



Windmill Estate Maintenance Company (WEMC)

Annual General Meeting - Minutes

Tuesday 14th October 2025 – 7.30pm

Present

Rob Hey (RH) – Acting Chairman
Ann Hester (AH) – Secretary
Ann Noke (AN) – Director
Alice Ramcharran (AR) – Director
David Powell (DP) – Director
Michael Monk (MM) – Director
Paul Hester (PH) - Estate Manager
Louise King (LK) – Administrator
Scott Engel (SE) – Works Contractor
Approximately 13 WEMC residents.

Apologies

Paula Murphy (PM) – Director

1. Introductions

RH opened the meeting by thanking the numerous residents from around the estate for attending and introduced himself and the committee members as above. RH advised, that two committee members, Michael Monk who had served on the committee for over 30 years and Gill Richardson, would be stepping down. He went on to thank them for their service and asked for any new volunteers who would be willing to join the committee and help spread the load.

2. Estate Background

AH started by explaining that she had been involved with WEMC for the past 25 years because she wanted to contribute something to the community.

She then went on to talk about the estate and how it was started in 1968 and continued in various phases until 1972. She advised the maintenance fee back then was £10 a year which was quite high considering the average wage about £24-25 a week. She spoke about the residential dynamics and how popular the estate is with estate agents and how the condition of the estate contributes to its popularity and keeps prices buoyant.

3. Maintenance Fee

AH explained how the maintenance company administer the annual maintenance fee and how they have tried to keep the costs low but still maintain the greens, forecourts, certain walls, steps, around 90 trees, some footpaths and a few legacy fences. She also explained that for many years the fees we had charged hadn't covered the rising costs of maintaining the estate and therefore we would now have to play catch-up. She explained that the trees are getting older, the footpaths are cracking and the infrastructure is struggling as the estate gets older, and along with the challenges we are now facing which include our ever-changing weather patterns, our costs are going to increase. She also advised that the fee that we charge is a lot lower than other estates and hoped that the residents understood that what WEMC, all made up of volunteers, do for that money is really good value.

She went on to explain how WEMC on behalf of the residents had battled to retain the estates' streetlights, fought for the resurfacing of Georges Hill, obtained a grant from Hughenden Parish Council for 20% of our footpath repair costs until March 2026, get involved in many meetings including those with Hughenden Parish Council and chase Bucks Council to carry out their responsibilities which include graffiti, road and pavement repairs etc.

She advised that during the year, over and above the usual maintenance, WEMC had resurfaced the entire footpath around the bungalows at the top of Georges Hill along with some patch repairs at a cost of £15,000, removed some dead trees, cut back the preserved oaks behind the church, cut conifers and removed one on top green, removed a wasp nest, tidied bollards, cleared up ivy, collected fallen leaves in autumn and removed moss

during winter months. Due to increasing costs, the number of grass cuts and strims have been reduced to fit our budget.

4. Accounts

RH explained that due to a delay with the accounts they wouldn't be published until later in the year and will be put on our website. He went on to provide an explanation of the expenditure chart that was provided and how WEMC are now trying to forecast what we will need in the future and the maintenance fees we will charge. He explained that 13 years out of the last 20, the fee hadn't been increased but with hindsight the fee should have been increased year on year rather than the big increase we had this year, so we could get our finances up-to-date and cover the increasing costs.

He advised 361 properties out of the 363 had paid their maintenance fee this year. 12 of those residents pay by cheque which unfortunately costs us money to pay in, he went on to thank all residents who do pay by bank transfer.

AH went on to provide a detailed breakdown of the chart headings:

Green – Groundskeeping includes: maintenance, forecourt tidying, various repairs, grass and hedge cutting and clearing away, tree surgery, estate management. She explained that some of the jobs we were hoping to do last year have had to be put through to this year as we didn't have the money.

Pink – Administration includes: insurances, licenses, website & computer costs, virus protection, accountants, legal fees, Company's house annual return, land registry documents, postage, printing, banking charges along with the services of an administrator. We have also become a member of the FSB, Federation of Small Businesses.

