

GOLDSWORTH PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION CIO

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING, 7.30pm ON WEDNESDAY 22nd JANUARY 2020

AT THE COMMUNITY HALL, GOLDWATER LODGE, GOLDSWORTH PARK

PRESENT:

Irene Watson, Chair
Tina Hartley, Treasurer
Celia Young, Secretary
George Binyon, Editor Goldsworth News
Cathy Salmon, Social Secretary
Gerald Smeesters, Natural Goldsworth Park
Steve Willson, Webmaster
Christina Candey, GN Advertising Manager
Cllr Saj Hussain, SCC
Cllr Ann-Marie Barker, WBC
Cllr Chitra Rana, WBC
Cllr James Sanderson, WBC
Hannah Rees, WBC
Gary Rimay-Muranyi, Dianthus Trading Co
Roger Westcott, GPAC

Sandra White, LCAG
Jim Mackay, Lakeside Fellowship
James Elstone, GP Scout Group
Mark Hartland, 1st GP Scout Group
Hilary Harris, 1st GP Scout Group
Sylvia Lambert, GP Guides
Mary Bowler, GP Guides

Residents

Wanda Binyon
Bob Cowell
Maryel Cowell
Ron W Butler
Royer Slater
Liz Wilkinson

APOLOGIES

Chris Martin, Vice Chair
Cllr Colin Kemp, SCC
Sandie Bolger, SCC Youth Development Officer
Andrew Halstead, GP Allotment Society
Emily Ferris, Head Teacher, Beaufort School

Residents: Pamela Marshall, Sue Johnson, Margaret Waters, Hilary and Michael Addison, Gill Brooking, Sue Slater, Katie Sherlock.

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first General Meeting of the GPCA CIO.

As this is the first meeting of the new Community Association CIO, there is no last meeting and so no minutes. The minutes of the last AGM of the old Association were sent out and comments can be made at the AGM, on 21st October 2020.

The Chair said that this was an ideal time to rethink the way in which these meetings are run. In the past, the meetings were formal with committee members giving reports and answering any questions. After the CIO Trustees were elected, the meetings were less formal, starting with questions from residents. General meetings are for residents so the Trustees would like to hear about how they would like the meetings to go.

- Do residents want regular reports from Trustees, or are they happy to wait until AGM for reports?
- Would residents prefer to start with questions? If so, could questions please be sent in advance of meetings.
- Would residents like to have a Speaker from time to time, on a topic of local interest?

The general feeling was that talks on topics of local interest would be welcome with CC suggesting local history and nature on the Park, RS suggesting the Surrey Bat Group, SH suggesting the Canal Society, Squires and the Police Commissioner, and RW suggesting organisations which impact on life in the Park such as the Police and Fire Brigade.

IW pointed out that we only hold 4 General Meetings a year, one of which is the AGM.

2. MATTERS ARISING/OUTSTANDING

The Chair proposed that, instead of Matters Arising, there should be Matters Outstanding to ensure that questions which are not answered immediately are not forgotten. The items which are outstanding from the last GPCA meeting concern:

- A big increase in the rat population (RC) – HR reported that there were regular inspections and that the rat population seemed to be under control. RW added that “Roger the Rat” had reported that, if anything, the rat population was fairly low at present and were concentrated by the children’s play area and the coppice near the wildflower patch. The numbers will grow in the summer.
- the steep slope into the shopping centre car park which makes access for wheelchair users and others with mobility problems difficult (CC) - IW had spoken to the managing agents and HR had planned to meet the Facilities Manager before Christmas but the meeting was postponed; she will try to rearrange. The main barrier to action seems to be cost. **HR/IW**
- the issue of dogs not on leads or not under control – still awaiting information from the Council about proposals and new signage. HR said the issue would be discussed at a meeting in a couple of weeks after which she could report. IW said she was pleased to see the new signs on the rubbish bins saying that they could be used for dog waste bags. **HR**
- finishing the boat ramp – GRM said that the delay was in getting the steel work done and this should be done soon now that a welder had been identified. Extending the ramp from the disabled anglers platform to the Sea Cadets platform is a longer-term project but he is seeking quotes. The toilet in the snug bar is also a longer-term project as funding has to be found. **GRM**

