



# Hanover & Elm Grove Communities Forum

14<sup>th</sup> September 2023 – 6.30pm  
Phoenix Community Centre (and online)

*Meeting chaired by David Gibson (HEG Deputy Chair)  
Minutes taken by Jerome Cox-Strong (HEG Secretary)*

## ***In Attendance (online attendees are indicated by an asterisk\*)***

**David Gibson** (HEG Deputy Chair), **Jerome Cox-Strong** (HEG Secretary, Pankhurst Area Community Association, Pankhurst Pantry), **Simon Bannister** (BHCC Community Engagement), **Wei Lee** (HEG Forum Committee Member, Friends of William Clarke Park), **Fiona Wright** (HEG Forum Committee Member), **Dinah Clarke** (HEG Co-Treasurer, Hanover Action), Cllr Maureen Wilder (Lab), **Vanessa Cox-Pendray** (HEG Co-Treasurer, Lower North East Hanover Residents), **Chris** (HEG Committee Member, Lower North East Hanover Residents), **Nick** (Lower North East Hanover Residents), **Cllr Tim Rowkins** (Lab, BHCC Environment Committee Chair), **Alexia Lazou** (Hanover Community Association), **Tina Cox\*** (Resident, local Lab), **Ceza Da Luz\*** (TDC).

## ***Apologies***

**Sarah McCarthy** (HEG Chair, Phoenix Residents' Association, Phoenix Food Shop), **PCSO Chris Browning** (Sussex Police), **PCSO Bonnie Scovell** (Sussex Police), **Les Gunbie** (Hanover Action), **Cllr Ty Galvin** (Lab), **Cal Chester** (TDC)

## **1 - Welcome/Introductions**

**David Gibson** introduced meeting.

*(NB – Updates on projects were given at end of meeting.)*

## **2 - Police Update**

*(NB – Notes provided by **PCSO Bonnie Scovell** and **PCSO Chris Browning** were read by **Jerome Cox-Strong** in their absence.)*

"On speaking with some residents near the alleyway of Hanover Terrace / Hanover Street which has raised concerns in the past, this does not appear to have materialised over the summer period. Foot patrols are ongoing in that area along with the rear of Phoenix Art Centre which have previously been mentioned.

I would like to raise an issue relating to scams – this time relating to a building scam in which a local elderly resident was told the entire roof needed replacing on their property,

when this was not in fact the case. Police are investigating with Trading Standards. Look out for your neighbours.”

**Dinah** – Steven O’Connell has been in contact to create a speedwatch group. Four other volunteers have come forward to support project. Albion Hill/Scotland Street considered as one location to monitor.

### **3 - Nursery Allotment**

**David** – Discussion of deserted plot of land owned by council in lower north-east Hanover; some residents have expanded their gardens onto area.

**Simon** – Important to have full conversation. Simon has arranged site visits for all ward councillors. Conversations have taken place with 4 or 5 residents to gauge views. Site visit has also taken place with BHCC Biodiversity Officer (Kim Dawson) to examine uses that align with nature conservation practices. Environmental Education Officer also due to visit to consider possibilities for site to be centre of environmental education in future. Kim Dawson examined tree types, biodiversity records and environmental records. Bottom line is to preserve as a space for nature, shouldn’t take any action that compromises existing habits, tree canopies etc. But encourages non-intrusive management plan to look at site for conservation purposes, reinforcing site boundaries (inc. suitable boundary treatments). Negative use has taken place to date (builders disposing of materials for example) so key to enforce boundaries. Practical ways to enhance and improve exist – a small pond has potential if wetland is increased. Also possibilities of bat boxes and bird boxes, other installations. Non-native species have developed in space over years, so space can be improved. Council does not have resources for blind project, needs purpose/objective remit to go forward. Simon approached outdoor education team and Sussex Wildlife Trust, who have been positive about possibilities for outdoor education. Council plans encourage access for all schools to green space; would satisfy this for Fairlight School, which is approximately 3 minutes away from space and would benefit. Simon is interested in gathering info from those with expertise within council.

