

# VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION HELD AT VINTERS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE ON MONDAY 30 APRIL 2001.

### 1. OPENING.

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending. He particularly thanked our speakers His Worship the Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Dan Daley and Superintendent Mick Matthews, who was supported by Sergeant Farncombe and P.C. Ian Gedge and P.C. John Anstell. Others who were present included Councillors Mrs. M. Shaw and P. Sellar, Mr. Geoff Russell, the Highways Manager, Mr Dennis Fowle of Downsmail and Mrs.Helen Morley, and Mr. Martin Pleece, the Warden and Treasurer respectively of Vinters Valley Park Trust. The Chairman referred to the display on the work of the Trust and encouraged residents to lend their support to the Trust which had been in dire financial difficulties of late.

Apologies were received in respect of Andrew Rowe M.P., County Councillor Mrs. M. Featherstone, Councillor D. MacGrory and Mr. D. Abrams the Head Teacher of Eastborough Primary School. In sending his apologies Mr. Abrams had outlined the future programme relating to the redevelopment of the school which, it was noted, would require the closure of Huntsman Lane for some time.

### 2. MINUTES.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 April 2000 were circulated at the meeting, approved and signed by the Chairman.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

Mr. Val Elton referred to Minute 2 and his complaint last year about the condition of Footpath KB 9. The marker for this footpath was still not in place, but a member of Mr. Geoff Russell's staff had assured Mr. Elton that he would look into this matter. The Chairman thanked Mr. Elton for his efforts to ensure that our footpaths were kept open and in good order.

### 4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

The Chairman's written Report had been circulated with the Notice of Meeting and Agenda in the recent issue of "Park Ranger". In answer to a question the Chairman confirmed that the installation of a loop system was a matter which was being pursued.

A resident of <sup>Garrington?</sup> ~~Garrington~~ Close stated that the reference in the Report to the slabs supporting the bank flanking the footpath leading from the estate to Eastborough school 'slipping down on to the footpath' was inaccurate. She had seen vandals pulling them down. She had also seen a number of other acts of vandalism in that area including damage to the lights by the crossing. The representatives of the Police present took due note of these comments.

## 5. PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS.

John Stubbins, the Hon. Auditor, presented the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2001 and the Balance Sheet as at that date. Copies of this Account and the Balance were circulated at the meeting. John pointed out that income from hirers was up by nearly £1,000 and also highlighted the continued increase in bank interest arising from the transfer to the Standard Life Bank. At the same time there had been significant increases in the sums spent on general maintenance and on 'equipment: new and maintenance' so that there was only a surplus of £184 on the year, fully justifying the recent increase in hire charge. Despite this the Balance Sheet showed that the Association had maintained a comparable position to that reached in the previous year.

John did express concern about one matter. The main account had been overdrawn attracting Bank Charges of £66 and John expressed surprise that Chairman had decided not to pursue this with the Bank. The Chairman explained that he had investigated the matter and finding that the account had been overdrawn for three weeks he had decided that the Association had little ground for appealing to the Bank. John asked that the Chairman reconsider the matter and said he would be happy to assist him.

The Meeting duly approved the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2001 and the Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2001, copies of which are inserted in the Minute Book.

## 6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

The following members were duly elected to the posts indicated:

Chairman Neil Sinclair

Vice Chairman Gerry KIRRAGE

Honorary Secretary Keith Rogers

Executive Committee Joan Butcher, Sue Fry, Chris KIRRAGE, Peter Lott and Terry O'Connor.

## 7. APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY AUDITOR.

John Stubbins stated that as the Finance Manager had had to give her notice in, it meant that a new appointment would have to be made and that it might be wise to keep all options open and not to appoint an Honorary Auditor at this stage. With the full agreement of the meeting it was RESOLVED that the Executive Committee be given full authority to appoint the Honorary Auditor for the coming year and settle the honorarium to be paid for the past year.

## 8. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - ABOLITION.

The Chairman explained that the Executive Committee had given consideration to the Annual Subscription which in the past all Members had been asked to pay to provide the Association's income. With the completion of the Community Centre the Association had been able to obtain a reasonable income from the hiring fees. Some years ago it had been decided not to collect subscriptions, but it had been necessary to waive the Annual Subscription at each A.G.M.

## 8. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - ABOLITION. (continued)

The Executive Committee had come to the conclusion that there appeared no need to retain the facility for an Annual Subscription, the collection of which had been a great burden for the Committee and a surprise to Members each year. To abolish the Annual Subscription it was necessary to amend the Constitution and to follow a special procedure. Following the receipt of a written request from a Member the Executive Committee had passed a resolution unanimously that the Annual Subscription should be abolished and the Constitution amended accordingly.

Notice of the proposal had been given in Park Ranger and it was now necessary for the Annual General Meeting to consider the proposal to abolish the Annual Subscription. It was then formally proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** by more than the two thirds majority with only one person voting against that the Annual Subscription be abolished and that the appropriate amendments be made to the Constitution including the deletion of Paragraphs 5 and 9 (vii).

