stroud Estate. He had proved himself to be a man of great integrity having at all times the welfare of the Estate at heart. Jimmy Simons would be sadly missed.

The Chairman then proceeded to briefly outline the work of the Committee and the Trustees over the last twelve months referring first to the considerably increased pressures being brought to bear upon the Trustees to permit development of properties at higher density than is desirable on the Heights. A particular example being an attempt to re-develop "Greenhedges" against all previous agreements between the Trustees and the previous owner.

Residents had reached the time when they had now to decide what sort of development, if any, they wanted to see on the Heights, and must be prepared to take strong action to preserve this unique area from the ravages of the speculator.

This did not preclude any reasonable development on the Estate but simply that any development must be regulated to the benefit of all. In this connection the Chairman confirmed that individual personal objections to planning applications carried more weight with the Amersham Planning Committee than a list of names appended to a petition. - Residents please note.

b) Road Maintenance

The roads carry nearly three times the traffic they did when originally laid down. Wear was becoming noticeably greater caused by this increase and also by vehicle speed out of all proportion to the type of road surface, and too, with scant regard for the safety of others.

A contractor had now been found who was prepared to repair and maintain the roads for a period of ten years at a fixed price per year but required the Committee to sign a contract. The constitution of the Committee is such that it is unable to do this but hoped to come to an agreement with the contractor. In that event we would look forward to a period of reasonable stability in the cost of road maintenance.

c) Tree Maintenance

A similar problem exists with the trees. They need continuing maintenance if they are to be kept in good order and without great care they will grow extremely large and ungainly - some cases even dangerous.

The Committee commissioned a report from Mr. Bishop whose Firm had been responsible for excellent work locally, and who has both skill and deep knowledge of this subject. This report was excellent and detailed, suggesting a seven year plan estimated to cost in the region of £3,000 plus V.A.T.

d) Gates and Verges

Posts are now in position but difficulties were encountered with lines of sight for the gates so closures have been operated with chains and signs. Counterbalanced poles will be investigated for the future.

Ramps have again been suggested during the year by those residents in favour of them as a speed deterrant, while others would prefer none at all. The question is still open but the Committee are not, generally speaking, in favour of installing additional ramps on the Heights especially on the Hills.

The Chairman reminded residents that last year an appeal was made to start a bulb fund and by the end of November 1972 about £50.00 had been subscribed of which £23.00 was spent on bulbs, peat and soil. The result from this modest effort was encouraging and it was hoped to plant shrubs this year to meet many requests.

Although Finance appeared later on the Agenda the Chairman apologised in advance, as temporary Treasurer, for producing a statement of Income and Expenditure which did not quite balance but since he was not an expert had handed all the books to the Auditor, the result of which would be circulated with the minutes of the Annual General Meeting.

The Chairman emphasised the amount of work put in by all Committee members and who met together regularly once a month



They devoted much of their spare time besides and one example of this would be shown later in the form of colour slides taken on the Estate and from the air by Denis Bates and Vic Sutton at their own expense - and flying is an expensive hobby.

Mr. Luya then closed his address by introducing Mr. Malandine, Chairman of the Action Committee, formed as a result of a proposal at the 1972 Annual General Meeting.

## 2. ACTION COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Mr. Malandine began by naming the team appointed and/or recruited to the Committee - Mrs Francis, Mr. Bruce Allen, Mr. Aubrey and Mr. Morrison. Mr. George Finch was subsequently appointed treasurer to the Committee.

The task before the Committee was to fight the plan published by the Bucks County Council for the development of areas H.1. and H.2. It was decided to fight the plan as a whole rather than only the parts which directly affected the Heights.

It won through with the exception of H.2. a small area of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

Mr. Malandine expressed especial thanks to the road stewards who undertook the work of distributing the literature - many of them were children and all were enthusiastic and willing helpers.

The highlight of the Campaign was a meeting at the Community Centre where a fighting fund was launched. Much of the money has been invested so the fund continues to mount. The Committee also organised a successful street petition and enlisted help from many individuals in addition to support from the Chalfont St Peter Parish Council. Contact was made with the Department of Environment and regular attendance was made to the meetings of the Amersham Rural District Council.

The Estate Architect, Mr. Key, produced an excellent report on the plan with much evidence to support the campaign.

Asked to comment on the fighting fund, Mr. Finch expressed disappointment over the response but nevertheless 102 people subscribed a total of £602.60. Expenditure amounted to £193.92 leaving a balance of £408.68. Mr. Key's fee was met equally by the Action Committee and the Roads Committee fund.

