

VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Vinters Boys School on 18th May, 1983.

1. Apologies for Absence.

Apologies were received from Mr D. Costello.

2. Minutes of the last A.G.M.

The minutes of the last A.G.M. were agreed by those present to be a true record.

3. Chairman's Report.

This was given by Mr John Stubbins, the chairman of the meeting, as the association had no chairman at present, although it was hoped that the coming year would find the position filled.

It had been a most eventful year, with the committee meeting regularly, much discussion had taken place regarding the proposed community centre and many items had been referred to the Maidstone Borough Council, all had been reported in the Parkranger. This was the new look estate newsletter which had been launched early in the year, designed to give it some identity and be easily recognised by residents. V.P.R.A. had also become a member of the National Federation of Community Associations, where literature and advice was readily available. The insurance had been updated for fund-raising activities etc. to give adequate cover. The Fire Officer had advised that there was inadequate audience protection on the Play Area for a firework display on November 5th. The question of whether anything could be done to prohibit dogs fouling play areas etc had again been raised. The committee were powerless to act, byelaws were a long drawn out process, but the ward councillors had been informed. Learner drivers were once again doing three point turns on main roads within the estate, the committee had written to the police, who, although they couldn't help, suggested writing to the secretary of local driving schools in the town. The estate might not be included on the test circuit next year. The committee asked how they could help the elderly people on the estate, and had organised a trip to the Hazlitt Theatre, only three couples replied, they are going next wednesday. The state of fences surrounding the shops had once again been a cause for concern, it was not the responsibility of the shopkeepers to maintain them, and they were going to the landlords, it was really a question of who would bear the cost. The committee had looked at the question of fund-raising, a beer festival had been suggested but was decided against as they were put off by Allington Residents Association. Barbecues, dances, cheese and wine parties, discos and a summer outing were being thought about, further details would appear in the Parkranger. The committee had received a lot of co-operation from the Maidstone Borough Council, they tried to help where possible subject to funds being available. Rubbish skips appear regularly, for details see Parkranger and Vinters Park news in the K.M. Bushes and trees overhanging pavements were dealt with, concrete litter bins were on order from M.B.C. for siting within the play areas. Road nameplates that had either been vandalised or were missing were to be replaced by the M.B.C. Staggered railings had been asked for to stop children cycling straight into the main roads, but the Council couldn't provide more. The litter on the grassed area was another problem, the Council were to collect weekly now. The M.B.C. had been asked about providing a hard surface at bus stops, however the Kent County Council would not provide funds. The officers on the executive committee tried to maintain services and amenities and as acting chairman, Mr Stubbins thanked them for their efforts.

4. Treasurers Report.

There was a surplus of £125, the Association was keeping its head above water. The subscriptions had been about the same as last year. The account holding funds for the community centre had been moved following the last meeting to obtain more interest. The accounts had been audited.

5. Election of Officers.

Chairman : John Stubbins
Treasurer: Andy Woodward
Secretary: Bob Wilcockson

the above had all been proposed and as there were no objections they were elected, the committee would be the same as 1983/84.

6. Subscriptions.

It was agreed that these should be kept at fifty pence.

7. Community Centre/Village Hall Progress Report.

Following last years A.G.M. the executive committee had devised a plan of action. Discussions had to be held with Taylor Woodrow who owned the land, then it had to be decided what could be built with the funds available, who would use it, income, type of building etc. Other Associations were contacted to see the differences with the ones which they had built. A grant of 75% had to be applied for from the Council. In the middle of the discussions Taylor Woodrow applied for permission to build on the minor centre site. Letters were circulated to the neighbouring residences. V.P.R.A. objected as the land was designated for a community centre/shops, and was a valuable amenity to the estate. The Council refused the application, in sympathy with the estate. Taylor Woodrow and the committee met to compromise on the planning application. Taylor Woodrow proposed building some property on part of the land, and it was said that in return they would assist V.P.R.A. with a car park and services to the community centre, although it was pointed out that T.W. have a responsibility to their shareholders.

There followed a break for refreshments. 2045hrs.

Meeting recommenced at 2105hrs.

It was the Committee's view that the proposed Community Centre would fulfill a need within the estate. The Church want somewhere to hold meetings and other activities, the Playgroup had a long waiting list, and could hold additional groups. Other users might be a youth club, cubs, scouts, brownies, a toddler group. It would also provide a venue for whist drives, jumble sales, childrens parties, bazaars, chess matches, keep fit, fairs etc. The layout had been given much thought, it would comprise a large room, common room, kitchen and toilets. This would provide space for two activities to take place at once. The height should be large enough for badminton to take place. There should be adequate locker space, storage, perhaps a stage. The best layout should be obtained for the size. The meeting was asked to consider the proposed layout sheet to inform the committee if any alterations were considered necessary.

