

Elm Village Tenants and Residents Association (EVTRA)

Annual General Meeting

7.00pm Tuesday 2nd July 2013, The Constitution, St Pancras Road, Elm Village

attendees:

David Powell, Pat McGowen, Sandra Dystant, Andreas Syrimis, Michael Winnes, Christian Spence-Davis, Frances Lee, Ed Lee, Helene Fawcett, Maeve O'Connor, Brian Harrison, Derek Hayward, Elaine Reed, Sue Bryan, Stella Timmins, Alex Hammond, Cara Jones, Peter McGinty, Collene Carter, Manos Mavrikis, Matt Long

Agenda

1. Welcome,

a. introductions and apologies

Christian was introduced – he runs a business on Camley

Apologies: Sheila, David (neighbours of Peter)

b. Special Notices

2. Report from Chair

a. Minutes of AGM 2012 tabled

b. EVTRA, our focus and our priorities

We are anticipating a changing neighbourhood and the need to keep relations with Places for People (pfp). We need also to engage in bigger issues of our landlocked 150 houses. Our priorities will be both the management of estate but also future planning of our area.

There are many aspects, particularly environmental, that make Elm Village a great place and worth protecting. We have gardening, allotments, green aspects of local life. We hold great parties and encourage social activities such as Christmas on the Green, Carols in the Con, and the increasingly popular Big Lunch. We want to celebrate Elm Village – it's got so much potential. We have something going here compared to many parts of London.

3. Treasurer's Report

a. Income and Expenditure summary

Pat read through the treasurer's report. We had 90 members last year. We are currently at 67 members. We are changing our bank account to Lloyds TSB from Halifax

Christian kindly offered for us to use his photocopier when we need flyers to circulate. This was gratefully accepted. We also recognised that we want to do more by e-mail and need to collect

more e-mail address.

Ed asked how can we get more members? Do extend to associate members e.g. Camley businesses?

David viewed we can explore this in the neighbourhood planning. Relationships are more important than money. These relationships work well and have value e.g. gardening projects. We pay a service charge – that is invested back into estate.

It's a broader question of how we engage people in Elm Village e.g. short term lets.

How can we identify lets versus owner-occupied? There is an engagement issue.

Why do people join? It's a way to get to know their neighbours, collectively address PFP, have a voice with bigger projects like planning and HS2. There are lots of external factors which Evtra works on. We need to demonstrate how Evtra makes a difference.

Pat, who reminded us of his 30 years in Elm Village, reminded the group that lots of problems originally forced residents to form a committee (there were traveller camps, drugs, etc). Now we have good relations e.g. with Pfp and the police i.e. we get traction and they respond. It's time consuming to get stuff done but progress does happen slowly.

We are on Camden's official list of consultants. This means we get a response vs engaging in planning as individuals. PFP now takes notice. People will otherwise walk all over us.

There are things we need to get involved in as a collective. There are big plans for this neighbourhood and we'll need to do something about it or delegate responsibility to someone else.

Peter went to two HS2 consultation – as soon as they knew he was from Evtra, HS2 representatives took interest.

The group agreed Evtra is a good way to know neighbours and community-wide issues. They agreed that Evtra is a useful body of representative collective interest particularly with HS2 and neighbourhood planning.

Action: Highlight achievement of Evtra for next door drop

4. Current Priority Topics for Residents

a. Security/Neighbourhood Watch

We continue to have good face-to-face and e-mail relations with the police and Camden's neighbourhood safety team. The winter time saw a spate of burglaries and we maintained e-mail communications with neighbourhood watch participants to alert them. Communication reaffirmed the importance of individual residents to call 101 or 999 and not leave it for others to do so.

b. Estate Management and Maintenance

Last year we expressed interest in changing relationship with pfp due to their lack of response, particularly on maintenance. We're a small fish in Pfp's pond (they manage 60,000 properties). We acknowledge some of the relationships in part of Pfp have been very helpful.

Management / maintenance update – over past year we put together 2 documents –

- (i) a record of walkabouts topics, Pfp's response and how we're proceeding
- (ii) a diary of interactions with Pfp, e.g.:
when Pfp wrote to residents about external decorations consultations. We have been promised to see documentation about the maintenance upgrades. Peter went to Pfp's office in Feltham to see the documentation. When he arrived, he was presented with copy of the original letter, a leaflet with ICI's technical paint specifications and surveyors report. There was nothing about decorating. Peter then met with Wendy Botterill. She advised that the surveyors report was confidential. We have no evidence from Pfp of an Invitation to Tender document and no list of contractors. We pay for the report and the redecorating so we should see it.

