

and the Playgroup was able to gain access, but no thanks are due to the person who broke the key. That incident cost several hundreds of pounds to put right, because every key had to be replaced! The Executive Committee is still puzzled as to the source of the key that was stuck in the door.

A floor-buffer was also purchased this year and has been important in maintaining the condition of the floor.

Within the present financial year it is intended to replace the chain link fence at the front of the building with a brick wall. This will achieve a considerable improvement in appearance and maintenance requirements.

As indicated in my opening paragraphs, the Community Centre has been invaded periodically by groups of youths who "just want to use the toilet". Unfortunately, damage has frequently been found after they have left. It is for this reason that

it has been necessary to remind all users that they are responsible for the premises and we have recommended that the doors are kept locked at all times.

We are looking into the possibility of an 'emergency phone' for summoning the police in circumstances where nuisance is being caused.

#### Conclusion

This year has been markedly quieter. I suppose some people would say that it couldn't have got worse, than other years. Nevertheless, committee members and the managers have proved willing to accept a number of tasks for which I personally am very grateful.

My thanks to all those people who have helped the Association throughout this last year.

.....Neil Sinclair

## FINANCE MANAGER'S REPORT

The accounts will be presented formally at the AGM and copies of the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet will be available at the meeting. I would take this opportunity of mentioning a few salient points.

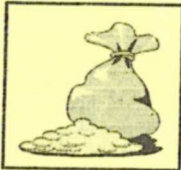
Whilst we started the year with a fairly healthy balance in hand of over £4,000 in the bank, this was somewhat depleted during 1993 to £3,540 at the end of the financial year, because of necessary expenditure on the replacement of the entrance doors, costing £1,860 and the later replacement of the door lock and keys (for all regular users), costing £286. These items are referred to in the Chairman's report.

Our insurance premium rose by nearly £400 to £841 and electrical consumption increased, putting our bill up by £191 for the year. We purchased a new floor buffer at a price of £584 (again, referred to in the Chairman's report).

Fortunately our income from regular and casual users held more-or-less steady from the previous

year.

A slight change has been made in the presentation of the year-end accounts, in that debts due to the Association and payments due to our suppliers have been included in the year of account, rather than being shown when they are actually received or paid. This has, in the main, not had a significant effect on our balance, because the sums owing to us and by us are similar in total.



The Chairman has commented that we have found it necessary to increase charges by 10% , after having kept them the same for a few years. It is expected that we should at least break even during the current financial year, even though we intend to replace the fence bordering the car park, or perhaps to achieve a modest surplus.

I shall be happy to answer any questions on the accounts at the AGM.

.....John Stubbins



# PARK RANGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION  
SPRING 1994

## RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All residents of Vinters Park and Woodlands Estates are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Vinters Park Residents' Association, to be held in the Community Centre on Wednesday 11th May 1994, starting at 8.15pm. Refreshments will be served from 8pm.

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM
3. Matters arising therefrom
4. Chairman's report
5. Presentation of accounts
6. Election of Officers and Executive Committee members
7. Appointment of Hon. Auditor
8. Consideration of a motion to waive the annual subscription
9. A presentation by Donal MacGrory on Vinters Valley Park
10. An address by Chief Inspector Williams of Kent County Constabulary on community policing
11. Any other business

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I must start this report on a sour note, with a warning!

The Community Centre has recently been plagued by boys of between 12 and 15 years of age, either annoying users or causing damage.

Most of them live within a short distance of the Community Centre and I am quite sure that their parents know who they are. Because of their behaviour all users have been instructed to call the police if these boys enter the premises. Parents, please make sure that you know where your sons are going of an evening.

A further matter of concern is the impending loss of our community policeman - Ian Gedge. This has been caused by a reorganisation of community policing. A Kent County Constabulary representative will attend the AGM to discuss this and other matters of concern with residents.

We are also pleased that Donal MacGrory will be coming to the meeting to discuss the present state of, and future plans for, the Vinters Valley Park.

On other matters, the Executive Committee has continued to divide its time equally between

## ALL MAY SPEAK ON ANY MATTER

community issues and management of the Community Centre. Residents should be aware of the fact that Vinters Park/Woodlands is generally considered one of the better areas of the town and therefore does not attract much special amenity funding from either the Borough or County Council.

We do our utmost to represent the best interests of all our residents. However, this would be made considerably easier if a few more people were prepared to join the Executive Committee. This normally involves about 1½ hours every 4 to 6 weeks. Nominations will be accepted at the AGM or nomination forms are available from our Secretary, Keith Rogers.

Being a voluntary committee we're also always pleased to hear of and to encourage residents to make their own representations to the Council on matters of concern. We are happy to advise residents on the best way of doing this.

### People

Keith Rogers and myself were elected as Honorary Secretary and Chairman respectively at the AGM. At the first Executive Committee meeting Noreen Latham was appointed as Vice-Chairman and Peter Lott (immediate past Chairman) was co-opted onto the Committee. Bookings, Finance and Premises Managers' positions were filled respectively by Margaret Stubbins, David Evans and Ernie Mercer.