3. COMMUNITY MATTERS

Residents’ Questions and Concerns

- 3.1** RS raised the problem, on behalf of a neighbour, of the noise nuisance from low-flying jets into Farnborough airport. IW mentioned that, a few years ago, changes in technology allowed for the flight paths to be narrowed on the approach to Farnborough and were now concentrated over the Park and Knaphill. RS said that there were consultative groups involving local authorities but that Woking was not represented. Although the consensus was that the noise from Farnborough traffic was not a nuisance, it was thought to be a good idea to find out why WBC was not represented. **A-MB**
- 3.2** IW raised the issue of refuse collections over the Christmas period which had been the subject of a number of posts on the GP Facebook Group. Collections of food waste and garden waste had been affected. A-MB said that there had been problems with staff sickness and vehicle breakdowns. It appeared that Amey/Joint Waste Solutions (JWS) had been waiting until there were several vehicles that needed maintenance before arranging for the work to be done. With regards to green waste, in cold weather the contents can freeze and so the bin cannot be emptied. Another problem was that JWS had not been reminding residents that their subscriptions to the green waste service had expired and they only found out when they rang to complain of missed collections. JS reported that these issues had been discussed at the Council’s Scrutiny Committee last week and Councillors will be monitoring the situation.
- 3.3** Following on from this, SW said that, when clothes/textile collections are made, the bags are often left in a pile at the end of certain roads for several days. This then looks like “fly-tipping” and does not improve the look of the estate. A-MB said that bags should not be left for days and it would be good if the contractors advised residents about how the collections are made.

3.4 BC observed that many of the lifebelts round the lake are concealed by foliage and can't easily be seen. He asked who was responsible for keeping access to the clear and whether they could be relocated. RW responded that, when the lake was first built, the lifebelts were nearer the lake path and very visible, but they were constantly being thrown into the lake. They were relocated nearer the water but since then, the foliage has grown significantly. The Angling Club cuts back the foliage twice a year and tries to keep the lifebelts clear. BC pointed out that the location of many of the lifebelts was so overgrown that no-one could get to the water to fall in anyway. SW asked how often the life belts had been used and HR said she was aware only one occasion in the 3½ years she has been with the Council. HR and RW will seek a review the locations. **HR/RW**

3.5 GB asked about the Robin Hood pub site and observed that it is over a year since the trees were felled and still nothing is happening on the site which is now being used extensively for fly-tipping. It appears that the Council has not agreed the money for the development although the GPCA had understood that there were plans for sheltered housing on the top (Robin Hood Road) and the Bustler bus depot on the bottom (Lockfield Drive). SH explained that the plans for the Bustler depot had been agreed but plans for affordable housing have still not gone to the Planning Committee. In the meantime, the fly-tipping will be cleared up and new security measures put in place.

4. OFFICERS' REPORTS

4.1 Chair

The Chair reminded the meeting that the GPCA achieved CIO status on 4th October 2019. The CIO has a new Constitution which can be seen on the website - www.ourgoldsworthpark.org.uk. This sets out the rules for managing the Charity.

The main issue at the moment is membership - the Charity Commission requires all Association CIOs to have a membership register so the GPCA CIO is asking residents to sign up as members and be recorded on the register. It can no longer say that "anyone who lives in Goldsworth Park is a member". By becoming a member, residents will continue to get invitations to meetings, minutes, the report and accounts for the AGM.

Residents can become individual members by sending the Chair a request giving their name, email and postal addresses and telephone number(s). Organisations with the GPCA CIO co-operates, supports, etc, can become corporate members and have one or more representatives registered and will continue to receive invitations, as above.

Details of how to apply will be in Goldsworth News in future.

