



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



MINUTES

Draft pending approval by 2023 AGM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

at 7:30pm on Thursday 24th March 2022 at Holy Family School, Vale Lane

This was the first 'physical' joint meeting of Hanger Hill Garden Estate Residents Association (HHGERA) and the Houses Management Board (HMB) since 2019 after two 'virtual' general meetings during the Covid pandemic. Approximately 30 residents attended in person and a further five votes were received in support of all proposals and nominations from Houses residents.

All relevant documents, including reports by the HHGERA and Houses Management Board chairs; budget and accounts; and a ballot paper for anyone unable to attend in person, were placed on the HHGERA website at www.hhgera.com/2022-agm and the paper/email voting deadline extended to April 1st. Residents were invited to contact the Association by email or letter 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. The final agenda was accompanied by an explanatory note about the proposed changes to the HHGERA Constitution, as put to the meeting.

The main decisions taken were:

HHGERA

1. To agree the Minutes of the 2021 AGM
2. To support the nominations for HHGERA officers in 2022
3. To approve the report on activities since the last AGM and plans for 2022
4. To approve the HHGERA Budget for 2022
5. To agree the HHGERA subscription rate should be set at zero for 2022
6. To approve the proposed amendment to the HHGERA Constitution, setting a maximum term of two years for the HHGERA Chair.

Houses Management Board

(Only houses residents voted on these items)

7. To support the nominations for Houses Management Board officers in 2022
8. To approve the HMB report on activities since the last AGM and plans for 2022
9. To approve the Houses Accounts for 2021 and Budget for 2022
10. To agree the Houses service charge should remain at £60 per house for 2022
11. To approve the proposed amendment to gated service road Rules of Use allowing HHGERA to charge to remove rubbish from service roads and a minimum charge of £100 in 2022
12. To approve a further change that means service road gate keys will in future only be available to houses with a Deed of Easement.

Welcome and apologies

Kate Crossland, HHGERA Chair, welcomed those present and introduced three guest attendees – Hanger Hill ward Councillors Fabio Conti, Gregory Stafford and Nigel Sumner.

Apologies were received from Association officers Levon Agulian, Bill Bailey, Dion Hitchcock, Ingrid Joannou, John Stone, Sergei Turceninoff and Alexandra Turner, from the Hanger Hill Safer Neighbourhoods policing team, and from a number of other Estate residents.

Minutes of the 2021 AGM

The minutes, which had been available on the HHGERA website since April 2021, were approved without amendment.

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/ Yumiko Moriai |
| Planning and Conservation Area Panel | Bill Bailey/Sergei Turceninoff |
| 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 |

HHGERA: Annual report

Kate Crossland, as HHGERA 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.

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

- The Association had worked closely with Police and residents to combat criminal activity in our generally low-crime Estate – the past year had seen incidents of pickpocketing, a raid on a cannabis farm, a handful of burglaries and thefts from cars, and a mobile phone theft. Residents were urged to report any crimes as this would ensure a regular Police presence on the Estate;
- It had continued to support residents over unacceptable noise from the Anyah (formerly Basrah) Lounge, just north of the top of the Princes Gardens loop, though this had been very frustrating as Ealing Council and the Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation each claimed the other was responsible and that it couldn't therefore take any action;
- It had welcomed the appointment of a new Board for the Flats management company, which appeared open to working with HHGERA on areas of common interest;
- When the Covid restrictions were lifted, it had organised a successful community litter pick and an extremely well attended Halloween Play Street;
- It had developed ideas on sustainability on the Estate (car charging, solar panels etc) and added guidance on the HHGERA website at www.hhgera.com/sustainability;

- It had responded to a number of public consultations in areas such as women’s safety and e-scooters;
- It had commented on 10 planning applications affecting houses on the Estate and won an important planning appeal against proposed enclosure of the front porch of a house on Monks Drive, which would do much to protect the design integrity of that road; and
- It had pressed Ealing Council to improve signage of the School Street road closure on Vale Lane – unfortunately with limited success, not least because one of the signs kept being knocked off its post by the Council’s own recycling trucks.