The storage space was considered to be insufficient for playgroup equipment. It was thought that the design and layout was too intense, that it would look like a concrete jungle, that cars parking in the nearby roads would cause problems. The meeting was assured that the car parking facilities would be in excess of the needs, that V.P.R.A. would have over half of the site and that it would definately have some trees planted around the building, when pressed it was said that these would be mature saplings which would have fences surrounding them. It was felt that without a resident caretaker damage would occur, but the committee did not agree that this would be any more likely than in other areas of the estate, that any cases of vandalism would be a matter for the police, and worries concerning vandalism should not affect tonights decision on proceeding with the project. It was asked why Taylor Woodrow were not building linked houses in place of the proposed maisonettes? the committee would go back on this point to T.W.

A resident suggested that with careful consideration the proposed design and layout could be much improved, no thought had been given to outside play areas for the playgroup. The committee advised that the car park would provide some space for this, it would need to be fenced off to avoid danger to children. In reply to earlier remarks it was said that Maidstone Borough Council would insist that any building would harmonise with the rest of the estate, and not allow it to become a concrete jungle, that they would also want value for money. V.P.R.A. could not afford to employ a caretaker, but it was hoped that a keyholder would live in the close vicinity, also that organisations using the premises would take responsibility for looking after it while their functions were taking place, and return keys to the custodian afterwards. It was asked if the main entrance would be in Hampton Road, also if there would be a grass verge. The sketch showing layout was then referred to which suggests that the main entrance would be in Aldon Close. The Playgroup committee asked if they might also confer with the V.P.R.A. committee to look at storage space for their equipment etc. This was agreed. They also said that washing facilities would also be very handy for the playgroup. They had wanted to have a representative on the V.P.R.A. committee, but had not been invited. Mr Wilcockson apologised for this, and said that if they could arrange a date at the end of the meeting, a member could be co-opted onto the committee.

It was stressed that there were no alternative sites available for a community centre, and it was emphasised that there would be no bar, that no rowdy activities would be allowed and neighbours privacy would be respected. V.P.R.A. do not want a profit from the centre, but would be looking for enough income to cover repairs and renewals. The concept had always been from the beginning to prohibit licensed facilities, and a covenant would be drawn up to ensure this. Although V.P.R.A. would have to meet Taylor Woodrow to discuss the type of building etc. the meeting was asked whether it would like the joint project to go ahead with outline planning permission applied for, and the design thrashed out by the committee. A resident asked if there would be a further meeting to finalise plans, but it was hoped that it could be left to the executive committee and other user groups to do. Building would need to have commenced by March 1985 to comply with requirements.

It was asked that if anyone was unhappy about with the proposed design they would contact the secretary, a report would appear in the Parkranger newsletter due in July.

The Committee thought it had received a good deal from Taylor Woodrow to get drainage and a car park put in, and this was generally agreed. The Chairman of the meeting then asked for a show of hands on the design of the site and to allow the committee to do the internal design. The majority were in favour, although it would still seem that most people want a community centre but no one wants it near them. Any further volunteers for the committee were asked to see the secretary afterwards.

9. Any Other Business.

It was asked if Calehill Close could have a grit bin for snow in the winter. Could the ward councillors do anything about obtaining some bus shelters and concrete standing bases for certain bus stops. Could anything be done to stop boys from playing football and cricket in front of the shops, and to stop dogs fouling pavements between Snowdon Avenue and the schools. Could anything be done to stop the bigger children cycling on pavements, especially the ones who tear along the path between Mostyn Road and Goldthorne Close, it was suggested that railings would slow them down.

All points were noted and would be discussed at the first committee meeting and replies published in the Parkranger.

It was generally thought that the car park at the shopping parade was in need of resurfacing, but as this also belonged to landlords and not the council, it was unlikely to be done. However shopkeepers had been able to get the council to do the entrance. It was pointed out that not all of the car park users were shop customers, it was also used by people going to or collecting children from the schools, coaches and visitors also used it.

The footpath by the playarea in Marston Drive had many pot holes and needed attention, this matter would be looked at with the others at the next meeting.

The question of streetlighting was also raised, residents were informed that if they knew of any lights which were either not working or out of phase, they should ring Maidstone 56744 quoting the appropriate number (which could be found on each post), the matter would usually be dealt with in a couple of days.

It was asked if it would be possible to get a footpath laid between Hampton Road and Alkham Road where at present there was only a grass verge. The meeting was told that there was no money available.

John Stubbins said that the Parkranger could take a limited number of advertisements and anyone interested should contact him at 6 Hadlow Road.

The meeting closed with thanks to Angela Knoll for taking the minutes at such short notice (just before the meeting began!) and to all residents for their attendance.