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Neighbourhood Association

Great Park Community Centre
Roseden Way
Great Park
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE13 9BD

Email: secretary@gpna.uk

Minutes of the First Meeting of the new Great Park Neighbourhood Association (GPNA) Committee with NCC, & the Great Park Consortium

Date: 26.01.2024

Time: 6:00 PM - 8.00 PM

Venue: Brunton Park First School, Roseden Way, Newcastle upon Tyne NE13 9BD

Present	Apologies	Absences
Jamie Robinson Ian Tew Sophie Cox Steven Mason Neil Collington Caitlin Smithson Donna Rawling Paul Cross Michael Forster (arrived 6.25) Consortium representatives David Abercrombie - Consortium Richard Cook – Persimmon NCC Representatives Louise Sloan – NCC James Cowan - NCC Pamela Holmes - NCC Susan Wannop - NCC Local Councillors Thom Campion – Castle Ward Ali Avei – Castle Ward Dan Greenock - representing Catherine McKinnel	Chris Clark Chris Dawson Claire Khan Sam Walton Robin Ashby Pauline Allen (apologies passed on via Sue Wannop)	



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1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting commenced at 6.05pm when all attendees were present.

All introduced themselves.

2. Resident Survey Feedback - GPNA

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1pwSVm5Deq9HMXx4mP1mydaT8DA9bsuiE/edit?usp=drive_web&oid=104770350128645181575&rtpof=true

The chair of GPNA presented the findings of the GPNA survey December 2023 – January 2024.

484 residents in the survey.

Key themes – communication and transparency, service charge and accountability, infrastructure completion and maintenance, improve public transport, inadequate street lighting, high service charges all reported to be areas of concern.

97.7% less than satisfied with communication from Manco. Highlighted work near Havannah school as an issue with example of gas works commencing without informing any residents that this was due to take place.

Only 6% satisfied with bus service and concerned over temporary bus stops being in place 12+ months after being established.

99% less than satisfied with service from Management agent – don't feel they are listened to, responded to.

Communication, feeling that there is no accountability, service provision, specific issues such as unfinished work, potholes etc.

There is confusion between consortium and Manco – who does what? (No response from the consortium on roles)



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Gosford home in different areas of the estate pay a different service charge.

The importance of developers needing to get across to sales team – that service charge is clearly explained to all new potential buyers especially with regards to houses of the same size paying more for their service charge dependent upon the cell they are buying their property in.

- Recommendations from the GPNA and survey results.

Clear and concise explanation of the service charge – what it is, how it is used, how residents can hold consortium to account being provided in proposed information to residents.

80% less than satisfied with variety of businesses in the town centre. Businesses being charged so much, similar rates to Gosforth High Street but without the footfall – reduce the rent, initiatives suggested to encourage business to open. (see presentation)

65% feel that crossings and paths are unsafe. (see presentation)

Examples given of easy wins e.g. path up to Havannah first school stops halfway up the left-hand side of Wagon Way Drive. If this was corrected residents would feel they are listened to and the consortium was actioning this concern, add road markings to key places e.g. Morrisons/Roseden – accidents at this junction that could have been avoided through sufficient road markings?

Example given from Facebook where contractors had parked on pathway to Havannah First school and parent couldn't get past with buggy. Although resolved this is a topic that occurs frequently across the estate.

Question from NCC – how many people was the questionnaire sent to?

Response from chair – not leaflet dropped due to not being able to access accounts to afford to pay for this and all responses online via social media. Newcastle University researcher contacted chair – will support with questions next time and an annual survey will be held to both gain a base line for progress and to show impact from consortium listening to and improving services across Great Park.



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Question from Persimmon representative – agreed was useful information and feedback. Expressed that they were here to listen. Happy to feedback to consortium and a focus on slide 11 was communicated – with main 5 items that needed urgent action. Chair expressed that we are happy for any progress to be made, even if it is one or two items initially.

Member of GPNA expressed that their conversations with residents, the main questions are - why are the roads and pavements in completed cells not finished/no top layer? Roseden way in particular incomplete – people have been living on this street 10+ years. Filling potholes on an unfinished road, what is the point? Has this come from resident's service charge money?

