

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Of the Norton Grange Residents Association Ltd
held on
23rd March 2023**

Directors Present: Jane Mander, Vicki Butler, David Bott, James Barrell

Secretary: Sally Andrews.

Chairman: Greg Molan

Apologies: Ken Priddis, James Atteck

1 Minutes

The minutes of the NGRA AGM held on 4th November 2021 was available on the web site. they were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

2 Accounts

Treasurers Report NGRA AGM 2020-2021

See attached summary.

It was proposed in light of current funds the service charge for this year only be reduced to £50 per household. This was proposed by Penny Hopkins and seconded by Gill Gadd. Passed unanimously.

The Accounts had been prepared by Thelma Murphy.

IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF THE PAYMENTS COULD BE MADE ON TIME TO SAVE THE NEED FOR CHASING AS THIS IS A VOLUNTARY POSITION AND THE TREASURER WORKS FULL TIME.

Accounts accepted unanimously

Thanks to Jane

3 Appointment of Auditors

Thelma Murphy was proposed by Jane Mander Seconded by Stuart Andrews and passed unanimously

4 Chairmans Report

Trees

The trees we planted at the amenity field some three years ago have now established themselves. Two mature ash trees were removed to reduce shading in a resident's garden and replaced with three silver birch trees that complete a line of such trees parallel to the

boundary with the hunt. Many trees have been planted by residents over the last thirty plus years since Norton Grange was redeveloped and these are now quite mature in many cases. We sit on clay soils with the downside that these can shrink quite dramatically in dry periods. Where there are large trees near to houses, this can cause cracking and subsidence either to the houses on the plot or to those on neighbouring plots. Trees do need managing, so we would ask all residents to assess the trees growing in their gardens in terms of their potential impact. Felling is not the only recourse where you think a tree might pose problems. A good tree surgeon can advise on alternatives such as crown reduction and thinning.

Hedging

Many years ago, a hedge was planted along the hunt boundary at the amenity field. As far as we are aware, there was no management of this which resulted in very tall growth turning into substantial trees in many cases. The directors considered what to do with the hedge and decided to have it laid to create a strong and attractive feature. This did mean that the hunt buildings became more visible, which was pointed out to us by one resident who was not happy with this. On reflection, we should have consulted those in the area, but this was not on our radar as the management of the amenity field was always regarded as a routine matter for the directors to take care of. We have taken note! The unmown area in front of the hedge has recently been cleared to reveal it and it is worth a look if you haven't already seen it. A nice example of this country craft which was entered for a competition run by the hunt and which took first prize!

Estate Maintenance

Andrew has worked with us for several years now and does a fine job of keeping the estate tidy, especially where trees, shrubs and vegetation are concerned. We have a list of tasks that need to be carried out on a regular basis and he undertakes one off tasks at our request. If you see something that needs attention, please let us know and we will make the necessary arrangements.

Courtyard Car Park

The heavy posts and rails that run on either side of the Courtyard car park and to which the space owners' names are affixed, needed to be replaced. They were rotten and in danger of falling over. The car park is part owned by NGRA, which has a number of visitor spaces, and individual Courtyard residents, a number of whom own individual spaces. This creates a difficulty when work to repair or improve the car park is needed. It must be shared accordingly, but a problem is created if individual residents do not wish to participate. The whole job had to be done as it is not divisible. We could not repair just NGRA spaces as they are mingled with residents spaces. This left NGRA with additional costs by virtue of some residents declining to fund their share of the necessary work, even though they benefited from it. This has raised a number of issues about the management of the Courtyard and its covenants which we have been investigating with our solicitors.

Entrance Lights

New LED lighting has been installed. We hope you like it.

Roads

The roads have been tarred and chipped to preserve the wear surface and to ensure that it is watertight. The work took much longer to complete than we had planned. Here, we are at the

mercy of our contractors. They have been very good to us over the years but were simply too busy at the times when the work needed to be done to provide their normal level of service. We could look for an alternative contractor, but the costs are likely to rise. Our work is small beer to the great majority of companies, so it is not easy to interest them in the work at affordable prices. That said, we have roads that are in a good state of repair and the problems at The Spinney, where the road surface was heaving due to tree root growth, has been effectively addressed. The state of the roadway outside the estate entrance was raised at the meeting. Unfortunately, the maintenance of this is down to the council, but we can lobby to have it repaired. The state of the track in front of Kinton Cottages was also raised. This land is owned by the council, not NGRA and there was no track here when the estate was first developed. It has been created by the residents of the cottages. Stone has been laid at the cottage residents' expense in the past without council involvement, as far as we are aware. This might be something that these residents wish to address collectively.