The Chair summarised the membership provisions, as follows:

- Membership is open to anyone 18 years of age or over, who is resident in, or has a close connection to, Goldsworth Park;
- The charity trustees can agree different classes of membership and have decided on two classes of membership:
 - a) individual members (residents) who have the right to vote to elect Trustees, to approve any changes to the Constitution, and to wind up the CIO. They may also call a general meeting in certain circumstances and propose resolutions.
 - b) corporate members which have the right to send representatives to meetings but do not have the right to vote on the issues mentioned. A corporate member can have more than one representative on the register.

Representatives of corporate membership who live in the Park can also be individual members, which would then give them the right to vote as individuals.

- The charity trustees can agree on how applications should be made and have decided that an email or note providing name and email address, postal address and telephone number(s) is sufficient.

- Members may be asked to pay reasonable membership fees – a clause which has raised some concerns, but the key is in the wording; members **MAY** be asked, not **WILL** be asked. This is the same wording as in the old GPCA Constitution. The charity trustees have decided not to ask for membership fees at present even though the GPCA's regular income does not cover its outgoings. However, it may be that voluntary donations will be sought at some time in the future. The “neighbours” – Horsell Residents Association and Knaphill Residents Association – both charge membership fees of around £5 a year per household. The Trustees hope that residents believe that the GPCA CIO is worth £5 or so a year if it ever decided to make this sort of charge in order to keep going.

The GPCA CIO has a Privacy and Data Protection Policy Statement which can be viewed on the website.

The Chair reported that, as new organisation, the GPCA CIO opened a new bank account. At the AGM, it was agreed that the GPCA would be dissolved on 31st December or such other date as the Trustees may decide. On 31st December, there were still a couple of outstanding payments due and, as there was a question about whether dissolving the GPCA would compromise access to old bank account, the Trustees decided to defer dissolving the GPCA until all payments were in.

4.2 Natural Goldsworth Park

GS – North Meadow

- There has been a meeting with Thames Water about the woodland path and details of its exact route are awaited. If the path is not constructed before bird-nesting time, it will have to be postponed until September.
- A good start has been made on the wildflower meadow with help of a local expert, Norman Johns, and funding from Surrey CC – thank you, Colin Kemp. What actually grows will be monitored and compared with what was planted. The results will be used to inform plans for the future.
- The results of the 2019 Insect Survey of North Meadow and the Lake area show “nothing interesting/new”. There are few mentions of bees or dragonflies. RW reported that 2019 was a good year for dragonflies and asked for any photographers to take pictures of dragonflies and send them in so that they can be identified.
- The monthly bird surveys continue, with some interesting results; however, it is only a snapshot. Residents are encouraged to take part in the RSPB survey of garden birds – see the NGP Facebook page for the results of the survey and the RSPB initiative.

RW – Lake

- A bird or bat-box has appeared on a tree near Willowmead Close and no-one knows where it came from. There is a protocol round the Lake and North Meadow, and the Council should be informed before installing any bird or bat-boxes in these areas.
- There appears to be only one resident swan on the Lake now, although there have been some migratory visitors. Otherwise, bird-life on the Lake has been mainly good with some migratory tufted ducks this week. However, the cormorants continue to be a problem as they have severely depleted fish stocks and this, in turn, could affect some of the resident birds which rely on small fish, such as the heron and great crested grebe.
- Because of the depletion of small fish, stocks of roach and bream have been moved from Brookwood Ponds with the help of the Environment Agency. As a very large, old carp was lost last year, two mirror and one common carp have also been bought in.
- To improve the situation, there are plans to introduce more sub-aquatic plants such as alba lily and broad leafed pond weed to create a sheltered environment for small fish. The “fish refuges” which help to protect the fish from the cormorants may be left in place during the summer.

- Tree work, involving felling a few trees, coppicing or removing dangerous branches from others is taking place. The affected trees are “DDD” - dead, dying or diseased. HR explained that Woking Council is responsible borough-wide for the care and management of trees. All trees are inspected regularly and members of the public can contact WBC or SERCO to request that a tree be inspected.
- CC asked if residents could be asked, via Goldsworth News, to send in their photos of dragonflies; perhaps a competition would encourage them. IW said it would be great to collect photos of the Park to create a calendar for fundraising.