Bill Bailey and Sergei Turceninoff, our representatives on the Conservation Panel, had contributed to Ealing Council’s review of conservation policies, which had resulted in generally positive recommendations. The Association had responded to the public consultation on these, calling for more forward-looking guidance on sustainability issues, and awaited the Council’s final report.

Presentation of 2021 accounts and budget for 2022

Kate outlined the ‘residents association’ part of the accounts and budget, covering Estate-wide activities of benefit to both houses and flats. There had been very little activity last year, so income and expenditure had been in balance at about £100 each. The plan was that this should change significantly in the year to come, when £2,000 had been budgeted for joint projects between HHGERA and the Flats management board. A number of other costs were also expected to increase as more events were organised and introductory offers expired on the HHGERA website and email server.

Subscription rate for 2022

Kate said the HHGERA Committee proposed that there should once again be no membership fee in 2022 as the Association had adequate funds in reserve for its Estate-wide activities. In answer to a question from the floor as to why flats residents did not routinely contribute to the Association’s work, she said this was inherited from previous arrangements, before the current HHGERA Constitution came into force, under which a former Flats Committee focused solely on social events and a Houses Committee took care of everything else. It might be necessary to reconsider when the reserves inherited from the Flats Committee were exhausted, perhaps via a small levy on the Flats’ service charge or voluntary contributions. But there was no urgency in this because of the healthy state of HHGERA’s finances.

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

Events and activities in 2022

The meeting heard that HHGERA was hoping to organise two main community events in 2022 – a street party around the Queen’s Jubilee (or failing that, a themed Play Street at the end of June) and a Halloween Play Street in October. Hopefully there would also be more of the successful litter picking events organised over the past few years. If anyone was able to help organise these events, they were invited to step forward after the meeting or by emailing consultation@hhgera.com.

Estate centenary plans

The Estate centenary (marking 100 years since the first houses were completed) falls in 2028 and members were invited to consider what might be done to mark the event. In discussion, it was noted that the Estate was built in stages – the eastern side first (Princes Gardens, Tudor Gardens, Vale Lane and one side of Monks Drive). The western side followed, adding the other side of Monks Drive, Links Road, most of Queens Drive and finally in 1932 the blocks of flats. Ideas for the celebration were invited from all residents, for discussion at the next AGM.

Joint projects with Flats management company

Kate welcomed Janice Dodd, a newly elected member of the Flats management board, to the meeting. The latter explained that the new board was still finding its feet but as the director responsible for gardening and land, she was keen to explore the scope for cooperation with HHGERA on subjects such as restoration of the Pond Garden and management the Links/Monks/Queens service road. She and the relevant HHGERA/Houses Management Board officers agreed to exchange contact details and try to take forward these long standing projects.

HHGERA Constitution – proposed revision

Kate introduced the first of three proposed amendments to the HHGERA Constitution, a [note](#) about which had been circulated to all flats and houses with the meeting agenda. This set a maximum term of two years for the role of HHGERA Chair, after which a break of at least one year must be taken before being eligible to stand again. Hugh Richards explained that the aim was to ensure the widest possible participation of residents in the management of the Estate and that it was difficult to find people who could make an open-ended commitment to such a demanding role. He would not have been willing to stand as Chair if it had been a job for life. Kate added that she had enjoyed her two years as Chair and was ready to hand on the baton while staying involved as Vice-Chair.

The proposed amendment was approved unanimously and came into force with immediate effect.

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

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 | Neil McNair/Bill Bailey/ Gavin Anderson |
| 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 |

Report on activities in 2021

Hugh Richards began by thanking Kate for her work as HHGERA Chair over the past two years. Having a doctor in the Chair and Dion Hancock, a pharmacist, on the Committee had been invaluable during the Covid years. Kate had done a great job setting up and chairing Zoom meetings – even chairing one from her sick bed. This was met by enthusiastic applause from the floor.