Mr. Luya then thanked Mr. Malandine and his Committee on behalf of everyone for the work they had so successfully undertaken.

## 3. TRUSTEE'S REPORT

Before introducing Mr. V.J.R. Sutton who was to present this report the Chairman reminded the meeting of the position concerning the Trustees. One had now moved out of the area; Mr. Bernard Clarke who had served for so many years on the Committee had now moved from the Heights; sadly, Mr. Simons had died recently, leaving only Mr. Hooper and Mr. Sutton to bear the burdens.

Mr. Clarke, being present at the meeting and who was thanked for his untiring efforts, had offered to continue unofficially as Solicitor although giving up his trusteeship. The chairman in thanking Mr. Clarke for his kindness, suggested that we really had no right to expect free services of this kind, if we needed expert advice we should pay for it - The Architect has received his fees, the Auditor would submit his account in future, and so on.

Mr. Sutton then informed the meeting that Mr. Lomas of A.C.Frost had ceased to act for the Trustees in connection with developments and in his place, Mrs Clifton, of "Little Dormers", Chiltern Hill had undertaken the task. Mrs.Clifton is professionally qualified and the Trustees are grateful for her offer of help.

Residents were reminded that plans for development or alteration to property should be sent to Mrs. Clifton in the first instance and before application to Amersham. It should be noted that quite apart from any permissions obtained from Amersham Rural District Council for garages, extensions and the like, permission must be sought from the Estate and if this is obtained first then time, trouble and expense is saved.

During the past year most residents complied with this requirement and matters therefore proceeded smoothly. Since the last A.G.M. some 24 applications for modifications have been received ranging from house extensions, extra rooms, garages, together with plans for two new houses. From these, 21 house improvements, two plans for new houses, and one application for a driveway were approved.

The Architects advice was sought in a few instances because certain features appeared out of keeping with the general surroundings and one application was not considered because the person concerned had not paid his subscription.

The most important development proposals during the year, reported Mr. Sutton, were as follows:

a) Greenhedges

Here the Trustees agreed to one house being built in the upper part of the ground facing Chiltern Hill. The property was sold on that understanding.

Amersham then received application for the demolition of the existing house and the building of three houses on the site. As a result of all the objections received in response to a call from the Trustees, the local planning Committee came to view the site and their report carried tremendous weight the the A.R.D.C. planning Officer - permission was refused and the original agreement upheld.

b) Joiners Lane

Although no strictly on the Heights this development would have affected us very much indeed. The plan was to demolish three houses lying just behind Lewis Lane and on the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres then to be freed to build thirteen houses.

After objections, again circulated through out the Estate, Amersham approached the developer suggesting that eleven houses might stand a better chance of being built. Once again residents objected and the matter is still in obedience.

Mr. Sutton then appealed earnestly to residents to register their objections even if the matter does not directly affect them because it helps considerably those to whom it does. Besides the next proposals might affect you !

c) Lincoln Road

This was initiated by a developer in Tring who wrote earlier this year to all residents in Lincoln Road suggesting that they sold the lower part of their gardens for building. The Trustees made known their objections and listed the various covenants covering the land.



Mr. Sutton reported that he had just learnt that A.C.Frost had written a similar proposal offering considerable sums of money for the purchase of the land.

Obviously the Trustees' objections will still hold good and although it is not their policy to prevent owners selling their land if they wish, a certain responsibility lay with them to ensure that the beauty of the Estate be enhanced rather than destroyed by these actions.

The Trustees would view these proposals objectively and even if one objection only was raised they would fight the whole project. If agreement was by common consent then they would ensure adjoining properties were protected.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Sutton for his report and suggested to the meeting it would worth while spending a little more time in order to view a selection of colour slides taken both by Mr. Sutton and Mr. Bates illustrating the unique setting of the Estate and to underline the efforts being made to preserve its amenities.

Slides were then shown which included some remarkable aerial shots taken from a private aircraft, while others showed the natural beauty of the Estate in which we all lived.

The presentation was received with generous approval.

Mr. Luya then introduced Mr. Hooper who was the sole surviving original Trustee now that Bernhard Clarke had relinquished his post. Mr. Hooper warmly encouraged the present Committee who had impressed the meeting by their zeal and activity, thought and trouble so obviously taken.

The Trustees, said Mr. Hooper, work closely with the Roads Committee and have two special aims :-

1. To preserve the beauty of the Estate.
2. To allow only natural development which does not impinge on that beauty.

In order to achieve this end, personal gain and interest must, to some extent not be allowed to override the general good of the whole, insisted Mr. Hooper, because whatever we do now will have its effect on the future of the Estate.

