

MINUTES for GCRA Annual General Meeting

Monday 30th November 6:30pm - Stockbridge Library

Present: Michael Sharp (Treasurer), Gus & Denise McNulty (Joint Secretaries), Susan Currie & Jackie Sutherland (Committee Members), Graham Sutherland, Chris Brannan, Jan McNee, Lindsay Kenrick-Smith, Carolynn Millbank, Sandy, Patrick Honeybone, Sam Rennie, Doreen Boyle, Michael Young and Mary Gray.

Also Present: Councillor Lesley Hinds, Councillor Nigel Bagshaw, Councillor Ian Whyte, PC Emily Grimwood and Josie Inwood (Friends of Rocheid Path).

Apologies: Jane Norie, James Watson, Robert Williamson, Anji & Olivia Rae

Welcome: Gus opened the meeting and thanked those present for attending. He then listed the apologies above.

Adoption of last years minutes: The 2014 minutes were adopted without comment.

Chairperson's Report:

There was no chairperson report this year as the GCRA has operated without one since Mark Westwood stood down at the 2014 AGM.

Secretary's Report / Actions from last year:

Gus said that he has answered correspondence from members. Also that he had liaised with the council regarding the reinstatement of the riverbank. On this Gus said that he had been trying to contact Jonathan James at the council recently for an update but had not had a reply. He also said that he wasn't sure how much work had actually been done on the riverbank. From the meeting it was pointed out that contractors had been on the riverbank and topsoil and grass seed had been laid. That there had been some improvement, although no stone picking had been carried out. Also on this subject Lindsay asked about the fence at the Colonies end of our estate which has been knocked down. Gus said that he would bring this up with Jonathan James and see if we can get this improved as there are concerns that this is being used as a short cut. Gus also said that he has continued to ask Jonathan about the two benches that he had said the council could replace after they appeared to go missing after the flood defence work, this is ongoing. Carolynn said that she believes that the two benches referred too belonged to the Balmers and are actually still on the estate but in very poor condition these days.

On actions from last year's meeting Gus said that one of the main actions from last year was to have the parking bays repainted. This was completed early in the year apart from 3 bays. Two of which were unable to be painted due to cars being parked over the markings on each occasion the contractors were carrying out the work and one bay (7/2 Glenogle Road) which Gus said he overlooked believing it not to be a parking bay as it is directly at the rear entrance to 7 Glenogle Road and had no sign of any markings and it was only pointed out after all the work was completed that this was actually a parking bay.

Gus also said that there had been an extra programme of gardening work to replace and improve the hedges and shrubs around the estate. Gus said that he had liaised with Greenscape and a number of areas had been identified for this work. Early in the year old shrubs and hedges etc had been removed, then after a number of months these areas were replanted by Greenscape who used a combination of cuttings from the estate and other estates that Greenscape manage along with some plants that were moved locations and some new plants. Greenscape have said that they have now replaced around 70 – 75% of the estates shrubs and hedges since the rolling programme of improvement was introduced by the GCRA a number of years ago. Gus also said that the front of 4 Glenogle Road had initially been identified as one area that would benefit from having the old and large hedges and shrubs removed from the front of the block, however this had not been done as by the time Greenscape had removed shrubs from the other areas identified Gus had not been able to clarify if the residents in this block wanted this work carried out or not. Gus said that he had planned to ask this block's opinion as they are facing directly onto the main road and someone had raised concerns about the privacy of this block if these plants were removed.

Also Gus said that the GCRA had repaid Billy Shaw for the round bench that had been bought and placed in the communal area at the end of the Liddesdale Place car park. Gus said that the committee had discussed buying something similar for the small communal space in Ettrickdale Place. However, it was pointed out by Lindsay and Chris that a number of flats overlook this space and the residents may not want a bench in this space. Chris suggested we could maybe look at placing a bench on the riverside.

Treasurer's Report / Subscription Fees:

Michael said that we are less secure financially than we were a year ago. This is partly due to the cost of repainting the parking bays and the extra gardening work. He said that there are 20 flats that have debts of over one year to the association and that this will need to be addressed. As it stands we are only getting in the region of 75% income and that this is putting pressure on our finances as we pay Greenscape £826 every month for gardening.

Further on this Michael said that the main issue for non payment is that we are not able to get hold of the owners, many of whom may be absentee landlords.

Michael said that this year the Association has made a loss in the region of £3000. Mainly due to the cost of repainting the car parks and the extra gardening work. Michael said that he thinks that this year the Association should be concentrating on core spending and not take on extra costs.

Michael then said that there had been expenditure in the last year on signage, a wall repair and a bench.

Michael then said that the Annual subscription fee has been at £90 since 1st October 2010 and that we should be looking at putting up fees to meet our costs.

For the current year, just started, Michael said that so far 80 flats have paid out of 122 meaning that we have around £10,000 in the bank.

From the floor of the meeting it was raised that previously committee members had gone door to door to chase up non payers and that this had helped reduce the number of non payers. Also that the Association could name and shame non payers. Gus pointed out that this has been brought numerous times in the past and that we feel that this is not something we can do.

On Subscription fees Gus proposed that for the year beginning October 2016 the Annual Subscription Fees should be increased by £10 to £100 per annum. It was raised from the floor that the Association should do more to chase non payers rather than penalising those who do pay. After a vote it was unanimously passed by the meeting to increase the fees to £100 in 2016.

Community Policing:

PC Emily Grimwood said that crime figures were very low in the Glenogle area; however we should all continue to be vigilant in regard to housebreakings as this continues to be an issue all over the city. As we had been discussing gardening Emily pointed out that there have been instances of plant theft reported (not in our area) recently and that she thinks bogus gardeners are stealing plants and then charging non suspecting customers to have them replanted in their gardens.