Consortium response – residents not paying for pothole filling. Service charge pays for areas in green on the website. Understands the confusion. Some cells topped off but said it is not consortium work. Roseden Way is big project and can't finish road as they'd need to do it again before adoption. David states construction traffic is still using this route. Some residents disagreed that this is no longer the case and there is no longer a need for a delay.

Consortium reiterated that they have prioritised Melbury to adopt first – consortium representative and NCC agreed that there had been more movement in 2-3 months than in DA's whole time on Great Park.

Consortium representative then explained the adoption process. Junctions 1-3 A1 to Sage would be the next to adopt.

Roseden way community centre to junction 6 would be next– a member of the team is looking at this.

Consortium representative stated that there is a big tender out to fix Roseden Way, lots of issues not just resurfacing e.g culverts to be replaced.

Spine Road – junctions 4-7 would be adopted following this.

Consortium stated they want the site adopted as it is a liability. Chair stated that if it's a liability why has this been the case on Melbury for the past 10 years?



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Consortium stated that they are paying for electricity, lights and gritting – not from resident's service charge money. They understand lighting is not adequate.

Persimmon and Taylor Wimpey recognised that now Rachel left her post they relooked at hiring. They decided to bring on new project manager for development works, this would then keep communication going with GPNA. Interviewing next week for project manager. This means there will be one point of contact for Consortium/managing agent/Manco. Interim managing agent has been appointed now.

Consortium stated that there is a full tender process for new management agent.

Can't allow whole GPNA group but management agent happy to have a selection of GPNA members to be part of meetings and appointment of management agents.

GPNA resident states that this process/procedure hasn't worked previously – so how is it going to work now? Wanting to support and assist where we can.

Consortium representative stated that the community's team which will improve engagement, will not just be one person responsible. Happy to communicate. GPNA stated that they were more than happy to support them with this.

Consortium member responded that governance process for Manco is set in stone but happy to look at GPNA members being involved.

3. Service Charge Information - GPNA

Chair delivered presentation based on the breakdown of service charges.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1IWgJTVOEGFK31tz3Z0h5IXm3duynMwU/edit?usp=s_haring&oid=104770350128645181575&rtpof=true&sd=true

Chair raised the 3 year trend increase and the significant increase of £137,200 to residents, and had the £74000 subsidy not been put in place for 2022 the income generated would have been £509,313.

Chair raised that the developer recharge costs have increased 39% or £29,374



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Chair raised that the landscaping and maintenance costs had increased 66% to £107,826 which was more than the subsidy amount given to residents.

Consortium response was that they will come back to us. Had meetings all day and as on holiday and wasn't able to look at figures in advance of the meeting.

Chair responded that knowing the figures is your role as director.

Consortium representative stated they would like time to digest the numbers before answering.

Chair explained reasons for looking into accounts for transparency. Audit of account information didn't match Rachel's numbers in January 2023. Rachel claimed dates were wrong on audit of account information and changed the spreadsheet so that it matched up in 20 days.

Consortium representative couldn't answer this on the spot due to not being the director at the time.

Consortium representative said they do audit accounts, they pay a professional to look at accounts, there has been no challenge from companies' house – so this is clear and transparent.

Chair questioned differences in cell G creditors, income, debtors, and expenditure as this did not match with income or expenditure of the Cell as shown on the audit of account information. (See presentation)

Consortium representative said he would need time to answer this.

Consortium representative said developers are subsidising and have done since the start. Consortium representative says he believes this is the only Taylor Wimpey site which does this.

Sage helped keep service charges low and now this income is missing.



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Consortium representative can't comment on Rachel. Sage signed TP1 contract. Commercial property needs to pay service charge and the loss of the sage impacted this. Service charge could have increased but the subsidy has kept this lower.

Chair raised that Advent homes have taken on the TP1 of the Sage and therefore should be paying the same amount as the Sage had in the past and didn't understand why this was now an issue? Consortium did not provide an answer on this.