Mr. Hooper's remarks were warmly approved by the meeting.

Items b) and c) of the Chairmans report were then amplified by Mr. Davis and Mr. Wilson talked about the gates closures, both Committee members were introduced by the Chairman and reported as follows:

Roads - Mr. Davis pointed out the work already carried out in line with the first part of the ten year plan to bring the roads up to an acceptable standard before maintenance could begin. This work would continue under the contract which also allowed for the roads to be gritted, tarred and rolled three times during that period.

One month after the first application the verges would be swept and the excess gravel removed. Gulleys would be cleared regularly and potholes as they appeared would be repaired without delay in order to prevent the surfaces deteriorating further.

An expenditure of some £1300 per year was estimated to cover all major road surfaces on the Estate except the following:-

Stoneycroft Spur  
Half-Acre Hill

Winkers Lane  
Winkers Close

These took relatively much less wear and tear and would be considered separately each year and the necessary action taken.

Trees - Mr. Davis then reported that this year, work on trees had been notified in advance to residents. In all five trees had to be felled and many heavy branches lopped which would have been damaged by traffic. It was intended to re-plant the felled trees with a choice from three varieties.

Woodside Hill was considered a difficult problem as two varieties of tree alternated on both sides of the Hill. It could be readily appreciated that the felling of every other tree would result in one variety remaining.

Mr. Davis reported a total of £81.00 having been spent this year.

Gates - Mr. Wilson reported having organised six closures during the year and would have increased the frequency had more volunteers been found.

It was suggested by Mr. Wilson that a leader be appointed in each road with the responsibility of coordinating residents into teams for inclusion into a rota system organised to a set programme.

Would volunteers please contact Mr. Wilson.

#### 4. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Luya reported that there were 17 non-payers from Sandy Rise and 5 others who are expected to pay in due course.

Once again the Treasurer stressed the importance of paying subscriptions promptly, Failure to do so resulted in hours of wasted time and energy by himself and members of the Committee.

The Committee cannot hope to negotiate contracts or agreements which depend on prompt payment in return for keen prices if the delay in subscription payments continue.

Mr. Luya announced his intention of calling for a proposal from the floor to maintain the half-rate differential of 24.00 on all future subscriptions, but to be gradually phased out when those properties qualifying for the half-rate changed hands.

In addition this report suggested a single Estate Fund from which the Committee could spend sums as and when they were needed for a particular purpose. This would allow more flexibility and simplify accounting.

Turning to the subscription for 1973/74 the Treasurer estimated that the Estate would have to find some £1,300 plus £300 for the roads. The first figure covering the contract and the second for the possibility of work required to be carried out on the uncontracted roads as previously explained.

Over a 7 year period the estimated cost of tree maintenance would be between £400 and £500 a year, and allowing a contingency sum of £300 to cover solicitors, architects fees and the like brings the total sum required to be raised to £2,500 per annum.



This had to be raised from 180 houses on the Estate including Sandy Rise. There were 77 full rate subscribers and 103 paying half-rate. A special payment of £35 from the Douglas Haig Homes and a payment of £14 from the Youth Club were the other contributions.

If the subscriptions were increased to £16.00 Full rate and the half rate to £12.00 the 180 households would yeald £2,468 provided everyone paid. In fact the likely figure would be nearer £2,200 - some £200 short of the total required.

This short-fall would be solely due to the unco-operative spirit of the householders in the lower half of Sandy Rise who in effect represent 17 households the members of which all enjoy full use of the amenities of the Estate without contributing one penny towards the upkeep.

The Committee were most anxious to find a solution to this problem.

The proposal would be to increase the subscription rates as follows:-

Full subscription rate	-	£16.00 per annum
Half-rate subscription	-	£12.00 per annum

At the same time it was suggested that the finacial year be altered to begin on the 1st January and end on the 31st December each year. The present date of 31st May is most inconvenient bearing in mind the time-lag between that and the A.G.M.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

## 5. QUESTIONS

Mr. Hollier - asked why the people in Sandy Rise were so difficult.

The answer was thought to be that their attitude stemmed from the time the Bye-Pass was completed and their access to the Village closed up. Previously it was possible to do this without using the Estate Roads, but this is not the case now.

Mr. K.G.Smith - suggested that one line of attack might be to publish the names of those who refuse tp pay up - alternatively to publish the names of those who do so.

Mr. Finch - asked whether Sandy Rise might pay if the road was made up.

The Chairman replied that this would cost a great deal now because the both the surface and the foundations had disintegrated and we were unable to meet this cost without capital expenditure by the Sandy Rise community. Mr. Sutton reported that the Committee had requested a meeting several times but had received no positive reaction.

