

Jesmond Dene Estate Residents' Association

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25th April 2024 at 7:30 pm at St George's Church Hall, chaired by Georgina Mackie

Present: Christine and David Cheeseman, Paul Cook, Ian Watson, Ann Brown, Mark Scanlon, Lydia Appleby, Tom Devine, Helena Strettle-Davis, Bill and Judith Meikle, Sydney Dodd, Margaret and Richard Baron, Melinda and Hugh Firth, Joan Trinder, Georgina and David Mackie, Val Douglass, Claire Winskill, Sally and Jonny Green, Glenda and Jo Pickering, Neela Shabde, Moira and Derek Proctor, Ishy Bruce, John Garrett, Isabel and Bob Clifton, C Rawley, Mary Sinha, Geoff Potts, Judith and Ean MacKellar, Cllr Philip Browne

Apologies: John and Noel Armstrong, Cllr Gerry Keating, Jeremy Bruce, Heather and Aly Hassan, Jane Monk, Peter Gray, Sarah Brewis, Marjorie Wilkinson

The Minutes/Annual Reports of the year to March 2023 were approved.

Annual Report: Georgina presented her report – “The year has been a very busy one. We started off the year by recruiting five new members onto the committee – we are trying to bring in some of the new families that have arrived in the area over the last two years. Two from Castleton Grove, two from Adderstone Crescent and one from Lindisfarne Road.

We have had a resignation from Glastonbury Grove and our Treasurer will be stepping down initially for a year due to work commitments.

As you will hear from the Treasurer, our finances are in relatively good shape but we would like more residents to join. Up to date we have 67 members which is about a quarter of the households bearing in mind now 50 per cent of the flats are tenanted, not owner occupied.

Planning: as usual we have seen quite a number of planning applications – these are sent to me weekly. Mostly they are for trees. The appeal which was outstanding at the last AGM for a house in Lindisfarne Close was dismissed. The application for a small flat in a house in Adderstone crescent was approved. Two applications for houses in Castleton Grove were also approved. The application for 12 A Adderstone Crescent was refused in March and at the moment there is an application for 19 Lindisfarne Road.

Suddenly, at the end of March, it was noted on the weekly lists that applications for the Banqueting Hall had been disposed of – no more news on this development. This may be due to Urban Green's financial position.

As you all know, the Council have agreed finally to give us a parking scheme with some sort of permit arrangement. After a convincing yes vote in the survey, many residents also pointed out that some sort of permit scheme was needed as the time-limited proposal was not totally ideal for a residential area. The potential scheme is now with the ministry of transport for approval and I understand the scheme will include more yellow lines know road markings and notices on lampposts and notices at the end of each street. There will be a further consultation before implementation and I encourage you all to respond.

Can I point out that parking is not a Police matter. If you will wish to complain, you must phone Parking Control at the Civic Centre. There have been several such incidents in Lindisfarne Road this last year.

If you have an obstruction then it is a police matter.

Turning to the environment I have already mentioned that trees are a very important feature in this area – not just for the environment but they are part of the street scene of the conservation area.

Unfortunately, with all the bad weather, heavy rain, and gales some trees were damaged, the roads and pavements are not in good shape and we have many potholes. Fallen leaves have blocked the drains and gullies. I would encourage you to report these online to the Civic Centre. Litter being thrown into gardens, including dog poo, is causing a nuisance – also loud music and some noisy parties

I am afraid there has been no movement on the litter bin at the bottom of Lindisfarne Road. But we do have keys available for the bollards on Jesmond Dene Road for tree works and wall maintenance only. The keys are held by myself and Ean.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Committee for their support – Ean who works tirelessly – and all those who have shown their support throughout the year.”

During subsequent questions Georgina responded:-

- Joan Trinder wondered if there could be a ban on parking in the streets when the road sweepers were clearing leaves – This was thought to be impractical (although a good idea) but that the proposed parking scheme would also help.
- Neela Shabde asked if we will know the details of the parking scheme before implementation – There would be further consultation and at least another letter.
- Judith MacKellar wondered about the current situation with respect to LTN consultation – It was unlikely that residents on the estate would be consulted although the Association had already sent a letter to the Council requesting to be consulted. Cllr Philip Browne added that he was pushing for wider consultation with open sessions to explain any proposed scheme. There would likely also be a portal through which to channel responses and Cllr Browne would let the Association know its details later.
- Hugh Firth stated that residents must be consulted and that the Council had an obligation to consult. However, he believed that the changes being constructed were tinkering with LTNs rather than addressing the underlying issues associated with transport.

Treasurer's Report: Chris reported that the Association had started the year with £4590 in the bank, received income of £103 (£30 in donations and £73 in subscriptions), spent £352 (including £200 on newsletters) with a net loss of £248 leaving a balance at the end of the year of £4342. Geoff was thanked for auditing the accounts. No clarifications to Chris' report were sought.

Neighbourhood Watch Report: Georgina reported that “As most of you know our policing comes from Clifford Street in Byker.

Our neighbourhood watch scheme covers all the houses in all the streets on this estate. This means we have about 250 residences. You will have received a leaflet with your invitation to this meeting about NorthumbriaConnected. If any of you have read the National Neighbourhood Watch newsletter this month – which is on our website – you will notice Police.UK. These two schemes are roughly the same - but Northumbria Police is attaching itself to the National Neighbourhood Watch website.

If you wish to register on our official registration document, please do so but we can only take

people who live in this area. Your street contacts are printed on the JDERA newsletter and we operate two contacts for each street.