Chair asked how the service charge is calculated.

Consortium stated that the service charge calculation is banded for the house, money each cell pays is based on the open space they've got in their cell, and the square footage of house. For example, a Gosford in cell G would pay more than Gosford in another cell. It is in proportion. Some have more direct open space in the cell, they will pay more.

Chair brought up numerous examples of similar house types with very different charges. If the two in the same band and cell are very different e.g. £270 versus £208 – if it based on square footage, how is this so different?

Consortium suggested they may owe money. As they've not seen their individual accounts.

Chair stated that the service charges sighted did not owe money to his knowledge and that the statements were for 2022.

Chair asked - Developer recharge costs: management fee – what does this cover?

Consortium representative must go back to accounts. But gave examples that it covers staffing, running costs, Rachel, and assistants.

Chair found it strange that the management fee covered wages as the staffing costs which are separate have also increased over the 3-year period 2020 to 2022 £32,117, £54,329, £80456...why was there such an increase in 2021, and in 2022, when only Rachel was available?



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Consortium responded that Rachel had an assistant. Stated he would have to look at numbers and accounts as he doesn't have that information. Chair asked who the assistant was as he had never seen or met them or been made aware of them. No answer from the consortium.

Consortium representative again reiterated that he can't answer these questions – as didn't have this information in advance and needs time to. Chair clearly stated that the agenda and information was sent out on Thursday (4 days prior to the meeting taking place).

Chair asked - PPO liability insurance – what does it cover? David responded that he believes this is insurance for the park and premiums are increasing.

Chair asked what a forward funding cost is – consortium representative couldn't comment.

Chair questioned the landscaping and maintenance for strategic open space. 2020 £46996, 2021 £46481, 2022 £80675.

Consortium representative couldn't answer this and expressed concerns about wanting to answer these questions accurately and couldn't without having the information in advance of the meeting.

Chair agreed to continue presentation but agreed that the consortium representative can veto further questions if they felt they would not be able to respond but others could add to the discussion if they felt they could.

Consortium representative clarified that; large area is strategic open place. Cell specific open space is local open space within that cell.

Chair asked that the map was coloured in differently to differentiate what was open space and local space so that figures could be 'drilled down' into more specifically.

Consortium representative suggested that he is aware the bin emptying cost is significant.



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Discussion over policing play parks – can only residents use them? NCC and consortium agreed that this is difficult to police.

Consortium representative stated that Great Park was meant to be handed over to local authorities, but guidance changed.

Discussion over play parks being accessible for all, including those with SEND.

Consortium representative stated community centre wanted to work on SEND, need a working group to support this. Sue happy to work with the working group.

GPNA resident asked why SEND play parks weren't considered when building. Consortium responded saying that they built the park meeting the exact specifications.

SUDS system – when will they be adopted by NCC? In 2022 big increase in charges – this was due to extra work. All maintenance of suds will always be charged by the management company. Residents pay for SUDS.

Litter picking – questions over the costs £49820 to empty bins, cell G is £4284 per bin (see powerpoint). £800 per year for LA per annum.

Consortium stated bins were being removed from other estates to avoid these costs and issues. This was to put the responsibility of looking after litter to the resident. Chair suggested that bins are removed from the Great Park if it saves £50,000 of residents service charge money.

GPNA resident stated they've never seen litter picker on GP. They have seen many residents and children litter picking.

Sue/consortium has asked the council to empty bins. Council responded that they didn't have the capacity to do this.

Consortium gave example of tendered site in Carlisle 3 bins - £500 per week.

In terms of grounds maintenance - IDM 1/3 cheaper than any other.

Managing agent was outsourced to try and deliver better value for money.



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Chair said transparency was needed e.g. residents need to be notified we went out to tender to 3 people and went with this for best deal.

Chair questioned the increase of money in community facilities – community centre increased £45,549, £57,193, £100,525 – it is run like a business – booking rooms etc. Why do they now need to raise money/funds to create a sensory room? No answer provided to this question.

