

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
The Hyde Park Estate Association
Lancaster Hotel, London
Tuesday, 21st October 2014**

Present: 80 plus signed in members and guests

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chairman, Nick Johnson Introduced and welcomed the panel. Cllr. JP Floru, Cllr. Heather Acton, Chief Inspector Tracy Stephenson and Mark Field MP.

The Chairman welcomed The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr. Audrey Lewis.

Apologies were received from, Cllr. Antonia Cox, Terence Mallinson, Juliana Wheeler, Caroline Duff, Gary Griffin, Betty Freeman

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19th November 2014

These were circulated and taken as read.

Proposed By Simon Davies. Seconded by Leslie Robert.

3. Matters Arising.

There were no matters arising.

4. Treasurer's Report. Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014.

The complete Accounts had been circulated via email and post to all members and to all present. The Treasurer reported that subscriptions were up 14% on the previous year. This has been due to Lynda King Taylor and her membership drives at the quarterly Monkey Puzzle meetings. Income generated by Fund Raising was £8,000.00. Our biggest expenditure was donating to Charities, followed by Professional fees and Architectural advice. AGM expenditure is higher due to our improved venue. We retain a healthy balance. Surplus for the year is £1,970.00. The HPEA has net assets of £38,579.00

Proposed Sally Martin. Seconded Dr. Allen Zimble.

5. Chairman's Report.

The Chairman welcomed all present and in particular the panel for the evening and thanked them in advance for giving of their time and expertise. The Chairman gave special thanks to the Lancaster Hotel for their splendid hospitality and for continuing to support the local community. Special thanks are recorded to all of our sponsors who have supported the HPEA throughout the year. The Chairman welcomed The Rt. Worshipful The Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr. Audrey Lewis for gracing us with her presence.

The Chairman welcomed our panel for this evening, our Councillors, J P Floru and Heather Acton, together with our MP Mark Field and Inspector Tracy Stephenson who will be answering member's questions. The Chairman reported on our very successful Summer Garden Party where we supported the Charity, 'Never such Innocence' and were able to present a cheque for £5,000.00. We enjoy strong relationships with the Church Commissioners and Westminster City Council. The HPEA continue to meet once a month at The Victoria Pub where we invite speakers to talk on local issues and we have now introduced quarterly social/membership drive meetings at the Monkey Puzzle. A Christmas party is being organised by our outstanding Social Committee Chairman Sandra Brendlor. So we look forward to welcoming you all in December. We have been successful in our application for the Neighbourhood Area Forum. This will enable us to influence what will be granted with planning and what is built and how it is built. We continue to be worried and concerned about the level of crime, prostitution and begging in the area. The Chairman showed

examples of areas of prostitution on screen where prostitutes continue to operate especially in Sussex Gardens. The problem has exacerbated since the cutbacks in Police numbers. The Chairman gave special thanks to Cllr. Heather Acton and Sgt Ken Taylor in dealing with these issues. There are plans to design out crime with redesigning gardens, lighting and educating Block porters. Increasing the numbers of Police in the area would go along way to solving all these problems. We do know our 6 cluster areas have to compete with each other. We worry about Police effectiveness now that the Police Force has had to cut services.

There is at present proposed Government legislation to allow short lets. Many blocks of flats are blighted by this problem and Westminster City Council, The Church Commissioners and the HPEA do all in their power to reduce this problem. We are opposed to the new Government legislation and have the support of all our Councillors.

We received notification of 356 planning applications during the past twelve months. Many are straight forward, but some cause a great deal of distress. We have a planning subcommittee that meets weekly. Basement excavations are a great source of unhappiness on the Estate. These excavations create noise, pollution, loss of parking and even damage to neighbouring properties. Councils are now working to limit the scope of these excavations.

John Walton is actively involved with TFL to get a workable route for the Super Cycle Highway.

We are concerned about plans to route the highway along Bathurst Mews or Stanhope Terrace.

If a Mansion Tax is introduced it will change the whole area as many residents who have lived here for a great number of years will be forced to move as they will not be able to afford the proposed Tax.

Proposed by Sandra Brendlor. Seconded by Jack Gordon.