Car Parking

We still have a problem with people parking on the estate roads in the area of the Mansion House. This creates a choke point and can make manoeuvring difficult for Mansion House residents with parking spaces here. Please ask visitors not to park on the roadway in this area and to use the visitor spaces in the Courtyard car park. On a related point, would residents ensure that they do not use the visitor spaces in the Courtyard car park for regular parking. The car parking accessed by the track between The Pines and the electricity substation is for Mansion House residents only. Mansion House residents own the individual spaces located here and they should not be used by non-Mansion House residents or their guests unless with express approval.

Estate Speed Limit

This is more honoured in the breach than in the observance! It's simple, vehicle speeds are too high. This is especially dangerous where there are blind bends. Ten MPH is very slow, but safe. Try it! The installation of speed limit repeater signs was raised at the meeting and the directors will look into this.

Fibre to The Premises (FTTP)

James Atteck is the director who had led on this development. James was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following update. There are several government and private projects that are focusing on the rollout of Full Fibre across the UK. The rush to get our vouchers approved last year, was to prevent us from being put into one of the lots that the government is auctioning out for Warwickshire. This would have delayed us getting FTTP significantly, potentially for some years. However, in December, our Openreach Community Projects contact informed us that our Community funded project had been swallowed up by a much larger project being run by a commercial arm of Openreach called the Rural Build Programme. James worked with Openreach to ensure that all our properties have been correctly incorporated to that project. At first, it looked as though this might be terrible news, but it is not. The project is due to complete June/July 23, so it is a similar timescale as before. It also absolves us from our government voucher commitment of taking out a FTTP contract for a defined period of time, at a defined speed as soon as the infrastructure is installed, allowing residents to change to FTTP when your current internet contract runs out. The next steps are as follows. By June/ July, Openreach should have finished building the infrastructure cabling up to the closest manhole/telegraph pole to your property. You will then get a letter from them saying that Full Fibre internet is available in your area and you can contact an Internet Service Provider (ISP) about signing up. There is no need to do

anything at this point if you do not wish to and you can retain your copper line until they turn off the copper network at some point in the future. If you wish to upgrade your service, then you just need to contact an Internet Service provider of your choice eg. BT, Vodafone, sky, etc. You should find that speeds of up to 1Gbps will be available. Once you place an order, the ISP will arrange for an Openreach engineer to make the final connections from the street to your property and install the Full Fibre connection box on the inside of your property. From my research most of the ISPs do not charge a connection fee for this but it's worth checking on the deal that you select. As far as James is aware, the project is still going to plan but he will let us know if this changes. Can I thank James on behalf of the residents for his work on this project. It have been a long hard slog, but it does look as if we might be approaching the end game .

□ Legal Advice Regarding Covenants We incurred significant costs in the last year in the form of legal fees. These have been incurred in respect of investigations into the application of the Courtyard's covenants and steps necessary to enforce the general NGRA covenants in the face of some persistent and regular breaches. The association has always striven to resolve any problems relating to the covenants in a consensual manner and this has been overwhelmingly successful. However, in recent years, we have encountered instances of behaviour that clearly falls outside of what any of us would define as acceptable and is in breach of the covenants, especially those relating to nuisance. We have had to threaten legal action against one of our residents in view of their conduct over several years. The directors felt that it was necessary to pursue this matter in order to maintain the integrity of the covenants and we are now much better informed as to the legal measures that might be taken should the need arise. Naturally, we hope that this is not necessary. □ NGRA Covenants It is a good idea to read the covenants thoroughly, especially if you are new to Norton Grange. They can be found here: <https://www.nortongrange.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/covenants.pdf> The third schedule, parts one and two are the sections that cover rules and regulations are the most relevant on a day to day basis. The NGRA website (<https://www.nortongrange.org/>) also explains the procedure for getting approval form such things as putting up garden structures, conservatories, extensions, fences, etc and for removing trees. Evidence of NGRA approval is routinely sought as part of property purchase and unapproved alterations and structures will present problems.

