

Nevill Residents' Association meeting, Monday 5th February 2024, 7.30pm, St Mary's Church Hall, Highdown Road

Minutes

1. Update on NRA committee activities since our last open meeting (Suzy Nelson, Co-chair of NRA)

- a) We managed to get all the grit bins filled, eventually, but tracking the price down for the two that are NRA's responsibility was problematic. The price continues to vary all the time.
- b) Not as successful getting the bus route included in the primary gritting route. We continue to lobby on this, including a petition that we need people to sign. 195 people had signed today but that's a significant minority of residents.
- c) Christmas fair at Social Centre was great success. It raised £345 for NRA funds and refreshments raised around £357 for the Royal British Legion. ***The next fair will be on 23rd November 2024 – date for your diary!***
- d) We had a Christmas social at the Social Club - maybe 30 people were able to come and it was good to see people in a relaxed environment. It was maybe too close to Christmas. Next year, we'll arrange something a bit earlier.
- e) The NRA newsletter, coordinated and put together by Carole, came out in the Autumn and another will come out in March, before the AGM. Thank you to the street reps for delivering so promptly.
- f) NRA has a new website and we are using it much more. Please check it out: [Nevillresidentsassociation.org](https://neville residents association.org)
- g) The noticeboard by Nevill Green was damaged when the hedge was cut and the contractors are paying for the replacement. It has been ordered but not yet delivered
- h) Kevin Moore's talk at the last meeting was followed by the setting up of a local Speed watch group. We have 4 people fully trained and one has completed the online course. The online course is very easy! The scheme is very effective as being clocked speeding results in a letter from the police. ***We could do with a few more people to get more sessions organised.***
- i) Bus leaflet - you will have recently received this leaflet. Its creation was led by Sarah O'Kane, who would like to thank Ann Link, Mark Maidment and Fiona Griffin for their work on it, Suzy Nelson and Kia Makepeace and the NRA committee for supporting it, and the street reps for distribution.
Mark Maidment, a bus enthusiast, wants to do a survey on the information on bus stops.

Agreed that this is supported by NRA.

2. Managing flood risks, the causes, and how we can help. (Presentation by Rachel Paget and Peter King, Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust)

The project to reduce flooding in local areas is a partnership project with Lewes DC. The Rivers Trust is a Charity; there is a Rivers Trust in every catchment area. Flash

floods caused by high levels of rainfall and excessive surface water are increasing: intense rainfall events are more common, and a greater proportion of rainy days are 'intense'. The best management approach is to make space for water to prevent sudden flash flooding.

Rachel gave a very interesting presentation on how rainfall flows across the Nevill and down into the town. The Nevill was chosen as a good area to introduce surface water flood management measures because we are high up the Down, so are the start of downward flow. Water from the Nevill takes a passage to the river but intense rainfall results in flooding en route. The idea is to put as many SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) measures as possible in to the community to hold water back from the drains, as a demonstration of surface water management, and to inspire others. **There is funding for 30 measures and 17 enquiries are going ahead so far.**

Solutions at home include:

1. Water storage
2. 'Greening'
3. Permeable surfaces

Rain Planters. These free planters come with all the kit to make it work to hold water back and release it more slowly to reduce the rush of flow. These are being put together at the Nevill Bonfire Land and can be made to fit the space.

Although the project is about flooding, these rain gardens also reduce the pollution from your roof. The first 5mm of rain washes toxins from your roof into the planter or rain garden. 80% of urban pollution comes from rainfall draining from roofs.

There are also options for a rain scape, a rain garden or a storage pond.

Other measures that households can adopt include:

- Green roof, which soaks up lots of water and can be put together for around £50. For hers, Rachel picked up sedums that had dropped off other green roofs into the road.
- Rainwater harvesting i.e. water butts. The last water butt can be left to drain over the winter to give capacity for the next rainfall. Come drier, warmer weather, all taps can be closed.
- Permeable paving to replace hard standings can be made of shingle, bark, pavier blocks with spaces between them.

Questions – Is there more than one design? Is it possible to raise the planter onto legs so can drain it into watering cans?

A - can't be totally bespoke but can be adjusted to fit.

Q Ann Link - installed one a good time ago. The overflow went into the drain that goes into a soak away. Was that drain needed?

A - lots of houses are plumbed into the sewer network, even though they shouldn't be. Soakaways and sewers only have so much capacity and after that they discharge into the surface drainage network (or overflow). Any delay in water entering the soakaways means they can drain before getting too full.

Q water butts - could empty water butts in anticipation of rain coming to create more capacity.

A - best thing to do is to have an additional butt that slowly drains away so householder doesn't have to do anything proactive.

Q - will funding still be available to the late comers?

A - get in quick! If there's demand, might get more funding. Have got much more efficient at making them, too, so it is getting cheaper and easier to make one.