Blue line – Maintenance fee that we receive.

She advised that at the end of the year, if we managed to do all the jobs we hope to be able to do this year, we will be £5,000 in deficit so we will be eating into our reserves. She put out a request for help with delivering our newsletters, printing, laminating, social media etc

SE asked if the Groundskeeping included the footpath repairs, which AH confirmed it did. He also suggested that we should provide a detailed breakdown on the chart so residents could understand and appreciate where the money was actually spent. [LK to update the chart.](#)

A resident asked how comfortable WEMC are with their reserve amount, she felt it didn't look healthy enough, she understood that WEMC had tried to make savings where possible but presumably the fees would have to be put up again to increase the reserves. AH agreed and explained that over the years we had eaten into the reserves to carry out some of the work that was required, meaning that our reserves would have to increase to deal with any future emergencies.

SE brought up the state of the trees on the estate and that a lot had been done to them over the last 5 years. RH advised there are 90 trees on the estate and as they need to be removed due to disease or being unsafe, we will not be replacing them until we get them down to a more manageable number. SE advised that it was important to replace some but with species that are not going to grow too big, as the trees make the estate.

5. Condition of the Estate and General Maintenance

AH advised that we are aware of the tarmac situation on the estate and that some areas are not ideal. We have been made aware that when some residents replace their fences that back on to our alleyways the contractor does not put right the damage that is caused to the alley; we would ask residents to be mindful and arrange for any damage to be repaired.

She went on to explain that we try to keep the areas where people walk as clean, safe and trip free as we can but it is never going to be perfect because we don't have the money.

RH advised that the public footpath that runs through the estate isn't owned by WEMC and has been maintained by SE in the past at SE's and WEMC's expense. Unfortunately, SE and WEMC cannot afford to do this any longer and therefore we are going to have to rely on the council to maintain it from now on. A resident asked what

they would need to do once the weeds start growing. PH advised that David Carroll, a Bucks Councillor, has suggested that PH surveys the whole footpath and puts together a report for him to take to Bucks Council and try and get them to step up and maintain it. PH suggested he waits until spring/summer when the weeds start to grow again as it has been well maintained by us til now. SE pointed out that the tarmac is failing and thought the survey should be done sooner rather than later to get it on the council list for Council to carry out their own survey. RH suggested more people should complain via 'FixMyStreet' to get any problems to the top of the list. It was also suggested that the school is approached for their help and all the parents that walk along that path complain too.

PH provided an update and explained his role. The main part of his role is litter picking and reporting back, he picks up about 50 large bags of litter a year and a lot of that comes from Georges Hill rather than the periphery roads. The bins on the shop forecourt shops overflow as they are not emptied often enough by Bucks Council – this can be reported on FixMyStreet. He reports anything that he thinks is of interest to WEMC, such as a problem with a tree, hedge or alleyway. Any other issues which aren't WEMC's responsibility, he will report on FixMyStreet where possible.

The role has changed quite quickly over the last year and whilst FixMyStreet is a really good tool, you do need a lot of patience. Some jobs are dealt with quickly; some take a lot longer and some jobs they refuse to do. The more people who report on the site will help get the jobs done quicker.

PH has spoken with residents who have a problem and sometimes talks to the residents who are causing the problem to help resolve the situation. He has also spoken to residents who live on Primrose Hill and Windmill Lane that back on to our estate about the effect their hedges and trees have on access to our alleyways.

He has dealt with a wasp's nest in the ground at the entrance of Cowslip forecourt, Bucks Council wanted £70 to attend, he solved it for £7. He has also joined WERA, Windmill Estate Residents Association, they have their meetings once a month, he advised that they are desperately short of volunteers and asked if anyone wanted to volunteer and the benefits of joining, you get to find out what is happening around the outskirts of the estate, for example building works etc. RH advised that WERA are pushing Bucks Highways regarding putting in a chicane to stop people speeding through the village and to cope with the traffic from the Terriers Estate using our road as a rat-run.