Hugh then introduced highlights from the HMB [report](#), available on the website. Starting with finances, he reported that the Board had both raised and spent a lot more money in 2021 than the previous year. Service charge receipts were about £3,000 more than in 2020, with much of the increase due to a push for payment by houses with a Deed of Easement (DoE) which contracted the owners to pay their share of Estate running costs. These houses now had a 100% payment rate, compared with around 80% for non-DoE houses. A lot had been done over the past year to improve record-keeping

and issuing of the Deeds, which had been brought in-house. Previously, a DoE would take several weeks and the HHGERA solicitor charged £300. Now one could be completed in around 20 minutes plus the time required to sign it, and the HHGERA charge had been reduced to zero. A template Deed is available online at <https://www.hhgera.com/selling-your-house>.

Strong receipts and financial reserves meant it had been possible to spend significantly more on the communal gardens, where the gardeners had cleared a number of overgrown areas to facilitate maintenance and future improvement schemes. The big laurel bushes on the Princes Gardens central reservation had been pruned to make it easier to keep them in shape with a hedge cutter and to improve visibility, and hence security for the houses and pedestrians on both sides.

Sadly, the big Horse Chestnut tree at the junction of Princes Gardens and Vale Lane had become unsafe and had to be felled, along with a Sycamore in the Tudor Gardens triangle; the Board was investigating possible replacements. Quentin reported from the floor that he had donated about 20 oak whips (small seedlings) for the gardeners' enclosure behind the Princes Gardens loop, though he did not know if any of them had survived. Amid all this, last Summer had been an ideal growing season, which made it hard work to keep the lawns and hedges looking neat. The gardeners had risen to the challenge and the gardens continued to look good throughout.

The other main preoccupation in 2021 had been the gated service roads managed by the HMB (the ungated ones are managed by the Flats' management board). Each of the service roads presented different challenges, though the common denominator was inconsiderate behaviour by residents who fly tipped rubbish on HHGERA land, blocked service roads so the Council's bin lorries couldn't get past, failed to follow guidance by leaving food and garden waste in service roads, or overfilled the communal bins used in two of the service roads. All this led to missed collections, rubbish accumulating behind houses, and encouraged vermin.

Hugh said HHGERA's eyes and ears, and first line of defence against these and other problems was the network of service road monitors. However, he said everyone could help by explaining to new neighbours how the rubbish collection system worked, picking up litter dropped during bin collections, and generally following the service road Rules of Use. Anyone interested in helping with this work, or who wanted to report concerns, was asked to email skips@hhgera.com.

Hugh thanked everyone who had helped keep the Estate running smoothly in 2021, singling out Neil McNair and his network of collectors for organising service charge collection, John Stone as gardens co-ordinator and Sarin Takhar, who had kindly stepped up as service roads co-ordinator after Genevieve Bornor had left the Estate.

2021 accounts and budget for 2022

In a sign of the times, Levon Agulian, HHGERA Treasurer, was away delivering aid to Ukraine so Hugh briefly presented the HMB's [accounts](#) for 2021. These showed a healthy financial situation and a surplus of £1,715 for the year despite the increase in spending. The Association had nearly £52,000 in the bank (including all reserves) but it was necessary to be cautious as raw material costs had rocketed due to general inflation and supply bottlenecks. Economists expected stability to return in two years' time but with the war in Ukraine, the future was very uncertain.

Introducing the 2022 [budget](#), Hugh said it was unlikely service charge income would be as high as 2021 because all the arrears from Deed of Easement houses had already been recovered. Costs would however increase because of inflation, giving a forecast deficit of around £2,000 to be funded from reserves. Sooner or later, a large outlay would be needed for service road gate repairs and replacement, a further £1,500 for which would be set aside this year. The Board was also building up a reserve for Estate centenary projects, as mentioned earlier by the outgoing HHGERA Chair.

Houses' service charge for 2022

Hugh said the healthy state of the balance sheet meant the Board proposed holding service charge at £60 per house for 2022, though it was likely an increase would be needed in 2023 or 2024. The 2021 accounts, £60 per house service charge and budget for 2022 were approved unanimously by a show of hands.

