



## Notes AGM

Annual General Meeting to be held at Shrublands Club, 20A Laurel Close, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 6QE on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at 7.30pm

**LB Confirmed that we like to request that we get through the agenda and then hand over to the floor for debate, questions, ideas, and suggestions. – all agreed? Yes.**

### Apologies for absence

Pam and Len Ruel, given the Management board their vote.

### 1. Notes from last AGM agreed.

LB Minutes of previous AGM updates provided as

- The vote for doing the Nymans bed was very close therefore it seemed sensible to wait before going ahead. After recognising that the Highdown bed needed more work decision was taken not to proceed with the Nymans Court work the board placed this on hold pending further advise on what to do next. Next steps will be discussed later.
- Two non-payers paid up after small claims court initial letter. Two worse payers now with specialist lawyer to recover funds.
- Finance partner now on board and reviewing our accounts and budget for next financial year. Letter reminding residents that we all own the shared part of the estate issued as part of that process.

**Are we approving the Notes? Show of hands Approved/Not Approved.**



### **2/3. Chair's/ Secretary's report**

The secretary role remains empty however the following points were shared by Lindsey Beer.

- Alex Mitchell will be standing down as the chair he moved off the estate a while ago, no one has come forward to replace them we now have only four directors. Plus, the vacancy for the chair. Kim along with Pam have given up their time to help us around the estate and with administration. Graham still provides advise on building work but is no longer a volunteer. The board would like to thank them for their support.
- The Committee have continued to work with the gardening team, focusing on replacing plants lost last year to Box tree Caterpillars and planting more bulbs. Work has commenced on the bed in Charlesten to improve it with a stone gravel path and new planting planned.
- The committee has revisited all the insurances, and some have increased substantially this year whilst others we have managed to obtain lower quotes for the same cover.
- Once again, the Easter and Halloween trails for families have been very well received. We will continue to develop this to make sure we are making this a great place to live. Any ideas for future events will be welcome.
- We have been where possible moving plants around the estate to reduce the cost of new plants. Thank you to the residents who look after some of the beds outside their properties. In addition, Pam has been very focused on identifying special deals to make sure that we can plant new trees at the lowest possible cost. The gardening team have again planted additional bulbs around the estate which we think will add colour at low cost and be attractive for both the residents and any prospective residents looking to buy here.
- We have repaired brickwork, gates and fencing this year as well having to employee a tree surgeon to manage some of our larger trees.
- We continue to replace the old lighting as and when they break down.
- There has been a substantial amount of chat on our face book pages on CCTV, as advised on the site to install CCTV would add approximately £700 per year per household to cover the costs and we would need a large consultation with all residents signing an authority to be videoed. The board feel that this a prohibited cost and given the very small number of directors not something that we can proceed with. However, we have listened to feedback from the residents and installed dummy cameras in the garage blocks further ones will be added. Residents are strongly recommended to add a garage defender to their garage as a deterrent to thieves. These thefts are a town wide issue.



#### **4. Financial report**

Unfortunately, due to that change of financial partner we are unable at this meeting to share the accounts. These are currently being worked on and a budget produced by our new accountants which we will share as soon as both are available. It is important that everyone returns their personal details forms so that they can begin support. They will also advise residents of the telephone number for account queries as part of the process. The capture of these details will also enable us to email copies of other documents such as the accounts directly to residents.

As previously advised at the last AGM we continue to dip into the reserves to carry out remedial work around the estate such as repointing and the Highdown bed.

Please note that the cost of our normal services has continued to increase, these include electricity costs, drain cleaning in the garages, handman costs for repairs as well as tree surgery costs. All are requested by residents or recommended due to the age of the estate.

The board are advising today that this year the Annual Maintenance Charge will be £450. Future increases will be discussed later in the meeting.

#### **5. Election of Directors**

As required two directors are required to stand down, both Megan and I have agreed to step down. Unfortunately, I will not be re-standing as a director. Kim has kindly agreed to join the board. Can I have a show of hands to confirm if you are happy to re-elect Megan and vote on Kim. In addition, Megan stood down and was re-elected by a show of hands.

Following my decision to step down from being a director and following the lack of interest from residents in joining the board as a director or as a volunteer (although many are quick to complain). I have had no choice but to look at other options to run alongside the new accountants. I have sought an indicative quote for managing the estate. This was provided to me late last year by SHW who manage flats and estates like ours. Their cost would add £250 per household to the current Maintenance charges. As you are all aware we as share owners in the Management Company we are all responsible for looking after the estate. The gardens are a key reason why people live here. If no more volunteers or directors step forward by the end of the year, then the directors will be pursuing further quotes to take over the running of the estate. I think this would be a real shame, but it will be the only answer without more help. This can be further discussed when we open to the floor.



## **6. Other Business.**

### **Highdown Planter**

As you are aware work was carried out on this bed last year, we have since been investigating what steps we might need to take before moving on to another bed.