She said that if anyone has any concerns or wants to ask her any questions they can contact her via email emily.grimwood@scotland.pnn.police.uk

She apologised for PC Andy Morrow (our other ward officer) being unable to attend as he was at another community meeting.

Friends of Rocheid Path:

Josie Inwood said that the committee for Friends of Rocheid Path were formed about 5 years ago on the request of the council who wanted more local involvement.

She said that they carry out maintenance of the path and this is mainly in the form of once monthly volunteering sessions on the path, where all are welcome to go along, get involved and help out. This sometimes is just litter picking and sometimes a bit more. The sessions usually last 4 hours on a Sunday morning, however they have stopped just now due to the weather.

Josie also said that they liaise with the council if there are any major changes planned to the path. Also, that they have a good relationship with the parks department.

Josie said that if you want to get involved you can contact her by email therocheidpath@gmail.com or look for their website. She said that for those that want to you can join the group and pay £5 a year or pay a lifetime membership for £40.

Gus said that there is a link to Friends of Rocheid Path on www.glenoglecourt.com

Proposal for GCRA to manage the estate's trees:

Gus said that this had been his idea that he had discussed at the committee. He said that the current situation is that the trees are the responsibility of each block, however he felt that with a couple of exceptions, the rear of 2 and 8 Ettrickdale Place not much maintenance was going on and that a more co-ordinated approach where the GCRA take over the maintenance would result in the improvement of the state of the trees. He also said that he thought it unfair that some blocks have a disproportionate number of trees compared to other blocks, 1 Liddesdale Place in particular and that this is unfair on these residents as all of us benefit from the maintenance of the trees not just the residents in the blocks affected.

He asked the meeting what the feeling in principle was to this proposal before the committee spend a lot of time and effort on this area.

Lindsay had a lot to say on this matter, being the former secretary who had spent a lot of time and effort putting the current plan into place. She quoted from the 2010 AGM where the current set up was agreed as well as quoting the then Chair Mark Westwood directly. She said that the trees are the responsibility of each block and that the GCRA would need a mandate from a larger number of the membership before we change anything. She also said that if the GCRA took this on then we would just be rewarding the apathy of the residents who can't be bothered meeting their

responsibilities in maintaining their trees and we would be penalising those residents who do maintain the trees such as her block where each flat paid £200 to have an old tree removed. She also pointed out that as Michael said earlier in the meeting we are not in strong position financially then the GCRA has no case to put forward to take on this work.

Denise then pointed out that prior to Lindsay moving to the estate and getting involved the GCRA had managed the trees. This was after Gus and Denise became Secretaries the first time (2005) and noticed that no tree maintenance had ever been done since the estate was built in 1980 -1981 and as a result a lot of paving stones were lifted and walls damaged due to tree roots and many of the trees were in a poor condition. Denise said that no one was maintaining the trees and paving slabs damaged by roots so the GCRA did a lot of work on this which led to a vast improvement in the appearance of the estate which benefits all of us. Denise also said that rather than rewarding apathy the proposal would result in benefitting our community as whole.

Gus also said that he was aware that the trees are technically the responsibility of each block, however the GCRA could maintain the trees on behalf of the residents.

A vote was then held and the meeting agreed to the proposal in principle to look into this further and for the committee to report back next year with more concrete proposal including figures. Lindsay and one other member disagreed.

Committee Membership:

Gus again said that the Association had been operating without a chair since Mark stood down last year. He said that the committee had come up with an idea to resolve this. He then said that he would put himself forward to fill the chair vacancy. This was seconded and was agreed by the meeting with no objections. No one else came forward to say they wanted to fill this role.

Gus then said that one of our new residents, Sam Rennie had recently shown an interest in becoming involved and had been sounded out by the committee to see if she was interested in becoming the secretary.

Gus then nominated Sam Rennie to fill the secretary role. This was seconded and passed by the meeting with no objections. No one else had put their hand up to show an interest in this post.

Michael said that he would stay in post as the treasurer, however would be looking into a better way to run this role as it is putting pressure on his spare time. No one else showed an interest in filling the treasurer role.

Committee members Susan Currie and Jackie Sutherland said they would stay on.

The Management Committee for 2016 will be:

Chairperson: Gus McNulty

Treasurer: Michael Sharp

Secretary: Sam Rennie

Committee Members: Susan Currie, Jackie Sutherland, Jane Norie and Graeme Dunbar.

Any other business:

Patrick asked about the council's plan to stop the collection of recycling using the blue and red boxes which was due to come into effect as of 27/11/15. Councillor Hinds said she was aware of this and that as the new system of having communal recycling points was not yet in place she believed that the current system would continue meantime. She did say that the new system would be an improvement and would replace the current ad hoc system where some people have boxes and other don't with a system where everyone will be able to recycle at any time somewhere close to where you live.

Gus then asked the councillors about the council's plans to extend the controlled parking zone to include Saturdays and Sundays and that concerns had been raised by one of our members that this would result on extra pressure on our private parking spaces as they will be the first free parking available in the area of the CPZ. Councillor Hinds said that this boat had sailed and the consultation period was closed, however several comments had been made regarding the plans and that this would be going to council approval in the New Year.

Denise then asked the councillors about the parking on Glenogle Road, on the bend coming from Brandon Terrace at weekends where commonly cars park on both sides of the road on single yellow lines. The result of this being that cars are forced onto oncoming traffic on a near blind bend. Several others present agreed that they had also noticed this and felt that it was dangerous and only a matter of time until there is an accident. All the councillors made a note of this and said that they would look into it. Councillor Hinds though did point out that to change a single yellow to a double could take months.

Gus then closed the meeting.