Open question over why lighting is in the breakdown of service charge costs, when consortium said this is covered by developers, as well as potholes?

Consortium response – the only roads and lighting that comes from Manco is strategic routes. Path lighting not road lighting.

Images of roads/drainage, lighting without tops – which residents stated had been like this for at least 5 years.

Consortium representative questioned where the lights not topped were positioned. (Bridle Path) Says they are trying to solve this. However, as these paths are unfinished therefore not adopted by management company.

GPNA resident questioning that it doesn't matter it isn't adopted, it just isn't finished.

Consortium representative stated that new bridges have been purchased for these routes too.

Park and ride and round back of playing pitches, planning permission is in but takes a long time.

GPNA resident – we have seen that the bridge with un-topped lights has been left, you say this is planning permission. Question over who we need to contact or talk to and find solutions? How long has Greenside been built? If this is a route into Greenside – it should be finished.

NCC responded that the planning is a live application. Process doesn't have a timeline, information is reviewed, need to go to developers, to and planning permission takes a long time.



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GPNA questioned planning permission for a park but only half a path – surely planning permission would also account for a path?

Resident stated they checked documentation on NCC website – Great Park needed to have strategic routes in place before building, feels this has not been adhered to.

Consortium representative stated many incidents of planning permission haven't gone through due to third party opposition.

GPNA resident questioned whether this is due to the planning permission being in green belt land? Consortium responded no.

Chair questioned representatives about accountability – lady fell out of wheelchair due to unfinished paths/lighting. Health and safety wise – how have these occurrences been allowed?

TP1 agreement states they will cleanse roads and cells. It was stated that we are not paying service charge for this, and developers responsible for this. Chair showed images of parking bays full of dirt that are never cleansed and asked when they will be cleansed. No answer provided.

Chair questioned where £100,000 charge is going for lights, roads and drainage? Consortium needed more time to answer but clarified this funding is for paths. Chair questioned that if the funding is for paths, why are so many not finished or end or haven't been completed. No answer provided.

Discussion over bollards on pathways due to cars driving down paths/cars. Concerns over safety.

Chair questioned why we need to sign an NDA to see account information, would like to see audit of accounts done independently.

GPNA resident states there's no audit of accounts by UNW.

Consortium responded that UNW – tendered, accounts set out the type of audit. UNW are independent. Consortium not questioning credibility of UNW.



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Consortium stated that an NDA needs to be signed as it is commercially sensitive information. There are rules in place to protect them. Resident questioned why other new build estates don't need to do this. Consortium says this is how the process is set up and how it has always been. GPNA questioned over whether it can be independently audited – consortium doesn't see the need.

GPNA resident stated NDA isn't appropriate as legally we are allowed to take copies and give to an accountant. Consortium wasn't sure on this. Chair asked if the consortium would be happy for an independent audit of accounts. Consortium did not oppose or confirm that this could take place.

Consortium states UNW do full account process and was tendered.

Chair clarified that residents just want transparency.

Chair happy to meet again and suggested a 2 monthly meeting, and at the next meeting requested that the consortium answer all questions that have not been addressed in the meeting this evening. Wanting the consortium to show that they have addressed each point that has been raised.

Consortium moving forward – want to bring GPNA on pre-tender pack and appointment of project manager. This will cover accounts, performance indicators and many points mentioned tonight.

GPNA resident brought up issues list, which was on Great Park website, which was useful and transparent. Consortium stated that this was becoming a 'beast' to deal with. Chair stated that as builders they must have sales targets, work list for houses and surely a work list of issues around the Great Park would not be as taxing. No further answer given.

Consortium funding a new member of staff and management company – consortium wanted to meet monthly with GPNA, expressed that they want to work with us.

4. Great Park – Park & Ride – GPNA / NCC (20 minutes)



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Chair requested an update regarding the funds proposed for the Great Park - Park and Ride site from NCC and how these will be utilised with a full breakdown of costs estimated to be at £818,000

Chair asked for FOI and still feels questions not answered regarding this.

