



**HANGER HILL GARDEN ESTATE
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
&
HOUSES MANAGEMENT BOARD**



MINUTES

Draft pending approval by 2024 AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

at 7:30pm on Thursday 30th March 2023 at Holy Family School, Vale Lane

This was a routine joint annual meeting of Hanger Hill Garden Estate Residents Association (HHGERA) and the Houses Management Board (HMB). Approximately 50 residents attended.

All relevant documents, including reports by the HHGERA and Houses Management Board chairs; budget and accounts were placed on the HHGERA website at www.hhgera.com/2023-agm. Residents were invited to contact the Association by email with any points they wished to raise. These arrangements were publicised on the Twitter feed (twitter.com/hhgeranews). Formal notice of the meeting and the final agenda and nominations were delivered to all flats and houses within the timeframes set in the HHGERA Constitution. Printed agendas, nominations, accounts and budgets were available at the meeting, along with QR codes linking to other meeting documents.

The main decisions taken were:

HHGERA

1. To agree the Minutes of the 2022 AGM
2. To support the nominations for HHGERA officers in 2023
3. To approve the report on activities since the last AGM and plans for 2023
4. To approve the HHGERA Budget for 2023
5. To agree the HHGERA subscription rate should be set at zero for 2023 and 2024
6. To approve the proposed amendment to the HHGERA Constitution, removing the requirement for decisions to be taken by attendance at physical meetings and allowing voting by post / electronically.

Houses Management Board

(Only houses residents voted on these items)

7. To support the nominations for Houses Management Board officers in 2023
8. To approve the HMB report on activities since the last AGM and plans for 2023
9. To approve the Houses Accounts for 2022
10. To approve the Houses Budget for 2023
11. To agree the Houses service charge should remain at £60 per house for 2023 and increase to £70 in 2024

Welcome and apologies

Hugh Richards, HHGERA Chair, welcomed those present and introduced three guest attendees – Hanger Hill ward Councillor Fabio Conti, and PCs Christopher Delargy and Traei Dale from the ward Safer Neighbourhood Police team.

Apologies were received from Association officers Alexandra Turner, Bill Bailey and Ingrid Joannou, from a number of other Estate residents, and from Councillors Athena Zissimos and Gregory Stafford.

Hugh asked the meeting to remember Norman Pointing, a former Councillor for Hanger Hill and Estate resident, who died on March 1st at the age of 93. Mr Pointing had, done a lot to support HHGERA and written an interesting history of the Estate that is reproduced on the residents association website (<https://www.hhgera.com/a-short-history>).

Minutes of the 2022 AGM

The minutes, which had been available on the HHGERA website since April 2022, were approved without amendment, unanimously on a show of hands.

HHGERA Constitution – proposed revision

Hugh introduced the proposed revision, which would remove the words “in person” from Paragraph 6 of the [HHGERA Constitution](#) and thereby allow voting by post / electronically. This would formalise voting methods that had been used for reasons of force majeure when physical meetings were impossible during the Covid pandemic. The meeting unanimously approved the amendment on a show of hands.

Security and policing update

PCs Delargy and Dale emphasised that our Estate was normally a low crime area but acknowledged residents’ concerns after four burglaries in the past two months, several incidents of theft of and from cars, and the ramming of a service road gate by a stolen car. They had brought with them various leaflets on crime protection and asked residents to take sensible precautions – never leaving valuables in their cars, always locking up even when leaving their homes for a few minutes, and putting lights on timers if going away.

In response to questions from the floor, they said it was essential to report any crime as this would help police prioritise use of resources, and to share information among neighbours. A recent attempted burglary, which had been aborted when the criminals spotted a video door bell, demonstrated the value of cameras which could also provide useful evidence and help achieve convictions. They agreed it was very important to keep service road gates locked – failure to do so was a perennial problem throughout Ealing and they could speak to any residents who were known to leave gates open. Finally, they explained that specialist teams investigated burglaries and would normally keep victims informed of progress. But they could also follow up if people gave them the crime number and asked.

In emergency, residents should ring 999 or dial 101 for non-emergencies. Contact details for the local team, which they asked to be recorded in the minutes, are:

Team email:	hangerhill@met.police.uk
PC Delargy 2469WA	P256941@met.police.uk
PC Dale 1335WA	P261606@met.police.uk

Several residents took up an invitation to step outside to speak individually to the officers after their presentation.

HHGERA: Annual report

Kate Crossland, as HHGERA Vice-Chair, offered her thanks to everyone who had participated in and supported the work of the Association over the past year, thanking in particular Quentin Phillips of Japan Services for sponsoring the circulars and newsletters produced during the year and the many other residents who helped in big and small ways by delivering newsletters, gardening and watering trees, organising events and so on.