4.3 Social Secretary

The GPCA is organising a Children’s Easter Treasure Hunt on Saturday, 4th April, 2pm to 5pm, on the North Meadow. This will be for children under 12 years old but will be most suitable for younger children. Prizes will be small Easter eggs, with fruit for those with allergies. There will be teas and cakes – please let CY know if you can provide any cakes. The cost will be £3 per child, and it will take 50 children to break even. Local shops will be asked if they can donate Easter Eggs. “Easter Bunnies” - Marshals - are required and a First Aider: HH volunteered. HH has details of an Easter Bunny hunt she organised and will share it with CS. GR-M has offered the use of the Hall for refreshments.

The GPCA is also planning to hold an event in conjunction with Dianthus which will be a showcase for other organisations such as the Scouts, Guides, Brownies, etc., to demonstrate what they can do. The date for this event is Saturday, 12th September, as there is so much going on in June and July and then there is the main holiday season.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

5.1 A question was raised about the future of Lakers.

The Chair said there was a consultation document called “Family Resilience: Universal Youth Work” about the future of Youth Work in Surrey which can be downloaded from the website. There is no statutory duty for SCC to provide youth facilities - visit the SCC website to see policy. SCC are having to focus on children and youth with social needs, so are trying to encourage faith groups and community groups to make provision for youth.

It is not clear whether SCC is prepared to renovate Lakers if a faith/community group committed to providing youth activities. A-MB said SCC had not claimed the insurance money and do not appear to be prepared to make any repairs. The damage to Lakers is severe, and has, of course, become worse as the building has not been protected from the elements. If the building was restored, rooms could be let to other organisations, as a source of income. SH said WBC might get involved.

SCC is holding a Youth Engagement meeting in Knaphill, on 21st March for Goldsworth Park and Knaphill, whereas every other youth facility will have its own meeting. The Chair has asked SCC to rearrange the Engagement Event about Lakers to be held in the A2, Lakeview Community Centre or the Community Hall but has not had a reply. The feeling of the meeting was that Goldsworth Park and Knaphill have different needs and should be considered separately. SH said will take this up with SCC.

5.2 The discussion moved on to playgrounds.

WB commented that the provision of playgrounds for children on the Park is very poor compared with other areas. SH said the Council is working with a company on new provision. The Chair said that she was aware of a survey of play facilities and the GPCA will campaign for better facilities. Byfleet was mentioned and the Chair explained that the provision there is so much better because two mothers decided something needed to be done, went to the Council with a costed plan, explained the need, and obtained a big grant to add to money from WBC and developers and the playground rebuilt. If the GPCA could get local people to do the same, the Park could have much better facilities, too.

A-MB said that playgrounds are reviewed in turn. The playgrounds in GP were among the first to be built in the Woking area and will shortly be due for review. The usual practice is for the Council to consult residents about any proposals for improvements to the playgrounds before they are implemented.

CC commented that the surface of the playground by Waitrose was constantly “ponding” in spite of some work having been done. The Chair said it could be reported to the Managing Agents but the cost of repair would be put onto the shops and some of them would not be able to afford to foot the bill. At least any damaged equipment in that playground does get repaired.

5.3 Planning Issues

The Victoria Square development is proceeding apace and that there are 2 further high rise development in the offing:

1. On the old BHS site, up to 39 storeys with 310 1, 2 and a few 3 bedroom flats but no affordable accommodation. There is a consultation exercise on the revised plans with an exhibition in Christ Church on Saturday, 25th January from 10am to 2pm.
2. On the HG Wells Conference Centre site, up to 28 storeys with 366 1 and 2 bedroom flats but no affordable accommodation.

There is now another huge development in Goldsworth Road mainly on the railway side – on the other side of Victoria Way from the Victoria Square development. There is no planning application yet but there will be an exhibition of the proposal which include 955 new homes, commercial space and public space. There will be an exhibition at Christ Church on Thursday, 30th January from 3 to 8pm and Saturday, 1st February from 10am to 1pm.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next General Meeting will be at 7.30pm on Wednesday, 22nd April 2020 in this Hall.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 9.30pm