PH explained that we now have a Risk Register in place, which is updated regularly, and as a result if there is a trip hazard it is sprayed with yellow paint and if it is a big trip hazard it will also have a traffic cone placed on it whilst we decide how we can proceed, if finances allow.

PH also helps Linda Derrick who supplied the three barrels of flowers located at the parade and maintains them.

A resident asked if PH reported the paper mess that is left after the recycling collection. PH advised that he hasn't but decided to litter pick 2 days after collection in the hope that residents would pick up the mess after the collection which the majority do. SE asked if the council could take over responsibility of the 3 bins that WEMC are responsible for, PH advised that 1 already appears on 'FixMyStreet' but the council do not empty it. SE suggested that all 3 WEMC litter bins are removed as people have used these to dump their rubbish, as it may save money and mess. It is doubtful this would prove a useful exercise.

6. Street Lights

PH explained that Linda Derrick was a councillor for Hughenden Parish Council (HPC) and about 2 years or so ago had told us that HPC were going to turn off the street lights and remove them so they could never be used again. RH, PH and Linda attended several HPC meetings and managed to get the decision overturned and agree that HPC owned them and would maintain them. PH suggested to HPC that they should adopt a system of rolling replacement as they are not maintaining or replacing them. They replaced 3 lights last year, 2 more were replaced last week but they have now changed their policy and will only replace street lights when they fail or if they have less than 12 months perceivable life. There is a professional audit scheduled for 26/27, they are supposed to carry out a professional audit every 5 years, which we need to push for.

A resident asked why were they trying to remove the lights considering we are an urban area, PH advised that they were trying to save money because we are one of the few places in their ward that have street lights. RH advised that we will attend a HPC meeting next year to make sure they know what they have got to do and have it Minuted when this full inspection is done, so that we can keep track of it.

PH went on to explain that there was a procedure put in place to report faults and they are now being fixed. A sticker has been placed on all street lights with HPC's reporting telephone number. PH asked that he is also informed so he can chase repairs.

Linda Derrick reminded the committee that sometime ago the council agreed to clean the street lights which has never been done and it would be worth writing to the council to remind them of that. The recommendation by the council was for 3 street lights to be replaced, the council has cut the street light budget and only replaced 2. PH advised that he agreed to that, as to get all 3 replaced it would have had to go to full council and we didn't feel that that would be voted through and if we stuck with 2 street lights the Environmental Services committee could pass it without going to full council, which is what happened.

Linda Derrick also pointed out that it wasn't the council that agreed to change its policy on street lights it was a committee and a committee can't change the policy of the council. The council agreed there would be this rolling programme of replacement, the committee agreed that the replacement would only take place if a street light fails or it was within 12 months of the end of its life. She suggested that WEMC goes back and asks about the cleaning and points out that the policy can't be changed until the council decides to change it, it's not for a committee to change it.

7. IT

DP advised that the website had been updated last year and the documents are updated and all the information required is on there. AH updates Facebook with what's going on and where. DP pointed out that the more involvement residents have the better. AH put out a request for young people to join the committee to help out with social media. DP advised that we are still trying to gather residents email addresses to enable WEMC to maintain contact and in the hope that in the future we may be able to cut back on delivery/printing costs.

RH again asked for more volunteers and explained that they would not be required to attend every meeting, which are held once a month. He also asked for more help and support in the hope of keeping costs down and to spread the load.

AH advised that we keep residents updated via Facebook, newsletters and the WERA magazine.

8. Thank you

RH thanked everyone for attending.

9. Election of Officers

The remaining 5 existing committee members stood down as a whole and all stood again for re-election. This was proposed by Donald Cox of Honeysuckle Road and seconded by Martin Bailey of Lavender Way.

10. Meeting open for Questions & Comments

No further questions were raised.

Martin Bailey thanked the committee members for all they do.

Meeting closed at 8.57pm