FOI is with colleagues in transport. NCC representative said this was chased up today but has not been able to get it but will endeavour to update as soon as they can.

DD hasn't been signed – the work with this funding is linked to the high school. Work is on the park and ride as there's no pickup and drop off, no room to put this in place nearer the schools. Money is making a change to the park and ride to create on site bus bays for scholar buses. Internal paths into park and ride. Paths to connect park and ride to schools. CIL is not paid by Great Park residents; it is meant to deliver strategic infrastructure. It is not for or about maintenance or paths. This is facilitating delivery of school. So, school can operate as it should.

Chair asked why this funding is being spent on consortium land and being paid to the consortium who are also the developers. GPNA member also asked whether this is being taken from NCC, why do they not do this for other things.

NCC response was that they have to justify spending, and it is used on other housing sites around rugby ground in Kingston Park.

Money is in a pool pot, to deliver strategic infrastructure.

Chair would like to know how they come to this cost when it hasn't been approved – NCC representative is happy to send plans to chair.

If money isn't spent it goes back into the pot.

Money is for the school not for paths but can understand frustrations with residents about footpaths around the estate etc and so much money being spent on this.

5. Updates from NCC regarding adoption with the consortium – GPNA / NCC (10 minutes)



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Chair asked for an update regarding adoption, Section 278, and Section 38 road agreements as these are not in place after an FOI agreement. Who is responsible for ensuring the roads are brought to adoption standard and the cost is not put onto residents? Chair also asked for an update regarding the adoption timeline for Melbury and the Great Park.

Consortium stated that there are plenty of developments where developers have left roads.

Section 278 Timeline – NCC say they are working through the adoption process but looking to advance as quickly as possible. They stated that Melbury will be adopted within this financial year. Also stated that the agreements were present and would be shared soon as the initial FOI request has not gone to the right person.

NCC is now also working better with the consortium to adopt other areas and has appointed NCC contractors.

Chair clarified with NCC/Consortium that they were saying that the process has been sped up because the consortium is now using NCC contractors rather than third parties. Both NCC and consortium agreed that this was now the case.

NCC stated as it was public expense – needs to be managed carefully. 3-4 million pounds for roads in the whole city.

Getting sit to adoption standards/completing inspections – this is what NCC are working towards.

NCC can see benefit of being adopted.

GPNA resident – November leaflet drop from local councillor on Melbury, NCC contractors don't have capacity to deliver on adopted roads.

Consortium/NCC feel that this was misinterpreted information.

NCC agreed that communication needs to be improved.



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Melbury residents upset that councillors from Parklands cannot attend meetings and feel unsupported.

Street lighting huge frustration for consortium, GPNA residents reported lights, that open spaces say they will investigate, nothing happened. It is highlighted as finished 'pink' on letter from councillor.

Consortium responded that in the last 2 weeks, heads for the light have come into stock.

They stated they are now able to appoint the council street lighting contractor to put streetlights in place.

Consortium feels that they are in a stronger place in the last 3 months than they have for last 5 years in terms of adoption.

Question from GPNA resident to NCC is there a timeline with dates? NCC responded that there is no adoption timeline. It is open ended.

Chair stated that Great Park is due to be finished in 2030, does this mean adoption would take place once developers left site? NCC/Consortium stated that the adoption processes are tricky and this wouldn't be the case.

GPNA resident stated that after 20 years on Melbury it still isn't adopted.

Adoption process – is tricky.

Consortium says they signed agreements section 38 and 278s. Chairs NCC FOI request said that this was not. Member of staff from NCC says a member of staff is on long term sick and this may have slipped through the cracks.

6. Updates from the Consortium regarding adoption and ongoing works on the Great Park. (10mins)

No time.

13. Any Other Business (AOB) (20mins)



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No time.

13. Adjournment

Consortium happy to meet with GPNA representatives monthly.

GPNA representatives to meet new managing agent within the month and new project manager.

Meeting planned with all representatives 2 months from now. Monday is best for majority.

NCC representative asked for spreadsheet with service charges. Chair directed them where to find this.

Meeting adjourned at 08.16.