**Dinah** questioned whether Fairlight fell inside boundaries. Other attendees confirmed school is in HEG boundaries.

**David** also confirmed that St Martins and Elm Grove are within the boundaries.

**Simon** confirmed that from perspective of council no decision has been made yet, still looking at information gathering.

**Vanessa** congratulated Simon on work to date. Doesn’t want to give schools false hope so encouraged by developments so far.

**Nick** – Some residents are interested in the space. One option discussed is public or community garden space. During meetings to discuss, De Montfort Road residents have

been opposed to this idea. Nick asked if residents interested in helping to maintain space would be beneficial.

**Simon** confirmed this would be part of the preliminary model he envisages: local residents working with schools, area to maintain and deliver activities as ongoing.

**Maureen** – Consultation has been very effective. Wants to make sure that more schools than just Fairlight would have access, Simon confirms all schools in area would have access.

**Jerome** raised previous discussions that have taken place with Forum Committee over possible use as community food growing allotment.

**Simon** confirmed that Kim Dawson has said that introducing growing/allotment space would likely be too intrusive and more work than possible, so unlikely this would be a possible use for whole/part of space.

**Simon** – Value of nature has resonated with residents, badgers, foxes and birds have been identified as present in discussions. Mentions resident of 35 years who remembers threats to build and court case when originally moving in. Friends of the Earth and others advocated successfully for protection as green space. At this time, Darren (resident on De Montfort) bought a large plot of original space but rest remains council-owned. Also noted previous uses including horse and cart drawn community market. Simon reiterates hazards of space (broken glass etc.), but says this can be managed if green space as paths can be plotted accordingly.

**Chris** relayed that he has experienced pushback from residents over security, in terms of general public access. Also concerns about disrupting habitat in discussions. Praises Simon for meeting with best people and work on opening conversations up.

**Simon** confirmed no money available yet but with purpose, he is encouraged funds will be successfully procured.

**Tim** addressed point about fly tipping: needs to be addressed regardless of eventual use. Key to secure perimeter in localised areas where fly tipping from street is possible. Difficulty he foresees is unofficial expansion of gardens that has taken place to date – cannot allow this for some as this would create problematic precedent that others could raise complaint about.

**Simon** hoped that those living around site would want to help improve space and work with space.

**Tim** – Would always take the view that gentle, collaborative conversation would be better than more aggressive approach later on.

**Vanessa** – Local wildlife is not imprisoned (have been sightings of badgers etc. outside of space), so reinforcing perimeter will not trap wildlife.

Next steps: **Simon** raises possibility to talk to Tim and Environment Committee for paper/proposal to allow trigger of conversations with other parts of council (Property Team etc.) Intends to come back to Forum with update at next meeting.

#### **4 – GoodGym**

**David** – GoodGym are due to visit on Tues 19<sup>th</sup> September. Previously project engagement took place more randomly with community groups; intention now is for systematic approach that takes into account community groups and their wishes. David asks for suggestions.

**Nick** – Weed clearing has taken place on Chester Terrace.

**David** suggested council does not currently have capacity to weed at necessary rate.

**Nick** raised Wellington Road as a possible location.

**Wei** mentioned resident near William Clarke Park with property issues that could do with being cleaned up. Forum unsure that GoodGym could support private rather than public action. Wei indicates the resident is also happy to help with other activities if directed to location.

**David** indicated that GoodGym visit likely to be around 6.30pm on the Tuesday.

**Simon** has pavement-scraping hoes.

**Tim** – During campaign, weed did not come up as discussion point. It is a problem but not a hot button topic, question of priorities. Council focus is on keeping footways clear. Tree suckers have not been kept on top of due to overwhelmed parks team, can be conflated with weeds when people raise issues. Especially prevalent on Elm Grove where close to becoming safety/visible issue. Has been in discussing with streets team, no issue with residents maintaining, but have to be wary of transmitting Elm disease.

**David** asked what implements needed to act on tree suckers.

**Tim** has access to necessary equipment. Happy to move forward on Forum's behalf.

**Vanessa** highlighted that issue impacts bus stops in area.

**Fiona** asked if any litter picking is needed as has equipment. No suggestions of specific litter picking from group.

**Nick** – Issue with bins at bottom of Franklin Road, asks if any way to build better community pride in getting residents to take better care of refuse in this area.