We will begin repointing work to the 36 square metres planter backs as this is crucial for the structure, we will also be writing to the lease hold bungalows on either side of the planter to advise them of the requirement to keep their properties in good working order. This is clearly stated in the leases. We have secured a competitive price for the repairs, and this will be offered to the residents where the bungalows require repointing. Repointing is the responsibility of the lease holders.

Following a review of the options the board has taken the decision to press ahead with a temporary timber roof over the planter, consisting of battens and OSB board. The all-weather board will be treated with 1200-gauge Polythene. A new flash band along the wall and onto the roof will be fitted.

The board can't guarantee it will work but has been suggested by residents several times. If this temporary work proves to be reasonably successful over the winter months, we will then look at capping all the planters off by placing a concreting lid on them all with a fall, so that the water runs off the front and with the flash band along the back.

Whilst the temporary cover is in place we will not be able to put back the planters, these will be distributed around the estate. If we went for a permanent solution, then we can reintroduce planter boxes later.

I understand that this will potentially look unattractive over the winter months but as a board we feel this is the most sensible and cost-effective way to test if capping off would work.

If the work is successfully, we would ask the residents to vote on the cost to proceed with a permanent cap. This can be further discussed when we open to the floor.

### **22 Highdown**

The board has taken the decision to board up this property due to Health and Safety concerns following it being broken in to and potentially being used for illegal purposes. The board have taken legal advice and placed a trace on the owner. The owner has been written to by our lawyer requesting the property be brought back up to scratch as required by the lease holder or face court action for the Management board to seek transfer of ownership. The letter has promoted payment of overdue charges but no communication on the repair of the property. The board now wants to ask the residents to vote on the next steps.



Our lawyer feels that we have a good case, but nothing is certain. To go to court and seek ownership could if contested cost up to £12,000. However, should we be successful then we would be able to repair the property and then sell it. Adding a substantial sum to our reserves. If successful, this would create a case for other of the bungalows the one in Bateman for example which are falling into disrepair. This can be further discussed when we open to the floor, and we will ask residents to vote on whether to proceed or not before the end of the meeting.

#### **Long Term funding of the estate.**

Finally given the age of the estate and the need to maintain the gardens but more importantly the brickwork the board feel that we have no choice but to increase the maintenance charge in 2025. This will be made up of two parts the normal coat of running the estate plus a payment of 100 which will be added to the reserves. This money will be used to complete repairs around the estate and for activities like the capping of the long beds or other measures in the future. We will be giving residents a year's notice is sufficient to help manage the cost and pay monthly is available if this is more suitable for some residents.

Over to the floor for discussion.

#### **Key discussion points**

Discussion on temporary roof on Highdown bed. Mr E Jenkinson felt that the cost worked out at £30 per household and was work doing to see if it improved things further. Mr I Jerome asked clarifying questions and some additional questions about the cost. Me P Boize confirmed that his garage is still wet, confirmed that he is below the boarded bungalow. Jans Wilson confirmed that work carried out already had improved things and thought the roof and re pointing were a positive next step. Paul and Jacqui both raised concerns about the water running of the roof onto the payment. It was confirmed that the repointing would be completed on the bottom of the bed and resealed where it met the pavement. There is a run of gully in the pathway into the drains. All agreed that this needed reviewing over the winter to make sure the gully was adequate. Ian Jerome raised that the runoff pipes still were not that effective, however these would be bypassed with the roof. Prod asked about the cost of tanking the bed. It was confirmed that a primary quote was over £20k without re pointing. Prod also stated that the re pointing wouldn't make any difference.



He was advised that this needs to be completed to maintain the structure. Prod requested a full and detailed quote on tanking. Pete De Bize felt that all the steps proposed would help. Prod raised concern of the height of the roof and the position of it. It was discussed that this is designed to test the method. The garages are freehold and not the responsibility of the management board. Maintaining the flower beds is required. Felt given the discussion a show of hands was required.

The motion to place the temporary roof and repointing on the Highdown bed was carried by 22 votes in favour verses 1 against. One per household.

Discussion moved on to funding for solicitor to look at 22 Highdown. Discussion on next steps. Confirmed that there was no guarantee that it would be successful. Discussion took place on next steps. Concern over the bungalow being left boarded up and declining further. A brief overview of next steps took place. Eric Jenkinson thought it was a good idea, Pete De Boize questioned what would happen if we didn't proceed.

Witten one vote per household vote carried 23 in favour 0 against.

Discussion moved on to the £100 increase next year on top of the £450. Conversation generally supportive of this as recognition of the age of the estate and the need to maintain it. Residents felt that the increase for 2025 should be communicated as soon as possible. Agreed that a letter would be issued following the invoice for this year.

Discussion moved on to the disabled access requested before and it was agreed that this would be pursued again following the change of MP. A request for jet washing the garage steps, it was agreed that this would be instigated. Particularly Highdown and Leonardslee.

Discussion on further light repairs recognition that they were being replaced due to age.

A number of residents offered to help to stop the requirement as this point for a management Company being asked to take over, It was recognised that this would be a substantial increase to the maintenance charge. It was agreed to review the position again at future meetings.

Meeting ended.