

Annual Residents' Evening

Questions and Answers

Some of the questions below were asked by the residents themselves out loud, and some were written on post-it notes anonymously. The session was chaired by Councillor Marilyn Robson (MR), who answered the majority of the questions.

1. Could we have more post boxes on the Heath?

Several people asked this question. MR said that she actually met with a representative of Royal Mail last week to ask this question. They drove around Elvetham Heath to look for potential sites. It was agreed that we need several more post boxes, but it will take a while to go through the process of getting them.

2. Is it possible to put some bollards/benches at The Key car park, to stop cars driving across the central pedestrian area where the fish and chip van parks?

This was also asked in the following way: Could consideration be given to pedestrian safety in The Key? Cars often drive over the middle of the car park? Maybe more benches or planters would solve it.

MR said that it will be looked into as it had been mentioned before.

3. Grit boxes? During bad weather. How do we get them?

MR said that grit boxes are provided by Hampshire County Council on adopted roads and that normally it is on a road where there is an incline and there is sufficient space on the footway to site one. Turner's Avenue is a notable exception where one is located as it is neither adopted nor on an incline. An application could be made to Hampshire County Council via their website for adopted roads.

4. Could there be some more noticeboards on the Heath? Maybe both for Parish Council notices and community notices. Thank you.

MR said that this will be looked into. A possible site would be near the Nature Reserve path in St Swithun's Road. To fit with the surroundings, it would be better to have a wooden one, which could be expensive. Consideration would need to be given about who would look after the notices.

5. There were several questions and suggestions about buses:

- a. **Bus shelter glass/plastic sides please**
- b. **Bus service peak hours to train station. Do we know why it has stopped?**
- c. **Can we investigate the evening bus services from Fleet station to EH. Service is very poor now.**
- d. **Currently we have received fare increases and a cut in services. Lots of people have complained about this as the service from Fleet railway station is completely impractical. We have been told nothing can be done. Is this really the case?**

e. Could I please have a hard standing when I alight from the bus coming from Fleet on Elvetham Heath near the roundabout for Turbary Road?

MR said that the Parish Council would contact Fleet Buzz to see what they had to say. Links to the timetables are on our website. It is unclear whether more buses are going through Elvetham Heath now, rather than just the turning circle. One resident gave the contact name of Adam Craig given out as somebody to contact at Hampshire County Council.

EHPC is not responsible for the bus shelters but will investigate whether anything can be done about the hard standing and will try to sort out the issue of missing glass in the shelters.

6. Can we please install more waste bins around the Village Green (thanks for already installing more but not enough)?

MR said that the Parish council would look to see if existing bins could be re-sited as each additional bin is charged for.

7. Some public art/installations for EH?

MR said that this was a good idea but could be expensive. She suggested the idea of an art exhibition/fair.

8. The plans for the garden sound nice, but I would question the value of it. What about spending money on something that would add value? So much maintenance is needed around the Heath first. Also, the plants chosen sound like they will leave us with bare earth at times.

MR stated that Councillor Emma Watmore (EW) has been working on this in conjunction with the 'Minding the Garden' charity which had provided the plans. EW stated that careful consideration had been given to the choice of plants to ensure that there will always be something in flower.

9. Are the roads adopted by Hants CC yet?

MR stated that although no more roads have been adopted in the last year, a significant amount of progress has been made. There had been a major stumbling block stopping any dialogue between the main developer, Persimmon Homes, and HCC. The Parish Council managed to get the two parties together and we are hopeful that all Persimmon roads including the main Elvetham Heath Way will be adopted by the end of 2013. Once this has been achieved, the Parish Council will look to facilitate a meeting with the other developers and HCC.

10. Parking – inconsiderate parking on the road/pavements.

MR acknowledged that all over the Heath there are reported problems of inconsiderate parking. PC Lehec confirmed that several fines had been issued and the Police would continue to take it very seriously where cars are parked dangerously or are causing an obstruction. There was also discussion about the fact that in some places, people are parking on the grass verges and in several hotspots, some dragon's teeth might be considered to stop it. (eg Giffard Lane).

