

VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Invicta Grammar School on 6th June, 1984.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from some Womens Institute members and from Councillor Black.

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

Chairman John Stubbins reported that although the Community Centre had occupied much of the committee's time, many other matters had been dealt with during the year, these included:

Hard surfacing to bus stops - Ward councillors had this in hand but the matter was subject to allocation of funds by the K.C.C.

Fences enclosing shops - these had now been repaired but the car park was still cause for concern.

Dogs fouling play areas and verges - Councillors had the matter under consideration, but due to the difficulty of getting new legislation or enforcing existing bye-laws, it was really a matter of dog owners' behaviour and respect for play areas.

Road nameplates - after pressure from the Association the Council had replaced missing nameplates on main roads - unfortunately others have since been vandalised.

Broken Wall - the committee had received a complaint about the broken wall surrounding garages at the rear of Netley Close but could take no action as the wall is the common responsibility of garage owners.

Litter - this continues to be a problem especially on grassed areas. After a year's wait after our request, a litter bin was placed on the top play area only to be damaged beyond repair the next day. A more substantial concrete bunker type was placed on the main play area and within two days the front panel had been removed and the bin inside kicked in.

Tree preservation - Woodlands Estate - After receiving calls from residents concerned that a tree protected by a preservation order was to be felled, the Chairman had made strenuous efforts to establish the facts and if possible forestall the felling only to be told by the duty planning officer that the Tree Preservation Order had been rescinded two days earlier and the tree was subsequently felled.

The Association had been able to help some residents on another issue. We had been approached by a Mrs. Butcher of Birchington Close

to attend a meeting with the new freeholder of the maisonettes and representatives of the lease-holders. Apparently letters from the new owner of the land had been misunderstood and an unpleasant situation had developed. The meeting was very frank and a number of compromise solutions were reached. It was agreed to circulate all 232 maisonettes with details of the discussions and the decisions reached. Following the meeting Mrs. Butcher could put pressure on the Managing Director of Taylor Woodrow, which has yielded a cash offer to the land-owner in recognition of the fact that the garage forecourts were sold to her in a poor state of repair. The Association, on behalf of the residents affected, would like to place on record full appreciation for all Mr. and Mrs. Butcher have done in this matter.

Fund Raising

The Chairman reported on the success of a Jumble Sale which had been held at St. Luke's Church Hall. Our thanks go to Sue Fry who has put a great deal of work into organising this event. Sue had also booked two tables at the Penenden Heath Feté to be held on 23/24 of June.

4. Treasurers Report

Accounts were taken as read. It was agreed to retain the services of Mr. Westcott as Auditor.

5. Election of Officers

Chairman : John Stubbins
Treasurer: Keith Andersen
Secretary: Robert Wilcockson

the above had all been proposed and were duly elected. The Committee gained two new members and would be as follows:

Sheila Chittenden, Connie Davis, Sue Fry, Jean Low, Ingrid Wilcockson, David Evans, Colin Syrett, Bill Barr.

6. Subscriptions

It was proposed to raise the yearly subscription to £1 per household; 50 pence for Senior Citizens. The proposal was accepted.

7. Community Centre

The Chairman reported that the Council was not satisfied with the original design construction, which had not been drawn up at that stage by a Chartered Architect. We had intended to get the outline design, which was submitted, worked up to detail by an Architect after grant approval. An Architect has since been employed and has drawn up a conventional design after consultation with the appropriate Council staff. He has also obtained "budget quotations", which turned out to be slightly more than expected. Fortunately, Taylor Woodrow have agreed to carry out substantial works to the site, saving us several thousand pounds and have also agreed to donate the land to us.

St. Lukes Church Council have agreed to donate £2,000 and two of their members have agreed to become trustees. Unfortunately we are some £3,000 short of our target for our share of the costs, assuming maximum Council grants. We can overcome this in two possible ways:

- (i) cut back on design - i.e. system building (the Architect has asked for quotes from system building firms, but found no great difference in price level)
- (ii) we could borrow the sum, hopefully, from the Council and we have put in a request for a loan at a preferential rate of interest. (Just in case).

We are still receiving some objections from neighbouring residents regarding anticipated noise level and consumption of alcohol.

Mr. The~~st~~on was also concerned about possible car parking problems

If the Community Centre goes ahead it is a condition of grant that we have a Hall Management Committee and the Association's Constitution must reflect this and also cater for representatives of the Users. A revised Constitution must be considered at the next A.G.M.

There followed a general discussion.

Members raised queries regarding design, size and heating. Colin Syrett answered the various points. There was also a question concerning landscaping. Ian Chittenden questioned facilities for toilets for the children from the play-group. The Chairman explained that these had been designed in accordance with the requirements laid down by the KCC. A resident who had just moved to Aldon Close queried the absence of any changing rooms. It was pointed out that the Hall could not be used for Badminton as this would require a higher ceiling, which would be too expensive. Some residents were concerned about noise levels arising from the use of the hall by youth clubs. The Chairman pointed out that any noise level would be kept to a minimum due to the construction of the building. A member asked about the future of the present play hut. A representative of the play-group explained that the hut would come down as soon as they had moved into the Centre. The question of income and upkeep was also raised and the Chairman informed the meeting that the project would be self-financing. He also felt that despite the present apathy shown by the residents regarding the Centre more interest would be generated once the project was under way.

One resident brought up the matter of security since the car park might attract motorbikes etc. The Chairman explained that a fence would be put up and that it was hoped that a "key-holder" could be found.