Generally, with Pfp, Evtra needs to keep the pressure up. There was a letter that said Pfp would replace windows. This turned out to be a red herring.

Pfp reports £17k in management charges – where does it go?

So now, Evtra is keeping a diary of these interactions and documents. We are building a rich picture and we will get other resident's interactions with Pfp in the diary.

David reported we will meet with David Hooper a Pfp regional manager and work systematically up. If we meet resistance then we need to take our case to the board of Pfp. It's all monumentally slow.

Dee Dee – can we say what we expect to come from such a meeting? Should we get signatures? PFP tends to muddy everything so perhaps getting 20 signatures would help.

Peter responded that we're constantly dealing with different personnel – every walkabout it's someone new from PFP. So the diary is a good idea. High turnover of PFP staff is a concern. We've never had a solid, reliable relationship with PFP so now we will be more systematic. We need to be clear and be the collective voice of the service charge payers. We need to know where the annual money goes and what the detailed long term plan for roofs and windows etc. is. Previously, PFP did put together numbers (Evtra AGM at the Irish Centre) and built in long-term improvements. We need a senior person – not a shouting match but constructive conversation.

Derek asked about when the trees will be trimmed. Is there something from the council that won't allow it under a preservation order? The lights are not shining through and no daylight coming through.

Home insurance asks if trees are near by. Pfp is at risk with overgrown trees because properties could get damaged by falling branches.

Derek also noted glass on the pavement had not been swept for 6 – 7 weeks. Group believes that we need to promote civic responsibility and clarify what Evtra does and doesn't do.

Question about getting PFP to hold meetings in the evening. Or get them to come to AGM.

Action: Find out about tree trimming

Action: Get PFP to come to Evtra meetings

c. Participation in Neighbourhood Planning – Camley Street Neighbourhood Forum

Peter reported that last year the Neighbourhood Forum for Kings X became too big and there was not enough "juice" for it to work. Accordingly, Evtra decided to focus on Camley Street.

The Neighbourhood Forum (NF) is a legal entity under Localism Act. It gives Evtra traction and allows us to take charge of some of the planning strategy and some of the work done previously by council.

Peter has been talking to Camley businesses and feels the impetus for the NF is going well – they are very interested. We've collected signatures and sent our application to Camden planning to review. They sent back some suggestions.

We now have an application ready to go to turn us into a NF. By 10th July we'll submit to Camden council.

Peter circulated the draft application with the map. The group understands there's an overlapping of interests in business and residents.

Peter encourage people to sign up for the NF and noted there is a website where people can see the application. He reminded the group that signing just means you support the application to establish the NF – nothing else.

Evtra will continue. Having the NF means Evtra joins with Weavers Way and Camley businesses in a broader voice on planning in our area. The NF has its own single identity. The idea is to maintain a balance of interests and avoid a high rise Kings X situation. In Camley there are 1,500 people employed in 40 businesses.

Christian noted that Camley is in Kings X and HS2 firing line. We're keen on being neighbourly – we want to be welcomed. The wassailing event opened the NF dialogues. The businesses have an agenda and they're trying to defend people's livelihoods. Ed expressed appreciation to Christian for taking time to be with us.

HS2 Link will go across the Overground to the HS link to Europe. Camden is fighting it. Consultations will continue. If the Link goes ahead, all bridges will be rebuilt and widened. Construction supplies will be at top of Camley / Agar. This will mean big trucks and a lot more traffic going up Camley and dislodging companies north of the railway bridge. The position broadly is that Evtra needs to be heard but we don't have resources to lead. Others can do this. But if someone wants to be the HS2 liaison – let us know. We will need to register by 11th July to be an official consultee.

Evtra members on Barker drive could get more involved (being slightly nearer the tracks). There were questions about what will the noise be like – will we get double glazing? Peter doesn't have enough time. We need volunteers.

David – can we have another meeting in a week to decide how we will interact with HS2 consultation? Maeve, Dee Dee, Matt, Susan Bryan to get a date. A letter with signatures. Suggestions to make friends with Maiden Lane and Summers Town.

d. Garden Society

Garden Society is going strong. There's good interest. The bee hives are in place along the canal allotments (made possible by PfP funded from the Lottery). Bees to arrive 10th July.

e. Events

f. Communications

5. Any other business

6. Election of Committee

Nominations and seconds for committee membership

[Chair/Treasurer/Secretary/other volunteer members]

stand again - yes

8pm Close of meeting followed by drinks and nibbles