6. Election of Chairman, treasurer, Secretary & the Executive Committee.

The Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and the Executive Committee were all proposed and seconded and elected unopposed.

Chairman:	Nick Johnson OBE.	Proposed by Sheila Davies.	Seconded by William Quinn
Hon Treasurer:	William Quinn.	Proposed by Nick Johnson.	Seconded by Sandra Brendlor
Hon Secretary:	Sheila Davies.	Proposed by Susan Quinn.	Seconded by Sally Martin

The following were elected to the Executive Committee:

Susan Quinn, Dr. Allen Zimble, Sandra Brendlor, Sally Martin, Revd. Stephen Mason, Sarah Clifford, Jack Gordon, Juliana Wheeler, Lynda King Taylor, Leslie Robert, Betty Freeman, John Malthouse, Jeannie Dixon.

Proposed by Simon Davies. Seconded by Pierre Brendlor.

The formalities having been concluded the Chairman welcomed and introduced the Panel:

Our keynote speaker Cllr JP Floru, together with Cllr. Heather Acton, Chief Inspector Tracy Stephenson & Mark Field, MP.

JP Floru, (Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance & Chairman of the Audit Committee), reported that WCC has no money left. The Council has made £10 million of savings in one year. WCC has 60 Councillors. We are proud that we do not waste taxpayer's money. This coming year we must make 10% of savings across the board.

JP spoke of his concern about Terrorism and the issues that we have in Westminster.

Basic facts. 64% were born abroad. 56% are white British. The largest 17% in our ward are Europeans and Middle Eastern origin.

We treat every individual in the same way.

JP highlighted 3 incidents in the last 3 months.

1. He had received 7 emails from Jewish residents who were upset and frightened by placards carried in anti-Israel demonstrations. Hate speech is an arrestable offense. Why was no one arrested?

2. A number of reports that ISIS leaflets were being handed out in the Edgware Road and Oxford Street. Why was no one arrested?

3 During an anti-Israel demonstration The Rabbi in Portland Street confirmed that Jewish worshippers were advised by the Police, who entered the Synagogue to remain inside and lock all doors until the demonstrators had passed by. They remained in their Synagogue for one hour. The Police did nothing. It was reported that the Police did nothing as they did not want to inflame the situation. According to The Rabbi the situation is getting worse. Why was no one arrested?

We live in a free Society, but it is only free for some, others live in intimidation and fear.

Chief Inspector Tracy replied that the Police do not ignore Hate crime. We do allow a lot with protesters as we do not wish to be accused of Police intimidation. We take a level view and deal with them later. The Inspector reported that the Police had received only 3 complaints regarding the Jewish Community. Members from the floor questioned this attitude and felt that it should be seen that the Police are dealing with the situation when it happens, not at a later date which goes unreported.

Mark Field MP spoke of the new proposals on short letting. All London local authorities are against this new legislation which principally affects London. Mark continues to fight against these proposals. Cllr Heather Acton, (Deputy Cabinet Member sustainability for Parking and the Edgware Road) also spoke about the problems of short lets and the Deregulation Bill, clause 34. Westminster already has 5 MP's speaking against it.

Mark spoke of Labour and the Lib Dem's proposed Mansion Tax. This is really a tax on London. Many residents have lived in their homes for decades and would consider themselves to be asset rich, but cash poor. Mark felt sure that some common sense will prevail, but acknowledges that it is of great concern to many of his constituents. The best way forward would be a re valuation of properties and an introduction of an additional 3 or 4 Council Tax Bands. Labour and the Lib Dem's proposals are the politics of envy not common sense.

Any Other Business

There were questions from the floor expressing disappointment in Police attitudes to dealing with demonstrators and hoped for a change in the future.

Comments were reported on the noise, rubbish, overcrowding and ant-social behaviour that comes with short lets.

Cllr Heather Acton gave a vote of thanks to the HPEA and to John Walton, who is a stalwart on Crossrail and the Super Cycle Highway.

The Chairman Nick Johnson thanked the Panel, The Lord Mayor of Westminster, and with special thanks to our hosts the Lancaster London for their generous hospitality and to all members and guests present for a very successful AGM.

The Chairman invited all present to remain and enjoy the light bites and drinks that had been prepared by Sandra and the Hotel.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.