The year started off relatively quietly, a bit of antisocial behaviour during the summer months – mostly people going home from the Dene. But since the autumn things have been busy. Household burglary and shed crime appear to be down. Mainly its car crime and multiple types of scams -whether by phone, emails or people at the door offering services.

Recently, Lexus, Toyota, BMW and Range Rovers are top of the list for car crime – they are being exported to the East. Electric vehicles are not exempt – a BMW that was on charge was found in Cowgate!

Not far from here, a Range Rover behind gates with CCTV was taken at the beginning of March. Three youths on bicycles arrived, the smallest one climbed the gates and opened them, the other two disabled the cameras. The car was gone. Luckily there were enough images before the cameras were smashed to lead to an identification. The car has not been recovered but I understand the thieves have been caught.

Please do not leave anything expensive in cars – they are continually scanned by boys on bikes. Also please keep cars locked at night. Milk and papers left out are sure signs that the householder is away so please ensure the situation will be managed whilst you are away. Also people are going through dustbins looking for personal data.

Other scams include selling you gold or vintage wine with you transferring a deposit to their accounts. Never give out your monetary details – bank details or credit/debit card details unless you know who the people are.

Scams are a great worry – one family lost their holiday booking for a villa just before Christmas. When they booked it, they were asked to pay by banker's draft or BACS. When it came near the time to go, they had heard nothing – they had been scammed out of £4-5k. Another elderly resident was scammed out of £2.5k for a patio clean. BT are marketing a system to block scam calls and its £85 cost may be appropriate.

If you see anything suspicious, please report it through your street representatives, through the website or direct.

Recently, a van was reported acting suspiciously in Adderstone Crescent at night. With the aid of photos and videos taken by a dogwalker late at night, we ascertained what was going on by asking the Police to investigate. This turned out to be legitimate security being employed by Newcastle United to protect their players.

Alarmingly, the drug scene in Jesmond/Sandyford has exploded. Vast sums of money are changing hands. The Police have had some success with this but we are not immune to this on the Estate. In February, we had two cars passing something through the drivers' windows and both cars subsequently left in a hurry. If you see anything like this, please try to get the number plates or take a picture with your phone and report it immediately.

Late night dog walkers have reported a strong smell of weed and cannabis near the lower junction of Adderstone Crescent and Lindisfarne Road. Please be vigilant.

We ask you not to encourage door-to-door sellers – they are not genuine. Whatever the story they tell you, they are part of an organised gang looking at the security measures you have on your home.”

Election of Committee and Officers: The Chair walked through those who have consented to be on the committee for the following year being: Georgina Mackie (chairman), Ean MacKellar (secretary), Peter Gray (treasurer), with the rest of the committee comprising Sarah Brewis, Ischy Bruce, Alison Craig, Tom Devine, Heather Hassan, Sue Horseman, Jane Monk, Geoff Potts, Helens Strettle-Davis and Joan Stokoe. These were duly elected.

Councillors' Forum: Georgina Mackie welcomed Councillor Philip Browne.

Ann Brown raised the issue of the two sets of postal votes received by many on the Estate and the confusion this had caused. Cllr Browne indicated that the City Council was talking to the Electoral Commission but that the issue was specific to North Jesmond only. The actual outcome would be monitored and additional action taken if needed. The “second” set of ballot papers should be disposed of carefully as there was significant personal data associated with the papers. Joan Trinder asked how much this would all cost. Ann asked if the election would be valid and Cllr Browne said the outcome would be watched closely.

Joan Trinder sought clarification on the charging of £25 for replacement recycling glass caddies? Cllr Browne suggested that the Council was looking to charge £25 per caddy which he regarded as a false economy since it would, inevitably, lead to increased landfill charges. There was also evidence that, on the Estate, it was the re-cycling operatives that broke most of the caddies. Elsewhere in Jesmond, the issues of bins thrown around in the roads and lanes and missing bin lids seemed rife. Joan reported that the Council’s staff did not empty her bin if it was not full.

AOB: Melinda Firth wondered if there could be a more positive community event over the following year to include all on the Estate. Maybe a street party or something around Christmas? Ian Watson liked the idea of closing Acorn Road to traffic for a proportion of one evening over the Christmas period for some sort of street party. He also indicated that he had hope to extend the lights and Christmas trees to Gosforth High Street as well this year.

The Meeting closed at 8:30pm and we were treated to an excellent talk on the coming changes to the Church and Church Hall and the PCC’s attempts to create a Community Hub by Janet Wilson (one of the Church Wardens of St Georges

Ean MacKellar, 30th April 2024

Jesmond Dene Estate Residents Association

Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

	2023		2022	
Reserves as at 1 January 2023 / (2022)		£4,590.85		£4,300.39
Income:				
AGM			£0.00	
Donation	£30.00		£0.00	
Interest Received			£0.00	
Subscriptions	£73.50		£108.00	
Newsletter Sponsorship		£103.50	£500.00	£608.00
Expenditure:				
AGM	(£46.00)		(£22.50)	
Stationery and Printing				
NORA	(£20.00)		(£10.00)	
Newsletters	(£200.00)		(£200.00)	
Website Services	(£86.24)	(£352.24)	(£85.04)	(£317.54)
Surplus of Income Over Expenditure		(£248.74)		£290.46
Reserves as at 31 December 2023 / (2022)		£4,342.11		£4,590.85
Reserves				
Cash in Hand		£0.00		£0.00
Lloyds Bank		£4,342.11		£4,590.85
Total Reserves as at 31 December 2023/ (2022)		£4,342.11		£4,590.85