## 9. THE MAYOR ON 'GETTING INVOLVED'.

In welcoming Councillor Dan Daley, the Mayor of Maidstone, the Chairman said that the Association was extremely privileged in having the current Mayor at our A.G.M. for the second year running. In response Councillor Daley said that he had been delighted to be invited and felt that it was good for the Mayor to be out and about meeting people and involved in a meeting like this one. In his perambulations around the town during his year in office he had attended a great variety of similar meetings of many different types of voluntary bodies. He was particularly glad to see representatives of one such voluntary body at the meeting, namely the Vinters Valley Park Trust. This body was well worth our support as it maintained one of the small oases of open space in our town, which we need to preserve. He had had his Garden Party at another one not far away- Turkey Mill, a beautiful place and had lately visited another at the Scouts Headquarters at Stockett Lane. It was a shame that so many people knew little of these places. We ought to be proud of them all, protect them and enjoy them.

The first time Councillor Daley had visited Maidstone - in 1972 - he had hoped it would be the last as the traffic in the Maidstone area had greatly delayed his journey. However, within a few years he had moved to Allington, an area of great residential growth recently. In 1901 there were 320 people living there, but now the population was something like 9,750.

As Mayor he heard many of the complaints about Maidstone. Looking at a copy of the Maidstone Journal of 1901 he had been surprised that similar complaints were being made at that time. There was concern for the future of the Town Football Club, questions as to why Maidstone was still lit by gas when Canterbury had electricity, proposals to build an incinerator to deal with the rubbish, complaints about bad language in the streets and the hope that a theatre might be built for Maidstone. How familiar it all sounded. And people are still asking why doesn't the Council do something about these sorts of matters and others. The fact is that in so many cases the Borough Council does not have the ability to do anything. Very often the initiative and power lay with another authority.

However, people should be aware of how well Maidstone is doing. Already there is 1.2 million square feet of retail space and with the Fremlin development we will in time have more than Bluewater! As it is, in the rankings locally Maidstone only comes behind Bluewater, but in front of Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells! It is regarded as a very good location to do business.

## 9. THE MAYOR ON 'GETTING INVOLVED'. (continued)

Moreover there was a vibrant future to look forward to. The Riverside Park will be a great boon when completed - at present two months behind schedule with climbing costs because of the appalling weather. He would be opening the Ampitheatre on 12 May and we had three new bridges over the Medway, with the Lockmeadow Bridge the recipient of three international awards. The Borough Council is about to change by adopting Cabinet Government, which, if it works well, could be just what is wanted to give Maidstone a kick. Hopefully it will be a way to get outsiders interested in what is going on. One possible difficulty that Maidstone has is its proximity to London. We need to create and preserve our own identity.

The Chairman expressed the thanks of the meeting to the Mayor for his lively, amusing and yet, at the same time, very thought-provoking talk.

## 10. LOCAL POLICING.

The Chairman introduced Superintendent Mick Matthews who was going to speak on local policing. Superintendent Matthews thanked the Association for the invitation. He welcomed the opportunity to speak at such a meeting and thought the public attendance compared well with some high profile meetings on police matters. He had been at Maidstone just one year now, coming from being head of the intelligence unit for three years. So it had been a complete change of role from hiding in ditches, tapping phones and keeping out of the newspapers to one for which he really needed to be in the limelight getting all the publicity he could for the Police locally.

Nowadays much turns on the public's perception of the Police, closely linked to their perception of crime. Of increasing concern these days is people's fear of crime. He was grateful to the lady who, earlier in the meeting, had reported the incidents of vandalism at night in the area of the footpath leading down to the schools. This was a good example of criminal damage, which is the one crime which is on the increase in the area. Pulling wiring out, perhaps only a few pounds to put right, but possibly dangerous and a crime. This incident also illustrated the type of fear people can have, hearing noises in the street at night, perhaps sounding much worse than it is. Nevertheless, the fear can be very real.

The Police had to face up to two big issues - how to cope with Town Centre Policing and also Rural Policing. On top of this there were the Housing Estates in Maidstone to be catered for. Overall Superintendent Matthews was responsible for providing policing for a population of 194,000 with very stretched resources. The growth of night clubs and restaurants in the Town Centre meant that between 11.00 p.m. and midnight there could be 12,000 to 13,000 on the streets compared to 5,000 two and a half years ago. It is vibrant centre and such numbers are good for the economy, but their mere presence can make the middle-aged or elderly fearful of going to town at night. On top of this there was the real problem of drugs, which had led him to introduce the use of passive drug dogs - a change of tactic which had proved very effective.

To cover the Town Centre situation it had been necessary to call in the units covering the rural areas. This had produced a vacuum effect so that people in rural areas were scared even to go outside their houses at night. Fortunately the good performance achieved overall resulted in a grant from central government enabling an increase of resources. So now it was possible to rebuild rural teams as well as providing for the Town Centre with a dedicated team.

## 10. LOCAL POLICING. (continued)

So far as housing estates were concerned Vinters Park had the 'luxury' of two very effective Officers living on the estate as illustrated by the recent award to Ian of the Area Commander's Certificate of Merit. However there was not necessarily much evidence of police activity from uniformed Officers on the estate. This did not mean the Police were not about. They had been working a lot under cover to catch two people known to be committing burglaries in the area.