Funding for 13 left

Q Rob Elvery (is an engineer) - Soakaways in Nevill are hugely effective because water goes straight into the permeable chalk. However, so many homes are draining into the foul sewage, especially extensions. Both illegal and causes lots of problems. Would doing this project on a clay area be more beneficial?

Sandra Manning-Jones - much of the estate is effectively covered with a clay cap, owing to the hard surfacing outside many houses. At the top of the hill, we have more potential to help the rest of the town.

Q is it possible to check which properties are draining into the sewer instead of soakaways?

A not really.

Please note that the Project would also like to hear from people that are not interested so can learn what motivates people to participate.

A copy of the slides will be available on the NRA website

The whole of the presentation will be available on the Nevill RA website
Nevillresidentsassociation.org

3. Our roads – questions for East Sussex Highways' Stewards

Dominic Ward and Rebecca Kirby attended. They are employed by Balfour Beatty as part of the contract with ESCC.

Road gritting: There were a number of queries about gritting the estate in general and the bus route in particular. A tiny amount of estate roads is on the primary route. Most of the bus route is a secondary gritting route. Our experience is that the secondary route isn't gritted.

The NRA committee has written to Karl Taylor at Highways about this, but he is not prepared to add roads to the primary route and also won't share the criteria for this or for the times when secondary gritting should take place. He did say that gritting lorries have problems getting through where there are parked cars, but the dust lorry gets through.

Grit bins: The Stewards were asked about the make-up of grit that fills bins or is used by the lorries. There is evidence that salt-based grit is bad for invertebrates. We also asked why the cost of filling the bins has varied so much. [Prices given per bin fill this autumn / winter have been:

18/10/23 £392

02/11/23 £108

21/11/23 £266.92

28/11/23 £108 – the price we paid to get the two NRA-owned bins filled

The price on the meeting day was back up to £266.92.]

Karl Taylor has promised an extra grit bin for the estate, and we have to decide where it will go. We need to be sure that filling it will remain ESCC's responsibility as NRA can't afford to fill any more. We have asked Karl Taylor to clarify twice but he didn't address that question.

It was pointed out that grit bins are filled ad hoc; ESCC bins separately to 'private' bins, separately to LDC's bins. That's an expensive way to do the job and obviously more expensive than filling them all together with an economy of scale (and potentially charging out at the marginal cost).

We get a limited number of snow days. How long does grit last in the bins if it isn't used? Do bins just get topped up on top of the old grit? In which case, how usable is the old grit?

Dominic and Rachel were unable to answer any of the queries about gritting. Essentially, they deliver ESCC Highway's rules, and gritting isn't within their remit but falls elsewhere in Balfour Beatty. They did offer to take our questions away and pester for a response from the responsible person. The questions were emailed to them after the meeting.

Cllr. Wendy Maples - Dominic and Rachel have been very kind to come, but they are looking at the operational end of things. ESCC Highways is not open about some of its criteria but Balfour Beatty is employed to deliver to ESCC's rules. Balfour Beatty do the drains, potholes - anything maintenance-related.

It was commented that we really need to see the officers that commission the services.

Clearing gullies: Sandra Manning-Jones pointed out that grass clippings that aren't removed from the verges when they're cut, so they end up blocking the drains. Then Balfour Beatty have to come out to clear the drains: surely a waste of money and effort. There was a wider conversation about clearing grass clippings and putting them into the wider garden waste. The Stewards commented that grass clippings from roadside verges are too contaminated to put into garden waste bins. They would have to be cleared away from site and destroyed.

The detritus is therefore ending up in the gutters. Street sweeping is the responsibility of Lewes DC rather than ESCC. Ideally the streets would be swept after the verges are cut. However, last July LDC swept the streets the week before verges were cut (verge cuts were later than scheduled). This needs to be coordinated properly. It would solve a lot of problems.

Rob said that, walking around the estate, probably a third of the road gullies are completely full and not functioning. There are no water courses down from the estate, so soakaways are the destination for all road drains and need to be cleaned out regularly. Is there regular maintenance or is the process reliant on complaints?

The Stewards replied that Highways don't do anything with the soakaways as a standard. Gully maintenance is on a schedule varying dependent on flood risk. Customer reports of a blocked gully are referred to an inspector who will raise a clearance if it might cause flooding. If it isn't likely to cause flooding, it will eventually

be put into a programme for the whole area, and all will be cleared. Nevill Green gullies are waiting for additional cleaning now. Nevill Road / Green gullies are on a very strict and frequent schedule to reduce flooding problems on Nevill Road.

Mike Fisk pointed out that waste from those gullies isn't taken away because it is contaminated with sewage, so instead it's left on Nevill Green, which is a children's playground! There was a conversation about the flow from Middle Way onto Nevill Green, which was designed to take additional water, and that this seems to have stopped working. Cllr. Wendy Maples would like to know more about Middle Way's outlet onto the Green and Mike Fisk offered to tell her about it.