**David** confirmed this is beyond scope of Good Gym.

**Dinah** indicated that she hopes that with council engagement from Tim and Environment Committee can lead to 'Lewes-style' approach to pavement refuse collection, keeping sacks inside house until bin day rather than immediately putting bags out. Suggests pilot, as issue is with refuse team approach, says she will email Tim to discuss.

**Nick** suggested that this is a common issue that has arisen at LNEH area meetings.

**Tim** – enforcement about to begin for those leaving bins on street where outdoor footprint exists. Issue is with Hanover where limited space exists outside houses. David confirms there is bylaw but not enforced.

**Fiona** queried what the Council's exact enforcement rules are.

**Tim** confirmed that where front garden/front/side space where bins could 'reasonably be removed from pavement', residents need to use this.

**Nick** – Neighbours to resident mentioned by Wei have complained due to pigeon-feeding in basements. David reassures that no one will be feeding animals. Wei will clarify, and David will check with GoodGym as to their willingness to participate in cleaning activities around that property.

**Fiona** – Is plan to repeat system for visits to Forum to clarify potential activities?

**David** confirmed hope for GoodGym coordinator (possible Committee members) to take charge of formal arrangement for visits.

Forum confirms date is fixed. **David** will coordinate depending on how many volunteers attend.

**Tina** – how often are GoodGym planning to visit in future?

**David** clarifies highest frequency has been monthly, but more likely to be every 6 weeks.

## **5 - Community Defibrillators**

**Jerome** explained interest in issue. As part of role as first aider at Pankhurst Pantry, has noticed severe absence of defibrillators in local area – previously closest were as far as Bevendean and the County Hospital, now there are ones in place at Queen's Park Tennis Club and St. Martins School, but still a large blind spot across Hanover and Queens Park. Interest is firstly in mapping existing plans that groups have that have not been shared with others. Jerome mentioned discussions that took place on Facebook recently

suggesting Hanover Community Association may be planning to install one. Jerome asked Alexia if this was accurate.

**Alexia** indicated that there were no plans that she was aware of.

**Jerome** confirmed intention to develop coordinated approach. Plan is to approach different community spaces/groups with fixed locations who may be able to host where possible. Jerome clarified that he is talking about external, publicly available defibrillators. He has identified that there are internal, non-public defibs located at Elm Grove School, St. Lukes Swimming Pool and Brighton General (BG one is incredibly inaccessible; Jerome visited their Community Services team, who suggested only one on site in behind 2<sup>nd</sup> floor unmarked door and only available for a couple hours a day with a key), but key goal is to install enough public defibs to cover area.

**Fiona** asked about Jerome's awareness of range, and spread, and asked about awareness of funding opportunities.

**Jerome** confirmed that he has researched both aspects. Jerome indicated that the recommended range is for defibrillators to be available within 200m, so he has developed preliminary map of possible locations that would ensure almost all of Hanover, Elm Grove and Queen's Park had access to defib in this range. Locations he has considered to date that would fulfil this objective are: Phoenix Community Centre, Hanover Community Centre, St. Joseph's Church, Elm Grove School (an additional external defib), The Edge Community Centre, Brighton General Hospital, as well as St Luke's Church and School in Queen's Park ward. On funding, Jerome reported on two options he is engaged with: government fund for community defibs that is currently taking expressions of interest, and BHF funding window that is approaching in October. Suggested that other options could be considered in addition, as these would be unlikely to deliver the overall number of defibs being targeted: mentions possible crowdfunding options. Jerome asked Tim if council funding could exist to support this?

**Tim** was unsure of whether council funding exists.

**Simon** mentioned that a number of disused telephone boxes could be used to house defibrillators.

**Fiona** encouraged Jerome to discuss with local BHF representatives as part of plans, and praised plan overall.

**Jerome** agreed to contact BHF reps, and asked if any objections from meeting, or if meeting could take this as endorsement of proposal.

Meeting supported Jerome's proposal.