11. Village Green – can ball games be ‘disallowed’.

This question was met by a sharp intake of breath around the hall. This question had been asked anonymously on a Post-It note and another had been placed beneath it stating ‘it seems a shame to waste public space by banning a use’.

MR stated that it was not the council’s intention to ban ball games as the village green is intended as a recreational space for all residents. Organised matches/training which takes over the whole area is not permitted and the council has taken steps to encourage footballers to the Turner’s Way recreation area by installing goalposts there and this appears to have been successful.

12. Highway Verges and grounds maintenance.

There were several questions/comments about the state of the highway verges and roundabouts. MR stated that last summer the parish council was very dissatisfied with the level of maintenance that was being carried out by the Hart District Council/Basingstoke & Deane teams. A meeting with officers from both those councils led to a proposal being drawn up for the Parish Council to take over this maintenance. Discussions are at an early stage and although it is not likely to be cheap, there is some S106 money attached to the work and the parish council believes that having all grounds maintenance under one contract is the best option.

13. Road sweeping & weed clearance – particularly on EH Way at Golf Club end

MR stated that unfortunately this part of EH Way is not adopted so weed clearance, road sweeping and gully cleansing is still the responsibility of the developer. There will be a regular programme of cleansing once the road has been adopted. The clerk stated that this work would have to be carried out prior to adoption which is due to happen by the end of the year.

14. Tree removal from the Nature Reserve. The reason given was to return the area to heath land but it now looks bare and there is a significant increase in motorway noise.

MR stated that this had been noticed but was apparently part of the long term plan for the nature reserve. The reserve is the responsibility of Hart DC and unfortunately the ranger had not made it to the meeting. MR suggested contacting Adam Green at Hart - the Clerk has his contact details.

15. Facilities for Older children - there were several questions on this topic:

- **What are the latest plans for the play area by the Key Centre esp re older children**
 - **Equipment for 11 -16 year olds please**
 - **Urgent need for facilities for teenagers/youth eg shelters, skate park, BMX track**
 - **Some seating or shelter for older children to use would be lovely**
 - **Could the tennis/5 a side courts be open in the evening for young people to use**
- foc.

MR stated that progress had been slow to date on the play area project because other projects such as the pavilion and the allotments had taken up most of the council's time. With these 2 projects nearing completion, the play areas and provision of facilities for the youth would become the priority. The intention is to provide a facility which will cater for all age groups.

16. Dog fouling – can something be done

Unfortunately this question was accidentally overlooked at the meeting. The parish council is aware that there is a problem with dog fouling and in the last 3 months of 2012 took on the services of the dog warden for a trial period. Over that time as well as conducting weekly patrols, she erected a camera at certain problem areas and this led to a marked improvement. She also provided the parish council with a supply of dog waste bags to be handed out. These can be collected free of charge from the Key Centre. The council will look into taking on the dog warden's services again.

17. Community Litter Picking Event – suggestion

MR introduced Gillian Wain of the Fleet & Church Crookham Society to speak about the Civic Action Day on Saturday June 22nd. The society is running 3 action events – in Fleet centre, Church Crookham and Elvetham Heath. The Elvetham Heath event will take place in the afternoon. The plan is to spruce up the Key & the Green areas – repainting metal litter bins and benches, washing down plastic bins and litter picking the area. All materials will be provided. Volunteers are welcome, both adults and children, and need to meet at The Key Centre at 2pm.

18. Traffic Lights at the Station roundabout

Daryl Phillips of HDC stated that the junctions and the roundabout at the station are under review as it is known to be a problem area.

Police Report

MR invited PC Lehec to say a few words. He stated that Elvetham Heath is a very low crime area and appears to be getting safer:

- The number of break-ins to dwellings has reduced from 26 in 2011/12 to 2.
- Anti-Social Behaviour – the main issue is vehicles using Elvetham Heath Way as a race track.
- Any thefts appear to take place at Morrisons Supermarket
- Thefts from cars – most had left the car unlocked. He urged people not to leave anything valuable in cars and particularly not to leave it in view.