She highlighted a number of issues affecting the whole Estate, more detail on which is available in the HHGERA Chair's [report](#):

- **Security:** The Association regularly shared residents' concerns with our local Police Safer Neighbourhood team. HHGERA officers were also working on issues with some gates on service roads being left open and holes in fences. Residents were urged to report any crimes or suspicious behaviour as this would ensure a regular Police presence on the Estate;
- **Noise nuisance:** HHGERA had continued to support residents over unacceptable noise from the Anyah (formerly Basrah) Lounge, just north of the top of the Princes Gardens loop. With the support of councillors, the café had been served a noise abatement order and equipment had been removed. Things seemed under control at present but the Association would continue to monitor the situation;
- **Flats:** HHGERA was working more constructively for many years with the Board for the Flats management company on areas of common interest – including the pond, of which more below;
- **Events:** Social events during the year had included a fantastic June picnic and Playstreets in September and October;
- **Sustainability:** HHGERA continued to promote sustainability on the Estate through encouragement of biodiversity by leaving some areas unmowed during “No Mow May” and providing guidance on the HHGERA website at www.hhgera.com/sustainability. Electric car charging points had been installed on the southbound straight section of Princes Gardens under a borough-wide scheme;
- **Consultation:** We had responded to various consultations undertaken by Ealing Council, after taking soundings with residents where possible. Most recently, we had contributed on the draft local plan, with particular focus on protecting Ealing's green spaces;
- **Planning and conservation:** Pat McNair, an HHGE Conservation Panel member, said the Panel had commented on 16 separate planning applications affecting 10 houses on the Estate in 2022. It had also supported the Flats' management company's new application for replacement crital windows, which was submitted last November but was still awaiting approval. The Panel had strongly objected (along with neighbouring home owners) to two applications by one landlord to convert his houses to multiple occupancy for 8/9 people. These had been refused on grounds of inadequate facilities. One application for an enclosed porch on a house in Monks Drive had been objected to and refused, then went to appeal and was again refused as there were no enclosed porches along this road. The Association had also commented on the proposals from an Ealing-wide conservation areas review, final recommendations for which were awaited.

Upcoming events and activities in 2023

Kate said PlayStreet would be held again this year, on 11th June and 29th October (both Sundays) between 2 and 4pm, at the usual location on Monks Drive. Any other events, such as another picnic, would be publicised online and in the HHGERA newsletter.

Estate centenary plans

Kate said the Estate had been built between 1928 and 1932 so it seemed logical to take 2030 as the centenary year. The aim would be to have the green spaces in particular looking great – some funds would be available from the budget for this and residents were invited to put forward ideas for suitable projects and/or events.

Liaison with Flats management company and update on pond

Kate said a constructive meeting had recently been held with Alun Rowlands, the new Chair of the Flats management board and Janis Dodd, a board member, to discuss the pond garden (on the corner of Links Road and Monks Drive). Hopefully, progress would be possible in 2023 on this and other longstanding issues of common interest.

Janis explained that the pond (which belonged to the Flats) had been emptied out and cleaned, and that it would need to be relined as the concrete was badly cracked. Before this work could be carried out, however, it was necessary to stop people using the area because of the risk of accidents – particularly if unsupervised children got in. The current post and chain fence was broken in several places and not an effective barrier, so she felt there were only two options – to fence off the area securely, subject to planning permission, or to fill in the pond, transform it into a flower bed and retain the original post and chain. Fencing had already been acquired and a mock-up was circulated at the meeting. In conclusion, Janis acknowledged that it would be impossible to please everybody so a consultation exercise would be carried out to decide which of the two options was implemented.

In discussion, the point was made that HHGERA and the Conservation Panel had an interest in the pond, as it was an important element of the Estate's overall design and houses overlooked it. It was agreed that HHGERA and Flats officers should continue to work together to identify the most attractive and practicable approach consistent with health and safety concerns.

Presentation of 2022 accounts and budget for 2023

Kate outlined the 'residents association' part of the accounts and budget, covering Estate-wide activities of benefit to both houses and flats. Approximately £250 had been spent on running the Association and its website in 2022 but plans to contribute to joint projects with the Flats board had not come to fruition during the year. The plan was again to set aside £2,150 in 2023 for joint projects including potentially the pond. Other costs were also expected to increase as more events were organised and providers lifted the price of email and website server subscriptions.

The meeting unanimously approved the HHGERA budget and accounts on a show of hands.

