

VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Community Centre on 15th April 1987.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Joan Butcher and Councillor Margaret Shaw.

2. Minutes of Last A.G.M.

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

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Executive Committee Report

Yet again Community Centre Matters occupied most of the Executive Committee's time, these are recorded as item 9 of these minutes.

Other items dealt with during the year:-

Subscriptions

Some problems were experienced in covering the whole estate to collect the annual subscriptions, due to a shortage of collectors and problems that some committee members had in getting round all their areas.

Shopping Parade

Some shopkeepers asked the Residents Association whether we could get the Council to erect directional signs from the Sittingbourne Road. However, the Council refused because 'clustering of signs would confuse motorists'. Enquiries have been made regarding the condition of the Car Park and Mrs Kay Tuffin (a shopkeeper) remarked from the floor that the shopkeepers have contacted the landlord concerning re-surfacing the car park, and are still awaiting a reply.

Condition of Roads

The residents association sent a strong letter to the Council concerning the deplorable state of certain roads on the estate. They acknowledged that they are aware of these and would try to find monies to do something positive about the surfaces. Mrs Preece remarked from the floor that the new white lines on side roads such as Emsworth Grove and Netley Close seems unnecessary if money is short.

Telephone Call Box

The Residents Association are pressing the British Telecom to get a telephone Call box in the vicinity of the Community Centre, but they say that this will depend on the result of a future survey in the area.

Trees at Hanover Court

A request was received was a resident to get some action from the Kent County Council regarding some overhanging branches of some trees in the Eastborough School grounds and pine needles on the ground which cause slippery conditions when wet. This problem was rectified as satisfactorily as possible.

Underpasses

The Residents Association managed to get the Maidstone Borough Council to clear these out and paint them and thereafter maintain them on a regular basis.

Wall near Luddenham Close and Kewlands

The Residents Association tried to get the Maidstone Borough Council to remove remains of a demolished wall adjoining the garages. However, the Council insisted that by law this is the residents responsibility.

Mobile Library

An effort is being made to get the librarian to stop the Mobile Library in the Community Centre Car Park instead of Bedgebury Close as it is more central and will be seen by more people.

Post Office and Chemist

A petition was presented to the Residents Association asking for a Post Office and Chemist at the shops on the estate. Some discussion followed this and it was suggested that we send the petition to the Head Postmaster. The grocers shop would be agreeable to run the Post Office but had unfortunately been unsuccessful in their representations to the Post Office so far. Regarding the Chemist, there is no empty shop at present for it to be situated and there are other Chemist shops quite close. Government policy says that 2 kilometres is the minimum distance. Mr Sinclair suggested from the floor that perhaps a collection and delivery service could be arranged based at one of the shops. It was agreed that the Residents Association would write to the Family Practitioner Committee concerning this.

Chinese Take - away Shop

Mrs Smith from 51 Snowdon Avenue reported that the Chinese shop was remaining open well after the official closing time in the evenings until after midnight. It was agreed that the executive committee will contact Mrs Nai regarding this.

5. Community Centre Management Committee Report

Mr Dennis Acott (Chairman) reported that the Committee started at the end of January and consists of representatives of regular users of the Community Centre. Their function is to keep the centre running and the users happy. The number of bookings received so far is pleasing but charges may have to be raised to help make up a deficit of funds caused by the cost of the building. There have been some applicants for the odd job man but an early morning cleaner is still required. A Boot Fair will be held on 24th May at £5 per pitch to help raise funds. A request was received from the floor for some facilities for the elderly at the Community Centre and it was stated that Age Concern will be running a Lunch Club shortly.

6. Statement of Accounts

The accounts were taken as read and agreed. The Treasurer reported that bookings are going well but there is an overdraft caused by outstanding building costs. Therefore all subscriptions possible are necessary. A vote of thanks was recorded to Mr David Evans for all the hard work he has put in during the year.

7. Election of Officers and Executive Committee Members.

Chairman - John Stubbins
Vice-Chairman - Peter Lott
Secretary - Sheila Chittenden
Treasurer - David Evans
Executive
Committee Members - Ingrid Wilcockson
Jean Low
Neil Sinclair
Sue Fry
Mr C. Hollingshead

The above were all proposed and duly elected.

8. Appointment of Honorary Auditor

It was agreed to retain the services of Mr Westcott as Auditor and that an honorarium of £10 be paid to him.

9. Community Centre Matters

Rates

A strong case has been made to the Council which resulted in total general rate relief. This will save nearly £500 per year as an automatic relief of 50% is allowed.

Surrounds

A scheme of shrub planting and fencing has been submitted to the Planning Officer for approval. The Community Programme will carry out the work and the Residents Association will just have to pay for the materials. Last October a letter was written to the Maidstone Borough Council Technical Officer concerning the footpath areas but a reply has still not been received. We can see nothing in writing which says that we are liable to construct footpaths and in any event we could not afford it as this would run into thousands of pounds. It was suggested from the floor that perhaps some paving slabs could be put down to make access to the Community Centre easier. It was agreed that perhaps we could get voluntary assistance to do this after the Community Programme has laid out the grounds.

