HEATHFIELDS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION LTD
MINUTES OF THE 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date and time:	Friday 28th October 2016, 7.30pm
Location:	Thriplow Village Hall

In attendance - Committee: Tim Spicer (Chair), Geoff Creek (Director), Darren Mullett (Director), Martin Johnston (Secretary), David Schneider (Director).

In attendance: John Ramsey, Andrew Dansie, Fenella Dansie, Tina Creek, Debra Ashard, Amanda Johnston, Sabrina Melvin, Karen Clark, David Dawkins, Kerry Dawkins, Rowan Pashley, Gerald Sandford, Richard Green, Brian Green, Martyn Corbet, Austin Flynn, Tracie Cheeswright, Diane Maloney, Bob Hale, Ted Sterecki.

Proxies: Martyn Corbett held proxies for Pete and Sally Sketchley, Paul and Lynn Driscoll, Fiona and Dawn Atherton-Kemp and Jon and Donna Balser. Martin Johnston held Proxies for Mr and Mrs Arnold. David Schneider held proxies for Brandi Davey and Leo Hillier, Ugar Adis and Madeline Cassidy.

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1. Apologies

1.1 Apologies were received from Emma Knox, Danielle Harding, Heather Bell and Brandi Davey.

2. Welcome and Introduction

2.1 Tim Spicer welcomed those present and introduced the Directors.

3. Minutes of the Last meeting

3.1 Tim Spicer enquired if everyone present had seen the minutes of the last meeting. There were no comments in relation to the minutes. These were proposed by Fenella Dansie and seconded by Darren Mullett.

4. The Report of the Directors and Audited Accounts for the Year Ending 2015

4.1 Tim Spicer said that the accounts had been circulated. Tim Spicer asked if anyone had any comments. None were received. It was proposed by Ted Sterecki and seconded by Brian Green that the minutes be accepted.

5. Election of New Directors

5.1 Tim Spicer said that Darren Mullett was due for re-election by retirement and asked for a proposer. Ted Sterecki proposed this and it was seconded by Amanda Johnston. Darren Mullett was duly re-elected as a director.

5.2 Martyn Corbet enquired why David Schneider had not been proposed as a Director as he had only been co-opted onto the committee. Tim Spicer said that in the circumstances this would have to be done at this meeting and asked for a proposer and seconder. Fenella Danise proposed this and seconded by Amanda Johnston. David Schneider was duly elected as a director.

6. The Report on the Recovery of Arrears and Service Charges

6.1 Tim Spicer spoke about the current situation with the recovery of arrears. He said that a debt agency that had been previously employed had only been partially successful and although it wasn't a disaster it hadn't been as productive as we would have liked. He added that the Committee had agreed to try something different at recovering debts. This would be a letter to the debtor, followed by court action if this proved unsuccessful. However, CCJ's should not be considered guaranteed money in the short term so we cannot assume this will bolster funds if we follow this route, but they will be recovered eventually. He asked for any comments. Karen Clark enquired why people were not paying. Tim Spicer explained there were various reasons. Bob Hale said that we used to get a reduced rate from the Council. Tim Spicer replied that this used to be the case but it went up when the Community Charge was introduced. He felt that some residents did not like paying Council tax and a Service Charge, although this was no excuse for not paying. Martyn Corbett enquired about a long-standing debtor. Martin Johnston said that the Committee had been unable to recover debts from this person as he was not a HRA member and it is unlikely that we could take action via the court.

6.2 Karen Dawkins said that she had been in arrears but this was due to the solicitor who had never advised her how to pay the service charge. Martin Johnston said this should not have happened but he was putting in place a new system to ensure this did not occur in the future. He said he would advise the solicitor(s) during the conveyancing process and added that he had already done this on a recent house sale. He would also ensure that it was included in the welcome letter so that the new owner knew the process. John Ramsey agreed this would be a good idea as he thought there was no account details or instructions on the letter from RWA. Tim Spicer said that he would ask RWA to include a 'How to Pay' section on the invoices. Kerry Dawkins asked how to pay if using cash. Tim Spicer said to pay directly to him as Finance Director and he would pay this into the account and inform RWA.