Mr. Allen - who is the arbitrator on the roads.

The Chairman stated that the contract for the roads stipulated that the work should be carried out to the satisfaction of the Roads Committee.

Mr. Davis then answered a question on the expertise of the company selected for the contract and informed the meeting that samples of the work had been viewed, the company owned their own quarries, made their own tarmacadam and had been in existance since 1903.

Mr. Sutton pointed out that although the Contract covered a nominal period of ten years, there was a termination clause but that it really constituted a Gentlemans Agreement with understanding on both sides.

Mr. Allen - asked if drainage could be included if required.

The short answer is Yes, but it would be the subject of a separate quotation. Soakaways on the Heights would be maintained under the Agreement but new ones would cost extra. The position would be carefully watched.

Mr. Hollier - If the Financial Year was to run to the 31st of December would the subs be pro-rata ?

The Chairman explained that the present subscription for 1972/73 covering the period up to the end of May this year would be allowed to run until the 31st December 1973 - ~~i.e. 14 months~~. The 1974 subscription year would then begin on January 1st. *when subs are due.*

The Chairman asked for proposals as follows:-

1. Single Maintenance Fund

Proposed by Mr. Fowler

Seconded by Mr. Finch

Carried Unanimously

2. Half-rate subscription - to maintain the differential for the time being.

Proposed by

Seconded by

3. New Subscription Rate

Full Rate - £16.00

Half Rate - £12.00

Proposed by Mr. Malandine

Seconded by Mr. Fowler

Carried Unanimously

6. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Mr. Finch proposed that the present Committee be re-elected en-block and there was unanimous approval of this proposition.

In addition Mrs. J.K. Payne who attended the Committee meetings throughout the year supplying verbatim reports of the proceedings from which the formal minutes were written by the Secretary, was unanimously voted a member of the Committee. Mrs. Payne also had volunteered to take shorthand notes of the A.G.M.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. German questioned the density of the Trees on Woodside Hill and stated that he and ten other residents were complaining of a serious lack of light - nothing had been done during the last five year plan to alleviate this position.

Mr. Davis replied on behalf of the Committee saying that if subscriptions came in on time, more work could be arranged. There were over a 1,000 trees on the Estate and only the most urgent could be undertaken most times.



Mr. Davis pointed out that the Committee were unable at the moment to allocate more funds for the Tree work and that he had never noticed any lack of sunlight on Woodside Hill. The Committee were also firmly against any suggestion which included felling of every other tree on Woodside.

The Chairman then suggested that any suggestion or statement made in the past about felling trees on Woodside had been unwise. The inadvisability of felling every second tree when only two varieties existed was fairly obvious and had been commented on by Mr. Davis earlier in the meeting, and in anycase the cost would amount to some £200 which we could ill afford.

The proposals contained in the new 7 year programme covered the lopping and pruning the trees where light problems existed in Lincoln Road and on Woodside Hill.

The Chairman then asked if Mr. German together with the other people concerned would attend a meeting arranged with Mr. Bishop (the tree contractor) in order assess the problem and find a solution.

Mrs. Bishop of Langsett remarked that the trees blocked an enormous amount of light from the rooms of her house.

This was noted and it was generally acknowledged by the Committee that nearly all the trees were of a forest variety, and could grow to enormous sizes but they had taken steps to estimate the size of the problem, and Mr. Bishop's plan would go much of the way towards solving the situation, and in addition it would repair the clumsy pruning carried out in the past.

Mr. K.G. Smith - then raised the suggestion that the Committee's name be changed to Chalfont Heights Residents Association.

The general feeling of the Committee was that this involved a completely different set of values and such a Committee would then be required to adjudicate on peoples behaviour. After some discussion the chairman suggested the matter be explored further.

Parked Cars - this subject was raised from the floor suggesting that apart from party occasions, residents should ensure that their cars and those of their visitors were parked in drives.

Occasions when cars parked without lights and constituting great danger was also mentioned giving an example of those parked outside "Gables" in Lewis Lane, sometimes parked permanently all times of the day and night. The Committee promised to investigate this problem.

Mrs. Cassell - asked if there was a right of way around the Oak Tree on Chiltern Hill.

There appeared to be no precedent here, except extreme caution.

Mr. Hollier - questioned what could be done about the signs which go missing from time to time.

Short of policing this ourselves there seemed nothing much could be done - the Police were aware of it but unlucky so far.

Mr. Malandine then proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee.

This being unanimous -

THE PROCEEDING THEN TERMINATED