Subscription rate for 2023 and 2024

Kate said the HHGERA Committee proposed that there should once again be no membership fee in 2023-2024 as the Association had adequate funds in reserve for its Estate-wide activities.

The meeting unanimously agreed that the HHGERA subscription rate (as distinct from the houses service charge) should be zero for the current year and next.

Election of officers

The meeting unanimously elected the HHGERA officers nominated, to serve until the next AGM:

<u>HHGERA Committee</u>	
Chair	Hugh Richards
Vice-Chair	Kate Crossland
Treasurer	Levon Agulian
Secretary	Nim Maradas
Communications	Aleksandra Turner/Ingrid Joannou/
Planning and Conservation Area Panel	Bill Bailey/Pat McNair
Ealing Council liaison	Glenn Ellis
Police liaison and Neighbourhood Watch	Aleksandra Turner
Flats Management Board liaison	Kate Crossland/Dion Hitchcock
Social and community events	Ingrid Joannou/Aleksandra Turner/ Elen Rideal

Any other business (houses and flats)

A number of issues were raised from the floor:

- **Overgrown hedges:** It was noted that a number of houses had overgrown hedges which made it difficult for pedestrians to get past when cars were (legally) parked on the pavement. Cllr Conti said this was a problem throughout the ward and that the Council could issue a notice to owners if the matter was reported via the Love Clean Streets app or its website. He offered to take up any cases brought to his attention.
- **Maintenance of Garage Road:** Janis said she would take up questions about the state of this Flats-owned service road with the residents concerned.
- **Conduct of the AGM:** The Committee undertook to use a microphone and loudspeaker at the next AGM, after several of those present said they were having trouble hearing speakers.

There being no other business, this concluded the first part of the meeting. Guests and Flats residents with no direct interest in the remainder of the agenda were invited to stay or leave as they wished.

HOUSES MANAGEMENT BOARD (HMB)

Report on activities in 2022

Hugh Richards, HMB Chair, said 2022 had been a relatively quiet year. The core work of looking after the communal gardens had however continued, along with routine tasks such as raising HMB funds, keeping service roads clear and meeting statutory requirements including insurance and removal of unsafe trees.

Hugh then introduced highlights from the HMB [report](#), available on the HHGERA website. Starting with **service road gates**, he reported that the gate between 63 and 65 Princes Gardens had been damaged beyond economic repair by criminals who had rammed it with a stolen car. After seeking quotes from two firms, an order had been placed for a replacement with Drayton Fencing, Ealing Council's recommended contractor. This was going to cost £4,457 – none of which could be recovered from either the car owner's insurance or Ealing Council's Alley Gating Scheme. There were funds in HMB reserves to cover this. But in light of the higher than expected cost, the Board recommended setting aside £2,000 a year from now on (up from £1,500) to the gates reserve.

Moving on to **finances**, Hugh reported that Neil McNair was stepping down after eight years as Annual Service Charge Co-ordinator. This was a big and important job, and the meeting joined Hugh in a round of applause for Neil's contribution. Hugh said that he would be taking this on with Gavin Anderson. It was too late to make many changes for 2023 but from next year they aimed to issue as many invoices as possible by email, and to streamline the underlying administration.

Hugh thanked everyone else who had again helped keep the Estate running smoothly in 2022. The Residents Association and HMB were run by 20-30 **volunteers** and new helpers were always needed, in a wide variety of roles, to replace those who stepped down. Anyone interested was welcome to contact the Association via hhgera.com or to approach any of the officers individually.

Gardening and tree works

John Stone, Gardens Co-ordinator, reported that 2022 had been a particularly demanding year for the Estate gardeners because of the prolonged spring and summer drought and the need to do a lot of watering. He thanked the residents who had helped keep our young street trees alive during that period – they were supposed to be watered by Ealing Council's contractors but the service didn't seem very reliable.

As well as regular maintenance, during 2022 the gardeners had extended the Rose Garden lawn onto the areas at each end, cleared of mainly bramble. They had thinned the shrubbery on the Princes Gardens central reservation and planted more Spring bulbs. And on the service roads, they had pruned overhanging branches and taken down a number of young Ash trees that were showing signs of Ash Dieback, a disease spreading widely in the UK. The result was to make the gardens more open – with the twin benefits of displaying the new flowering plants and making people feel safer, particularly at night.

During 2023 the priorities were to plant a new tree at the junction of Princes Gardens and Vale Lane to replace the felled Horse Chestnut; to plant a cherry tree in the Tudor Gardens shrubbery; and (later in the year) to start replacing dead and dying sections of the Privet hedge around the Rose Garden. This appeared to have been attacked by honey fungus, which was also affecting hedges around some of the Estate's houses and blocks of flats. John said Portuguese Laurel and Griselinia Littoralis were two good alternatives to Privet that were resistant to the fungus. For the Rose Garden, it was proposed to use the laurel as it appeared reasonably tolerant of extremes of both rainfall and temperature.