**David** recalled motion to former Councillor Nancy Platts to full Council in past, that discussed defibrillators.

**Jerome** agreed to look into this motion as part of plans. Confirmed next steps will be reaching out to possible groups and building plan. Reiterated long-term intention to develop materials to be displayed across area giving information on where defibs are located alongside actual installation of defibs.

## **6 – Any Other Business**

**Jerome** provided financial summary. Confirmed that contact has been made with Robbie Chalmers from Metro Bank to start process of setting up HEG Forum bank account. Documents have been provided to Robbie to follow guidance given by Ceza on smoothest practice. Jerome, Sarah, David, Dinah, and Vanessa have been nominated to undergo verification process, the latter four as the planned bank signatories, and Jerome for best practice as a Committee Member. Jerome, Sarah, Dinah and Vanessa met in week before to discuss bank account, with agreement of best practices for maintaining account and records -- Dinah will maintain records as co-Treasurer. Jerome also provided updates on details of prospective account; it had previously been thought that banking would be paper-only, but Jerome has confirmed that account would include online banking in some form, which will support HEG Forum tracking. Jerome also highlighted the possible perk that the account includes unlimited free giant cheques for grant awards.

**Ceza** confirmed Robbie's reliability, hoped that process will be smooth now contact has been made.

### **Feedback from groups**

**Wei** – Friends of the Patch: just had weekend event on Saturday. Event went very well despite heat. Made approx. £2500 in takings and £1000 in donations. 27% were returning customers. GoodGym supported event (FOTP Committee member is GoodGym member).

**Alexia** – Hanover Community Association: Beer Festival is upcoming, Festival is major fundraiser. Previously coordinated by volunteer Gill, but process is being transferred to Laura (new Centre Manager) as part of her role. Tickets are now being sold online and locally as previously. Looking for volunteers (volunteers receive t-shirt, food vouchers, free drink). Volunteer evening taking place on 29<sup>th</sup> September 7.30pm at Hanover Centre, people can volunteer to be involved on either event. Tim confirmed he will be in strong support, queries how to sponsor barrels. Alexia confirmed it can be anybody – businesses, organisations, individuals. For all sponsorships, name goes on barrel, A3 poster, and programme also disseminated. £50 for sponsorship in past. Fiona queried length of volunteering on evening as only available for short time; Alexia confirmed ideal for whole evening volunteering (due to safety talk prior to opening) but encourages Fiona to get in touch.

**Nick** – Lower North East Hanover Residents Association: Raised discussion of opening up of rail tunnel. Explorations have taken place. Interested in talking to Tim/council over current use/possible use. Tim will find out what council has in place.

**Dinah** – Hanover Action: planning a Water Day (info on trees, water collection). HA is focused on information distribution. Interested in commissioning trees and other environmental aspects.

**Vanessa** – Interested in replacing planters on Elm Grove with new but same size planters. Simon suggests contacting David Fisher (Highways Team). Maureen confirms advice received from city parks, will forward to Vanessa.

**David** – Phoenix: Launch event tomorrow of Neighbourhood Action Plan, signing will take place. Gallery event Friday 15<sup>th</sup> 4pm. Wei clarifies boundaries, David confirms Food Shop and NAP boundaries are different: Food Shop has wider

**Jerome** – Pankhurst Area Community Association & Pankhurst Pantry: Pantry has seen slightly reduced numbers over last few weeks, but remains open to taking new service users on where needed. Jerome reiterated PP best practice is to welcome anyone in area to visit at least once, then can discuss whether other locations are better geographically for user or if they would like to continue using PP long-term. Encouraged anyone in need of support to be directed to Pankhurst Pantry. Jerome also updated on behalf of PACA; following AGM expanded committee now in place. Jerome and Emma Reeves now co-Chairs, Amy remains as Treasurer and others also taking an active role. Indicated that plan for more activities is being developed, encouraged anyone interested in using space to get in touch. Jerome also highlighted plans to clean up May Road and other areas.

**Ceza** – Trust for Developing Communities: TDC AGM on October 11<sup>th</sup> including Community Champions awards at the Brighthelm. Ceza has more details if anyone is interested. Jerome confirms Daisy was successfully nominated.

**Jerome** confirms next meeting will take place on 12<sup>th</sup> October.