The meeting was told that both recreation and design officers had voiced their approval of the project. Cllr. Mrs. Shaw explained that the Council had received three more grant applications like ours last year, whereas this year our application was the only one received so far and that we should be well in line for the grant. She also thought that it would be a great pity if the project lapsed for the sake of £3,000. The Chairman pointed out, however, that the Council might curtail funds and that it may also be difficult to obtain a loan.

8. Newnham Court Farm Development - Planning Application

Ian Chittenden, a past chairman of the Association, who lives opposite the site declared his great interest in this matter. He had become actively involved in the dispute and read out details from the prospectus, i.e. number of buildings, size, shape etc.

The Chairman reported that the Association had so far received 30 letters against and 1 letter for the proposed development. He then read out a letter from the agents of the developers and showed the illustrated brochure in which reference was made to the Kent Structure Plan. He had purchased a copy for the Association:

Ian Chittenden drew attention to the anticipated increase in road traffic to and from the Newnham Court site. Answering a resident's question Ian pointed out that the initial decision would be made by the Maidstone Borough Council, who would then pass on the application to the KCC and the Highways Dept. Neighbouring places such as Detling and Boxley would also be informed and must respond before the decision can go to appeal. The Chairman pointed out that we could not call for an inquiry - this had to come from either Tarmac or the Council. One member felt that it was pointless for us to oppose the development since we were unable to influence the inquiry. Ian Chittenden, however, felt that it was in our power to influence individual councillors. The Chairman felt that policy was involved and that we should make our views known and submit petitions. Ian Chittenden urged the meeting to persevere despite the odds. One resident quoted the case of the Service Station planned at Penenden Heath which had been successfully opposed. It was also pointed out that some of the proposals fell within the designation of the land, i.e. the butterfly farm etc. and consequently these could go through on their own. One member pointed out that enough warehouse facilities were already available and why could these not be used? Sue Fry queried the point whether or not it was fully known how the buildings were going to be used - High Tech Units for computers, etc. One member thought the warehouses would probably be used by Sainsburys and others. Cllr. Wood emphasized the importance of individual letters to councillors. The Chairman explained that the Association would play its part by circularising the Estate. One resident pointed out that a number of trees were shown on the map were none existed at present and that it would take at least 20 years for those trees to reach sufficient height.

Cllr. Mrs. Shaw informed the meeting that items shown on the new plan were quite different from present uses and could result in major change in uses. She urged us to fight now before it was too late.

One resident thought that because the application was for change of use it would not yet have to be opposed. The Chairman demurred and the member said we should not be objecting to the brochure but to the issue in toto. One resident said that it might perhaps be a good idea if we got together with the developers as a number of jobs might become available. The Chairman replied that the present Sainsbury store in town could be downgraded.

One resident told the meeting that his objection was based on the fact that the Crematorium was situated opposite the development site. It was also pointed out to the meeting that the owner of Newnham Court Farm had since been elected Councillor and therefore had political weight behind him. It was also said that Councillors would be more influenced by individual letters rather than bodies like us. Great urgency for action was necessary and he explained how it is possible to develop "virgin land" by various devious means. Ian Chittenden stressed again the importance of approaching individual councillors. He put a proposal to the meeting to instruct the Association to object in total - this was carried by a huge majority. Only 4 members voted against it.

9. Vandalism

The Chairman reported an increase in vandalism on the Estate. Reports had been received of:

- vandalising road signs,
- damaging garage roofs,
- damaging litter bins,
- removing childrens wooden play blocks from the main play area,
- graffiti on walls of under passes,
- motor cyclists using certain roads as race tracks,
- etc.

Also the M.B.C. have appealed to the Association members to help to catch persons interfering with and damaging street lighting equipment.

Various residents reported vandalised lamp posts. Upon enquiry from one resident the Chairman informed the meeting that he had been in touch with the police and been able to have a long talk with the police constable covering the area. It appears that the police are well aware of all the problems, but are unable to do anything about it unless the persons actually doing the damage are caught red-handed. It was also pointed out that due to the miners' strike the police were very low on extra manpower. Perhaps the residents could come up with some ideas?

The Chairman had received a letter from a resident in Cooling Close expressing concern about the state of the underpasses. Could offenders be made to clean it up?

One resident enquired if police activity could be increased once the strike was over. Also could the underpasses not be painted over to cover the graffiti? Sue Fry pointed out that it would be most likely for graffiti to be applied again only half an hour later. A member thought that better parental control might be the answer. Sue Fry informed the meeting that she had complained to several parents but found them totally unconcerned and disinterested

One resident complained about the amount of rubbish being strewn around skips. People should not dump their refuse near the skips. Was it worthwhile to have skips? The answer was yes - provided they were used properly and not abused. A resident remarked that if we had more skips less rubbish would be available. One resident felt that the mess found round skips was a bad advert for the estate. We shall seek advice from the Council.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 10.20 p.m.

VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31st January 1985

<u>INCOME</u>	£	£	<u>Year ended</u> <u>31st January 1984</u>	
			£	£
Subscriptions	513		6	
Jumble Sale	61		-	
Fete	24		-	
Deposit Account Interest	52	650	61	67
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<u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
A.G.M. Expenses	99		53	
Park Ranger	-		118	
Insurance	28		28	
Printing, postage & stationery	74		12	
N.F.C.O. Subscrip- tion	15		12	
Lotteries Act registration	20		-	
Donation	-		25	
Other expenses	4	240	32	280
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Excess of Income/ (Expenditure)		<hr/> £410 <hr/>		<hr/> (£213) <hr/>