While the figures for criminal damage were up, the figures for thefts from dwellings, shops and cars were down. Nevertheless, the increase in criminal damage means a lot of unnecessary damage which must be addressed. The acts of arson to trees was a case in point. There had been over 50 incidents in total and although three people had been apprehended separately they had only admitted to a couple incidents leaving 50 or so still unaccounted for. It is an act of a couple of seconds to set a tree alight and therefore easily done without anyone actually seeing. This is where the Police hoped the public could help as people do know what goes on in the community. Everyone was asked to contact the Police with any information they had about these and all other crimes. We were all asked to pass on to the Police any information we had.

The Chairman thanked Superintendent Matthews for his informative talk and asked for any questions.

## 11. QUESTION TIME.

Responding to the Chairman's invitation residents raised a number of points including those referred to below, which were either answered or noted for later action:

A number of residents raised concerns about the state of the underpass at Hampton Road of which note was taken on behalf of The Maidstone Borough Council. Part of this complaint related to graffiti which Val Elton raised as a general issue. Superintendent Matthews' response was that it was a great help when an area like the underpass was highlighted as a place where such offences frequently occurred. A surveillance exercise could be mounted, but it was necessary to catch someone in the act and this sometimes involved a long waiting process.

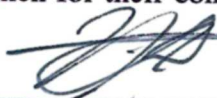
Carol Bell of Sittingbourne Road referred to the lack of bins for dog waste on a large part of the estate. Geoff Russell agreed to enquire about this, but the Mayor pointed out that there were 330 bins around the Borough. Complaints were made of particular dogs being allowed to foul specific locations, of which note was taken for the Amenities Warden to investigate.

Joan Butcher referred to the failure of an MBC employee to take note of the need for repairs to be carried out in the section of Birchington Close which was agreed to be highway last year. Geoff Russell would ask the Highway Inspector take appropriate action. Action was being taken to keep the footpaths open adjacent to the roundabout on Bearsted Road, currently blocked by parked vehicles.

Note was taken of a complaint of the inadequacy of the size of post boxes on the estate.

Pat Moorman asked if the proposal she had noted in another part of the country to require motorists over 70 to resit their driving tests was to be extended to Kent. Superintendent Matthews was not aware of any such proposal, but the Mayor added that KCC did run a campaign aimed at elderly drivers. Geoff Russell added his concern at the high proportion of dangerous drivers on the roads at night.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking everyone present for their attendance and all those who had spoken for their contributions. He then closed the meeting at 10.05 p.m.



5

CHAIRMAN

DATE



# VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2001

	2000/01		1999/00	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>				
Community Centre hire				
Regular hirers	8,834		7,540	
Casual hirers	1,270		1,595	
Bank Interest	211		58	
Boxley Parish Council: Grant	-		250	
Other income	35		60	
	<u>35</u>		<u>60</u>	
		10,350		9,503
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
<i>Community Centre Costs:</i>				
Caretaking & cleaning	3,131		3,004	
General maintenance	1,230		375	
Structural alterations & repairs	60		200	
Grounds maintenance	40		70	
Equipment: new & maintenance	1,889		199	
Electricity	504		768	
Gas	559		467	
Water	92		98	
Sewerage	136		121	
Insurances	745		722	
Performing rights	247		cr 100	
	<u>8,643</u>		<u>5,924</u>	
<i>Administration &amp; Other Costs:</i>				
Managers' salaries	840		819	
Secretarial expenses	177		128	
Subscription	10		10	
Grant: Vinters Valley Trust	300		300	
Donation	-		30	
AGM exps (Parkranger & refreshments)	89		85	
Bank charges	66		-	
Audit fee	40		50	
Other expenses	1		-	
	<u>1</u>		<u>-</u>	
		10,166		7,346
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>		<u>184</u>		<u>2,157</u>

## Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2001

	2000/01		1999/00	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Accumulated Funds:</b>				
At start of year		5,369		3,212
Add: surplus for year		184		2,157
Less: Deficit for year		-		-
		<hr/>		<hr/>
At end of year		5,553		5,369
<b>Deposits Held:</b>				
At start of year		70		115
Received		630		767
Returned	cr	640	cr	762
With-held		-	cr	50
		<hr/>		<hr/>
At end of year		60		70
		<hr/> <hr/>		<hr/> <hr/>
		5,613		5,439
<b>Represented By:</b>				
Bank current account		1,699		1,027
Bank reserve account		3,669		4,058
Debtors		947		817
Receipts in advance	cr	30	cr	57
Creditors	cr	672	cr	406
		<hr/>		<hr/>
		<hr/> <hr/>		<hr/> <hr/>
		5,613		5,439

AVICE HARMS - Finance Manager

I have examined the respective records and vouchers and certify that these accounts give a true and fair view of the transactions of the Vinters Park Residents' Association for the year ended 31 January 2001 and of the financial position at that date.

JOHN STUBBINS, CPFA - Honorary Auditor