7. Report on the Estate Maintenance, Infrastructure and Improvements

7.1 Further discussion on accounts:

At this stage Darren Mullet displayed his presentation. He expanded on the accounts, referring to the business plan, which detailed all expenditure and income generated. The current balance was £19.4k and the average spend annually was about £9.3k; we are still in the black. He said that we were not cash rich and we are not sitting on a pot of money. He added that income was also generated from conveyancing, which is around £2k per year. He spoke about the long term plan for spending up to year 2019 and explained that we should not have to overspend, but this would be reviewed in 2017. He continued by explaining how the money had been allocated and spent on footpaths, landscaping, playground, roads and parking areas. He then opened this to the floor.

7.2 Ted Sterecki asked what we get from Thriplow parish Council (TPC) and the pay levy. Darren Mullet said that we do pay into TPC but we get something back on this as well, although he wasn't aware of the details and we would need to examine this. He added that Heathfields is significant in this respect. John Ramsey said that the budget should not be a target and if necessary we should spend it. Daren Mullet said we need to keep a provision for road repairs. He gave the example of the kerb stones, which needed replacing in some areas. Martyn Corbet said he was the Parish Clerk and explained about the 106 monies. TPC pay for a lot which we may not be aware of. Ted Sterecki said he was not sure that the figures were balanced between TPC and Heathfields. Martin Corbett replied that he was trying to get this done and we all one parish.

7.3 Discussion on service charge:

Bob Hale suggested that we should raise the service charge £10 p.a. Sabrina Melvin added that some new estates that have service charges are up to £1000 p.a. and they didn't get anything more. Tim Spicer said that raising it £10 p.a. was not worth the effort and if there was an increase it would need to be more. Darren Mullet said we need a good reason to increase it and we need to get money from debtors first. Bob Hale replied that the reason he had suggested £10 p.a. was because there were residents who were retired or on low income. He didn't want a private company to manage the charge as it would be very high. John Ramsey said that the figures as presented suggested we did not need to raise the charge yet. Kerry Dawkins said that Duxford had held a referendum with all residents and perhaps we could do that here. She added that perhaps we could make the service charge increase voluntary. Martin Johnston explained that this wasn't possible as it had to be a fixed sum contained as contained within the Deed of Covenant.

7.4 Paths

Darren Mullett continued with his presentation, showing the path matrix and where work had been carried out, especially those which were considered high risk. Some paths still needing upgrading. Paths U and V were agreed to remain unchanged for the foreseeable future, and to concentrate working on paths I, O & N going forward with budget. The overspend against budget was accepted and another £2K provisioned for was to be spent. He showed photographs of the before and after work. John Ramsey said this was very good and thanked Darren. Martyn Corbett asked for clarification on the work planned by South Staff Water to install a water meter at 19 Whitehall Gardens and the disruption this would cause. Martin Johnston explained that he had contacted the company and the work area required would be 10 metres around the property and the road would not be affected apart from their vehicles using it.

7.5 Discussion on the planting plan

Darren Mullett presented the plan for planting of bulbs in 2016-17. He explained that a local meeting had been convened at his house whereby volunteers had been allocated areas to plant bulbs and he used this as an example of building the community. Fenella Dansie had also kindly donated 10k of bulbs. Part of this work would also include clearing the kerb edges. He then showed plans where this planting would take place and improvements in the other green areas. He showed area F, where the intention was to put benches, prune the trees and perhaps install a piece of local art. At area G a Christmas tree would be planted. Area H was where it was intended to plant a small orchard. Martyn Corbett said he objected to this and was supported by proxy votes from four other members, as the area contained a large soakaway. The trees would also attract wasps and other vermin and it was not big enough. Darren Mullet responded that HRA was going to plant trees and a meadow two years ago and there had been no objection then. The discussion moved on to the parking at this area. Martyn Corbett said that the parking areas on the plan were incorrect and should be larger, which would reduce the planting area. Tracy Cheeswright suggested that we could just put benches there. Darren Mullett said that this might be an idea, perhaps as an adult area. Martyn Corbett questioned this, asking if it would be used, and if not it would be a waste of money. Amanda Johnston said she had mobility issues and benches were a good idea as it would allow her to walk around the estate and sit down whenever she needed to. Sabrina Melvin said that we should put this all together and put it to a vote. John Ramsey said this was all good work and it was good to see enthusiasm. Martin Johnston added that he had contacted South Cambridge District Council and enquired if they could provide information and support in this endevour. They had agreed to send their project officer to the estate and she will provide a report. Darren Mullet said that the idea was to improve the estate and the community. It was suggested that perhaps a consensus be taken from nearby houses and the estate generally as to the usage once the size of the soakaway and the parking had been determined. This may establish what we could or couldn't do. However, it was recognised that some residents in the local vicinity may have a vested interest this would have to be a democratic choice. It was also mentioned that the scheme might be supported by an external grant rather than HRA funds if it was considered for the benefit of the community.