Windows/Condensation

Complaints have been made to the Contractor regarding scratching on the windows and condensation. Certain window panels will have to be replaced later in the year due to scratching. On the matter of condensation, technical advice has been sought and it appears that construction is correct, but there is insufficient circulation of air in certain rooms and dampness remains. Some form of ventilation system will have to be installed sometime in the future if no other solution can be found. The window sills' tiles are to be linseed oiled.

Basins in Toilets

It would appear that there is some doubt about the ability of the wall blocks to hold the weight of the basins when anyone sits against them. Mr Chittenden called one of his plumbers in who has refixed several of the basins with stronger fittings which should resist anybody sitting or leaning on them.

Economy Measures:

In order to save running costs at the Community Centre certain items have been installed:

Cytermiser which allows water only to flow to urinal cistern when the basin tap is turned on. This saves water being wasted overnight and when the premises are not in use.

Aquacheck which cuts off water if there is a burst pipe or if taps are left running for any length of time. This again saves on water costs.

Economy 7 - the hot water is on this system which keeps costs down.

The Central Heating is on a time clock.

Polling Station

It is pleasing that The Maidstone Borough Council will now use the Community Centre as a Polling Station which will be much more convenient and easier for wheelchair access than the Union Street School.

Licensing

A Performing Rights Society Licence has been obtained and a Public Entertainments Licence has been applied for. Unfortunately there has been at least one objection to the latter licence and so there will have to be a Maidstone Borough Council formal hearing which could take up to 6 months to arrange. There has been considerable confusion over this licence caused by a circular letter delivered to houses surrounding the Community Centre. A letter was put out by the Residents Association correcting the misleading opinions but this did not prevent the objection.

Official Opening

An official opening of the Community Centre will be arranged when the landscaping has been done. It was difficult to decide who should open the Centre but perhaps the Mayor of Maidstone would be suitable and invite Invicta Radio and T.V.S. to attend for some publicity.

Final Costs

The Contractors account comes to more or less the same as originally estimated even though the specification has been cut down. However there have been additional costs for site works and the foundation slab. Mr Chittenden has gone through the account in great detail and is not happy with some of the costs. A meeting with the contractor took place and these items were challenged but the contractor has not come back with any explanations. In the meantime several thousand pounds and the retention fee have been held back. Unfortunately the cost of the Community Centre will be £13,500 more than funds the Residents Association have and an overdraft of £5,000 has already had to be obtained. The Council has been approached for a further grant or loan of £13,500 but they are likely to want guarantors and a full market rate of interest - a concessionary rate of interest was hoped for. A decision will not be known until June/July and guarantors will have to be found. Repaying a loan will be a large sum to afford in addition to the running cost bills such as electricity, gas, water and insurance.

Noise from the Community Centre

The question of noise and nuisance from children at events at the Community Centre was raised. Mr Stubbins said that the Residents Association had not received any complaints nor had the police. However a resident from 2 Bedgebury Close said that he had complained to the police. Another resident from Aldon Close said that she never hears any noise from the Community Centre. It was suggested that the Management Committee consider this problem at their next meeting. The trouble with children running around the outside of the Centre

during functions held there was raised and Mr Acott asked people to let him know if there is any complaint so that something can be done at the time. It was suggested that spot checks might take place during functions to see that things are running satisfactorily.

10. Annual Subscription

It was proposed and seconded to set the annual subscription at £1 per year per household. The Treasurer asked if there was anyone willing to help collect subscriptions and the following volunteers were found:-

Mrs Birch 7 Birchington Close
Mrs Bell 26 Sittingbourne Road
Mrs Meadows 13 Littlebourne Road
Mrs Smith 51 Snowdon Avenue
Mrs Powell 4 Bonnington Road
Mrs Brooks 12 Northfleet Close.

11. Constitution - To consider deletion of Clause 13(c)

This clause reads:-

13. Standing Orders and Rules for the use of the Community Centre.

(c) The Centre Committee shall ensure that no alcoholic drink of any description is bought sold or consumed on any part of the premises.

An alternative new clause was suggested by the Chairman as follows:-

(c) The Centre Committee shall be empowered to define the types and extent of activities at which alcohol may be bought sold or consumed on the premises, such definition being restricted to individual and group members of the Association.

The chairman outlined the reasons for the proposed change and a period of discussion followed. A vote was taken, and the alternative new clause was rejected by 120 votes to 30 votes.

The proposal to delete clause 13(c) was then rejected unanimously.

12. Any Other Business

The question of cars parking in Snowdon Avenue near the footpath leading to Eastborough School was raised. This causes a nuisance and is dangerous to children crossing the road. It was suggested that the Residents Association apply for further zig-zag lines here or some yellow lines. A resident from Goldthorne Close remarked that cars are parked in this road at school times obstructing access to their garages.

A vote of thanks was given to the Chairman and Secretary for all the hard work done during the year and also to Mr Ian Chittenden for advice on the Community Centre construction.

There was no other business

Approximately 150 members of the Residents Association were present.