Update on service road repairs

Hugh reported that the Princes Gardens outer loop service road repairs remained on hold. The works were still required but they were no longer so urgent because Ealing Council had not repeated the former contractor Amey's threat to stop refuse collections if the surface was not repaired.

Update on status of Links/Monks/Queens service road

Hugh said there had once again been little progress on the HMB's wish to gate the LMQ service road and possibly to undertake surface repairs there as well. However, a meeting had been held a few weeks ago with the Flats Management Board (which owns that service road) and a further meeting was planned shortly.

2022 accounts and budget for 2023

Levon Agulian, HHGERA Treasurer, briefly presented the HMB's [accounts](#) for 2022. These showed a healthy financial situation and a small surplus of £1,591 for the year as both income from service charge, and spending on the gardens, had both fallen compared with 2021. The Association had nearly £54,000 in the bank (including all reserves) though much of this was earmarked for specific purposes and inflation would undoubtedly mean a big increase in costs during the coming year.

Introducing the 2023 [budget](#), Hugh said the Board was planning a drive to pursue unpaid service charge from previous years and was therefore fairly confident of an increase in income during the year. Costs would however increase, giving a forecast deficit on routine spending of around £1,000, plus nearly £4,500 on replacement of the damaged service road gate and £1,000 earmarked for legal costs associated with the LMQ service road. A large overall deficit was therefore to be expected during the year. This would be covered from reserves.

The meeting unanimously approved the HMB budget and accounts on a show of hands.

Houses' service charge for 2023 and 2024

Hugh said it had always been an issue for HMB finances that the HHGERA financial year ran from January 1 to December 31, but that the budget and service charge were not set until the AGM in March. That made it impossible to start collecting service charge until May in most years, which in turn resulted in a prolonged collections season as late payers were chased up. As an experiment, he therefore asked the meeting to approve the proposed annual service charge for 2023 and 2024. This would allow us to start collecting the 2024 service charge in January next year.

The good news, Hugh continued, was that the Annual Service Charge could be held at £60 for the seventh year in a row in 2023, despite inflation over 10%, because of the healthy state of HMB reserves. It was however proposed to raise the Charge to £70 in 2024.

The meeting unanimously approved this proposal on a show of hands.

Election of officers

The meeting unanimously elected the HHGERA officers nominated, to serve until the next AGM:

<u>Houses Management Board</u>	
Chair	Hugh Richards
Vice-Chair	Glenn Ellis
Treasurer	Levon Agulian
Communications (Secretariat)	Nim Maradas
HHGER Ltd Company Secretary	Levon Agulian
Annual Service Charge co-ordinator	Gavin Anderson/Hugh Richards
Gardens co-ordinator	John Stone
Service roads co-ordinator	Sarin Takhar
HHGER Ltd directors (appointed by Houses Management Board)	Bill Bailey/Hugh Richards/ Levon Agulian/Sergei Turceninoff

Any other business – Houses

A number of issues were raised from the floor:

- **Planning:** Houses owners queried the need to get planning permission for double glazing and replacement windows, which was refused for front windows unless they had wooden (as opposed to UPVC) frames. This was extremely expensive and unfair given the climate crisis, high energy costs and the number of houses on the Estate which already had UPVC windows at the front. Kate agreed that planners should pay more attention to the balance between conservation, energy efficiency and cost, and noted that the Flats board was waiting for permission to replace windows, too. The Association had made representations to this effect to Ealing Council, as part of the conservation areas review. But it was unclear how far Council thinking had moved. The rule currently therefore remained that permission would only be given for replacement of houses' windows visible from the street, by wooden framed

windows that matched the original design.

- **Parking on service roads:** Hugh said the Board was aware of a handful of persistent culprits who parked on service roads. This was not allowed and the same residents appeared to be responsible for leaving service road gates open, which put everyone's security at risk. He said he planned shortly to start putting warning notices on the offending vehicles and that the Board would consider stronger measures if this didn't have any effect.
- **Service road gate keys:** In answer to a question about how to get a replacement key, Hugh outlined the [process](#) (which required a Deed of Easement to be in place for the applicant's house). He acknowledged that this could cause problems for tenants of unco-operative or absentee landlords and said he was considering whether there was a work around that could help this group.

The meeting ended at approximately 8.30pm with thanks all round. The next AGM will be held in March 2024.