8. Plans for the Improvement of the Playground and the Public Open Spaces

8.1 At the next part of his presentation Darren Mullet updated the meeting on the playground progress. He provided the costings and the plan for equipment already purchased. The HeART charity had been very active in raising funds and there would be a large donation from Tesco up to £12K. He said that various events had occurred to raise funds, including the Fantasy Football, park picnic, Phoenix night and the race night, which had raised £897. Planned were a Halloween event, Christmas Grotto, Bingo, sponsored walk and fun run. Martyn Corbett said he had concerns that the RoSPA report had not been acted on and if a child was injured on the tyres in the park the parents can sue. He said something must be done about this. Darren Mullet said he would find out about this and react to it.

9. Future Communications regarding the AGM

9.1 Martin Johnston explained that he had contacted Companies House regarding the circulation of AGM papers. He said that we have always printed hard copies of the agenda, minutes and associated information and circulated these by hand. There was a significant cost in printing these and time spent distributing them. He was proposing that in future all the papers would be available online via the website and emails. Notification of the AGM would be made via a hard copy slip posted through doors. Brian Green said he did not have a computer. Tim Spicer said that on the slip it would point out that a hard copy could be provided in these circumstances. This was voted on and the majority agreed to this.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 An issue was raised about the salt bins. There had been a nil response on HRA to SCDC's offer of training to undertake salting the roads. However, residents were free to use the salt as they saw fit, providing it was only used on the roads and not on their driveways. Martyn Corbett said that TPC had the responsibility for filling the bins. Someone asked what would happen to the bin once Cambustion moved in. Darren Mullet said he will speak to the council about moving it should the new owners decide they do not accept this on their land.

10.2 Tracie Cheeswright said she was concerned about the path to Thriplow as cars had been using it and there had been careless driving. Is there anything we can do to prevent this happening? Darren Mullet said this was not connected with HRA and we can't put anything up, even if it was on HRA land. Martyn Corbett said this was the Farmer's responsibility but in any case it could not be blocked. Amanda Johnston asked who then would be liable if there was an injury. Martin Corbett said that there was a duty of care by the farmer and we should approach the council to raise this with him. It was agreed that Martin Johnston would write to Martyn Corbett, in his capacity as TPC Clerk, highlighting this issue for the next meeting on 14th November. Martyn Corbett also mentioned that some dog owners were still not clearing up their dog mess and we need to get the message across.

10.3 Ted Sterecki said that the entrance to Kingsway was dangerous as there were bins outside houses there, which did not help when negotiating the corner. Tim Spicer said that HRA is intending to buy a traffic mirror to help drivers see better at that location.

10.4 Bob Hale raised the issue of the concrete blocks preventing access alongside the ex-Iceni site. Tim Spicer said this is not a right of way but we had enjoyed access. Martin Johnston explained that these had been erected by the liquidators (Deloite) as a public liability measure. Martyn Corbett added that it had been recorded in the TPC minutes that the blocks will be removed by Cambustion when they take over ownership. Amanda Johnston said it wasn't necessary for the blocks to be placed there as all that was needed was a sign about public liability. Bob Hale also mentioned that some of the lights in Kingsway were defective, Tim Spicer responded that an order had been put in to repair these.

10.5 Martyn Corbett said that TPC wanted to make improvement to the turning off the A505 up Gravel Pit Hill and he wanted to know what HRA felt about this as it was being raised at the TPC meeting. Martyn asked for a vote on this and there was a majority in agreement.

10.6 Darren Mullet presented the new HRA logo and there was no disagreement with this being used. Martin Johnston spoke about the new welcome letter, which was intended to be given to all new residents and contained pertinent information. Geoff Creek presented the new HRA sign which contained house numbers. John Ramsey said it did not have 'Private Estate' on it and this was noted. Martin Johnston said that he had researched the Companies Act 2006 and as a result it was intended to update our Memorandum and Articles of Association as advised by the Act. This piece of work would commence in 2017 and would need legal input. David Schneider said that Facebook was proving to be very useful and now had 120 members.

10.7 There were no other business and Tim Spicer thanked everyone for attending.

10.8 The meeting closed at 9.15pm

Chairman…………………………………………………………

Date………………………………………………