Wendy also said that the maintenance inspector would like to adopt an approach of issuing a police notice to get cars shifted on the day that gully cleaning is done. We agreed it should be tried but they do need to put up cones, because much parking on estate roads is by people visiting the estate. It was suggested that Balfour Beatty should do even and odd sides of roads on different days so that cars can be shifted more easily, as needed.

Sandra Manning-Jones suggested that there are people on the Nevill who have got a lot of knowledge about how the Nevill estate was build and it would be good to get people together to pool and record their knowledge.

Suzy Nelson reminded everyone to use the pot hole (and other matters) reporting system on the Highways portal.

Cllr. Maples asked people to let her know, with the reported number, if there is no response.

4. Further actions on icy roads:

a) Location of possible new grit bin. Jacky Chester and Mary Newnham, who have given apologies for this evening, would prefer it on the bend towards the bottom of South Way, where the 2022 accident was. Other comments were that by the shop might be best as access to the shop could then get gritted. The road in front of it does get gritted. South Way bottom corner might be more effective if it can be sited there somewhere. Suggestion that the Hawkenbury bin could be moved to the junction with South Way. However, there is apparently nowhere to put it off the pavement, which is already very narrow. Cllr. Wendy Maples was asked to talk to the local Highways Steward about where they could put a bin on the curve of South Way. [Update – since the meeting, Highways has confirmed they will pay for filling but will place the bin near the shops.]

b) Petition on gritting, <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/Gritthenevill>

195 signatures so far. Attendees were asked to sign. We agreed that we'd try for an article in the Sussex Express. A resident asked for a paper petition too. We will ask the shop to have a copy for people to sign, with note in newsletter to tell people about this. We will see whether street reps are prepared to ask people to sign if they see them. The petition could be presented to Lead Member for Highways 11th March. [Update – closing date is now 30th April, and will be presented to the Lead member ASAP after that]

- c) Snow shovels: There is a history of roads each having a snow shovel. There are three left in situ, and Jane has bought 9 additional. Jane will share the list of snow shovel holders once complete [Update - see March's newsletter].

5. Progress on Defibrillator

Jane Jackson – the £900 required to top up the grant to buy the unit has now been pledged. Angela Brinkhurst has raised an amazing £540 running quiz nights, and individuals and businesses have also contributed very generously. There will also be ongoing costs that we welcome donations for.

Mark Greenwood has kindly offered to donate his time to install it. We are still waiting for church to confirm the exact siting, which we're pursuing. We anticipate their approval to place on the kitchen side of St Mary's Church Hall, Highdown.

Imogen suggested that a video or similar of its use encourages people to have the confidence to use it (although, actually, you need no knowledge at all as the machine tells you what to do). We should liaise with the shop to make sure they know about it.

Actions: await confirmation from church; liaise with shop; investigate video for future meeting

6. NRA financial report

Kia Makepeace, NRA treasurer – We have received a £500 Resident Association grant from Lewes DC, and also donations related to the defibrillator. The current closing balance is almost £900, but that includes donations of £280 so far received towards the defibrillator. Full accounts will be presented to the AGM.

Action: Full accounts to AGM

7. Preventing sewer blockages

Jane Jackson, who lives at the end of Hamsey Crescent has had to deal with an overflowing sewer twice in the last month. She and her family have had to clear the pipe of a blockage of wet wipes, sanitary items, sweet wrappers etc; none of which should be put into the sewer in the first place. The pipe is the width of a Pringles tube and turns sharply just past their house to go down Highdown Road, so items get caught in the turn. ***We want to remind everyone that only pee, poo, or paper should go into the sewer.*** A note has been dropped through every door in Hamsey Crescent to remind people not to put anything else down the toilet, including 'flushable' wipes and hopefully the residents responsible will adjust their handling of those items.

8. Any other business

Request for a discussion about setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme across the estate. Carolyn Blayney, who coordinates the Hawkenbury Way scheme, kindly said she is prepared to talk to the AGM about it.

Action: Agenda for AGM

Ann Link offered a vote of thanks to the NRA committee for lots of hard work.

Date for your diary: *NRA Annual General Meeting - 25th April 2024, 7.30pm, St Mary's Social Centre*

Attendees (if you attended but didn't sign the attendance sheet, please let Lesley Healey know):

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|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Alison Barnes | Carole Kirby | Suzy Nelson (Chair) |
| Derek Blayney | Ann Link | Sarah O'Kane |
| Carolyn Blayney | Imogen Makepeace | Penny Ollosson |
| Janice Bournier | Kia Makepeace | Ben Overton |
| Rob Elvery | Adam Manning-Jones | Julie Philpott |
| Mike Fisk | Sandra Manning-Jones | Kath Reynolds |
| Lesley Healey (minutes) | Cllr. Wendy Maples | Colin Reynolds |
| Jane Jackson | Robert Massey | Graham Sutton |
| Cllr. Paul Keene | Carina Morissy | Vicki Trenhaile |
| Brian Kirby | | |

Apologies were received from: Nick and Jane Armstrong, Katharine Finnigan, Jacky Chester, Steve Williams