□ NGRA Directors

Thank you to all the NGRA directors who have been such a great team. They have worked very effectively on your behalf and have brought considerable knowledge and good judgement to the work of the association. Vicky Butler will be leaving Norton Grange after twenty plus years and has been a director for most of those years. She has been a very valuable member of the team and will be much missed. Many thanks Vicky and we hope that you and Jack are very happy in your new home. We are always happy to welcome new directors, so let us know if you are interested.

6 Election of Directors

All the directors agreed to remain standing.

The meeting was closed

Thank you to all the residents in attendance.

2021-22.

- It was proposed and agreed at the last AGM to increase the fees for Kineton Cottages to £45 to reflect a 1/63rd share of all NGRA running costs except estate maintenance and road repairs. The existing payment of £25 has not kept up with running costs and this increase is the first increase in 10 years. This was implemented as planned.
- 2021-22 Fees were all paid on time.
- Expenditure so far is as planned and in line with previous years, with the exception of £3600 recently spent on road repairs, which are set to be completed in early 2022 at a further cost of £27000. This significant expenditure was approved at the AGM in 2020 and was subject to a competitive tender process, with contracts awarded to Sutherpark.
- Plan to transfer £15,000 out of long-term funds (sink fund) to cover the road maintenance expenses in early 2022.

2022-2023.

- Fees levied at £300 per household and £45 for Kineton Cottages (see above).
- 2022-23 Fees were all paid on time, with only 7 households paying by cheque.
- Bank charges have now started to be levied by HSBC - £8/month plus 50p per cheque.
- 4 Properties were sold and completed share transfers, bringing additional income of £1400 – with one additional transfer in progress.
- Expenditure was as planned with the exception of an additional £2,332 in legal fees which were spent to clarify matters regarding to the legal status of The Courtyard and to take action in relation to upholding of covenants.
- Significant spending above our typical planned spending:
 - £24,588 to complete the road maintenance programme
 - £2,332 Legal Fees
 - £1,740 Lighting upgrades
 - £537 Courtyard Car Park (NGRA share of total cost)
- Forecast year end financial position:
 - £29,705 in current account
 - £40957 in savings

2023-24

- Future BACS payments would be appreciated. We will investigate switching to a bank with free banking.
- Bank interest providing reasonable income – we need to review with accountants about how this affects our tax free status.
- It has been recommended that we keep our bank balances at less than £80,000 as we are a not-for-profit organisation with tax payment exemptions.
- Forecast year end financial position:
 - £24,596 in current account
 - £42,057 in savings

2023-24 Fee Proposal

- Fees of £50 per property proposed for 2023-24 to cover the basic costs of running NGRA.
 - NGRA company running costs per household 2022-23 were £82.82 due to legal fees incurred.
 - NGRA running costs forecast £47 per household for 2023-24.
 - With significant repairs completed to roads in 2022-23, and no significant repairs planned in the next year a fee reduction is considered to be appropriate and fair, given the current cost of living.

Proposal

- Agreement sought on the re-appointment of Thelma Murphy at Cooke Watts as NGRA accountant.

A detailed summary of income and expenditure for 2021/22, 2022/23 and a forecast for 2023/24 is shown below. Please note that this table reflects cash flows rather than those represented in the statutory reporting of accounts. Statutory Accounts are available on the website.

Income and Expenses Cash Flow Summary 23/3/23

	Total 2021-22	Actual 2022-23	Planned 2023-24
Income			
-Services	17550	17275	3130
-Share Transfers	350	700	350
Transfer from Savings		30000	
-Bank Interest	21	473	1100
Total Income	17921	48448	4580
Expenditure			
Gardening & Estate Maint.	1834	2502	2400
Manual Road Sweep	2644	2280	2100
Document Storage	432	454	454
Road Repairs	3600	24588	
Lighting	200	1740	
Tree Maintenance	2130	200	1000
Room Hire/BBQ/Christmas	112		150
Stationary/computer/misc	318	201	222
Courtyard Car Park		537	
Insurance	585	598	600
Secretarial Work	600	600	600
Accountancy Fees	954	1020	1050
Legal Fees		2332	0
Companies House & VAT & Tax	13	13	13
Total Expenses	13422	37064	8589
Net Cash Flow	4499	11384	-4009
Bank Accounts			
Current Account	17360	29705	24596
Short Term Money Market	7	7	7
Fixed Int. Money Market	70477	40950	42050
Totals	87844	70662	67753

Jane Mander, NGRA Treasurer

March 23rd 2023