Regrettably David found it necessary for family reasons to tender his resignation in October as Finance Manager. Fortunately John Stubbins (a former Chairman) was prepared to step into the breach immediately and has taken over from David without a hitch. My thanks to both these gentlemen for the work that they have done this year, and to David for the flawless way in which he had carried out his duties for so many years.

David has meanwhile also been co-opted onto the Committee and continues to support us with his considerable experience and wit.

We were also sad to see the resignation in July of Val Elton. Again the family must come first. However we are delighted to see that, despite ill health, Val is continuing to pursue his interest in planning and environmental issues. He has in fact initiated a number of matters that the Committee

has pursued further.

### Traffic and Related Matters

Following the AGM's decision last year we have not pursued issues of traffic calming, although the irksome behaviour of drivers travelling through the estate still attracts much attention.

Following discussion at the AGM, the re-opening of the Hampton Road/Bearsted Road Junction gap was taken up with the County Council. However it soon became obvious that, with the decision made and the junction complete, the only grounds for improvement would be those of safety. We would be pleased to hear from any residents witnessing accidents on this stretch of Bearsted Road, as the final stages of the 'improvements' to this section are imminent and now would be a good opportunity to reinforce our arguments.

Park and Ride schemes in this area would also still appear to be some time away, despite the encouraging noises made earlier this year.

This seems to be a pity as if this scheme had come into operation there might be no need for the proposed 'half hour no waiting' restriction for the lower part of the estate. The Executive Committee was of the opinion that it should support this proposal in view of the dangerous manner in which many commuters park and the complaints we have received from some residents concerning parking in their area.

We did suggest a modification to include Marston Drive and the roads leading off it and we are pleased to note that the County Council has taken this on board. Some residents may be unhappy with our support of this proposal but it has at least spurred the Council into undertaking a consultation



exercise in the roads affected, inviting comments on the proposals and alternative solutions.

The Executive Committee has also followed up the matter of improving footpaths and providing maps of footpaths. No special funding has yet been provided for additional footpaths and footpath maps on the estate; however we will continue to

press the Council on these matters.

### Street Lighting

From time to time committee members receive reports of street lights not working. Periodically we carry out a survey of the lights and report faulty ones to the Council. Nevertheless, it is still quicker for residents themselves to contact the Council (telephone no: 602132). However if the response is not rapid please let us know.

### Litter

This is a continuing problem throughout the Vinters and Woodlands, with the Community Centre and Snowdon Parade being particular troublespots.

The Community Centre problem has been much improved since the introduction of overnight chaining of the car park and a regular routine of clearing.

Snowdon Parade and areas around it unfortunately still attract many complaints. It may be of interest to residents to know that if an open area is more than a few feet from the road then it is the responsibility of the grass cutting contractors to clear the area rather than council road cleaning staff. This may well explain the long life of some of the rubbish.

It would also be interesting to hear from residents about the amount of rubbish generated by the Fish and Chip shop and whether it is being cleared on a daily basis. Believe it or not, there are 8 litter bins in the area of Snowdon Parade, and we have actually checked their existence. Provision of additional bins may not be the answer.



Litter is in fact an estate-wide problem, ranging from sweet wrappers to bags of rubbish dumped in wooded areas. May I remind everyone that dropping litter is a prosecutable offence and the Council's Warden is prepared to follow these matters up.

When litter become unsightly, a phone call to the Council's Environmental Health Department will usually produce a fairly rapid response by the litter

removal 'Hit Squad'.

### Planning Matters

We continue to monitor planning applications and inform residents where appropriate.

In September, we supported residents in Snowdon Avenue with their objections to a Fish and Chip shop. Despite petitions and the personal representations of residents, Councillors MacGroy and Shaw and myself, our objections were disregarded by the Planning Committee, apparently because the application would almost certainly be passed on appeal.

Executive Committee members have also attended seminars on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and the Kent Structure Plan.

The Rail Link would appear to pose no direct threat to Vinters or Woodlands. However, it was alarming to realise that Maidstone East Railway Station was on one of two main goods traffic routes and will also take peak-hour passenger services once the Channel Tunnel is open. In many respects the sooner the Link is built the better.

The Kent Structure Plan would also seem not to threaten the estate although Maidstone is 5th on the list of areas with available land resources and it is anticipated that some 5,000 dwellings will be required annually until the year 2011.

### Community Centre

The Community Centre continues to attract steady bookings but as its age increases then so do maintenance problems. A number of minor improvements have become pressing.

For this reason it was considered essential to increase the hiring fees by 10% - the first increase necessary for several years.

Early in 1993 new and sturdier entrance doors were fitted and they have proved a worthwhile investment.

Regrettably, a few months afterwards a key was broken in one of the locks and no one saw fit to inform any committee member or manager. Fortunately it happened in the unlocked position