Gardening and tree works in 2022

Nim reported that the main focus would be on maintenance following the big push in 2021 to clear overgrown areas of the communal gardens. This would include removing a number of dead trees on the Estate boundaries (including trees affected by Ash Dieback) and cutting back ivy that could make some of the older trees unstable in high wind. In the Autumn, there were plans to start replacing dead hedging around the Rose Garden with honey fungus resistant varieties such as *Griselinia Littoralis*. The next big project would be to improve the Rose Garden lawn by levelling it with new soil on top of the existing turf and reseeded, as the surface had become very uneven.

Update on service road repairs – Princes Gardens outer loop

The meeting noted Nim's report that significant progress had been made on this [special project](#) since the last AGM. The working group had identified the areas most in need of repair and met six specialist contractors on site. (It wasn't feasible to resurface the whole service road as it would cost millions of pounds and there was no Council or government funding because the land was owned indirectly by residents.) Three companies were invited to tender and one had been chosen as the preferred bid.

Unfortunately, at that point it had become clear that neither prices nor timing could be guaranteed because of raw material bottlenecks in the aftermath of Covid. The working group had therefore decided to delay the repairs until the construction market was more stable. The work already done wouldn't be wasted, though, as specification and contractor details would be kept on file. A further report would be made to the 2023 AGM and in the meantime, any queries should be sent to serviceroads@hhgera.com.

Update on status of Links/Monks/Queens service road

Hugh introduced this subject by noting that the change of leadership in the Flats' management board gave an opportunity to reopen discussions on management of the service road running behind Links Road and parts of Monks Drive and Queens Drive. This was used almost exclusively by houses' residents, but was owned for historical reasons by the Flats. Residents had long wanted it to be gated like the service roads owned by HHGER Ltd. However, this couldn't be done without permission from the Flats board, which had so far not been forthcoming.

Hugh said the HMB would explore further the legal options and keep residents informed of any progress via HHGERA News and circulars to the houses concerned, as appropriate.

HHGERA Constitution – proposed revisions affecting houses

Hugh introduced two proposed changes to the houses' Service Road Rules of Use, as outlined in the [note](#) circulated to all flats and houses with the meeting agenda.

The first change would mean new gate keys could only be issued to houses whose owners had signed a Deed of Easement formalising access to the service road. This would extend a requirement that already applied to houses which had changed hands since March 2019. The aim was to accelerate the rate at which houses were brought under Deeds of Easement (currently only 84 out of 362 houses had one) and hence the reliability of Association income. It had been made possible by the faster and cheaper process for issuing Deeds, as outlined in the HMB's annual activity report.

The second change would allow the HMB to charge for removal of rubbish fly tipped on service roads, with a minimum charge of £100 proposed. This problem had been greatly reduced by the installation

of gates but a small number of houses continued to leave old furniture and other rubbish for someone else to take away. Ealing Council would not remove rubbish from private land, though kerbside bulky waste could be booked via the [Council website](#), so it was left to the Residents Association. This was unfair because it cost money – £350 had been allowed in the 2022 budget for a skip to do this – and took up Association officers' time that could be spent on more productive things!

Questions were raised from the floor about both proposals. In response, Hugh underlined that the Board was seeking agreement in principle, with details of implementation to be worked out. He confirmed that the first amendment would not mean skip permits only being issued to DoE houses though that was a good idea for the future. As to whether the charging proposal was enforceable, he said it was usually possible to tell where dumped rubbish came from – sometimes there were delivery labels attached, or neighbours knew – and engaging with residents often solved the problem. Failing that, the charge would be enforceable on Deed of Easement houses. The proposed change would thus add another weapon to the Association's armoury rather than being a complete solution.

Both proposals were approved unanimously by a show of hands.

Any other business – Houses

No other business was raised from the floor.

The meeting ended at approximately 8.45pm with thanks all round. The next AGM will be held in March 2023.