

the doors. Far less prominent but adequate and considerably cheaper.

Chairs Replaced - Following concern about the state of the chairs in the Hall the old ones were disposed of and replaced.

Curtains Replaced - As the curtains were looking distinctly threadbare they were replaced during this financial year - at a very reasonable price from KCC Supplies.

Loop system - We are currently examining a loop system for those with impaired hearing.

Play Group - Woodlands Play Group and Toddlers continues to meet on weekdays in the Hall. The Committee is well aware of the increased pressures that they have to endure with ever more stringent regulation. The Committee therefore felt that, when they approached us about the need to hire the whole Hall daily, we should not, initially, charge for the use of the Common Room.

A "Play Bus" - has visited the Hall and used the car park.

Other Users - The "Life Charismatic Church" has recently relinquished its regular Sunday Booking in the Hall. It is hoped that at some time in the future it will be meeting here again.

Unfortunately the local Guides group finished when its leader left the area. If anybody is interested in leading such a group then they should be aware that they will be charged an extremely low rate for hire of the Hall.

Finance

Overall the Association finances would appear to be healthy - although at the time this report was prepared we were still awaiting our audited accounts. As with any Charity we do not seek to make a profit, rather to make sufficient money to maintain a reasonable reserve, to maintain and prudently im-

prove the building and its contents, and if possible support local community initiatives. With this in mind it has been possible to increase the rates of pay of our managers and cleaners in line with inflation. Also as we have not been able to significantly increase our reserves it was felt prudent to, generally, increase our fees in line with inflation. It is hoped that it will very rarely be necessary to impose any increase of more than inflation.

Annual General meeting

This years Mayor - Dan Daley - will be speaking at the AGM and anyone who has heard him will know that this alone will make the evening stimulating. We will also have Superintendent Matthews or another senior police officer coming to speak as well as Geoff Russell to answer queries on the maintenance of the estate, its roads and surrounding areas.

Conclusion

The Association only continues because of the work of all its Committee members and of the Community Centre, Bookings and Finance Managers. As you can probably see we appear to be moving into a time when the Association is being consulted more frequently and by more public bodies.

Personally I feel that this, and encouraging a community spirit, should be the principal purpose of the Executive Committee of the Association. We do, unfortunately, sometimes lack Members able to involve themselves in such matters and would therefore welcome volunteers to stand for the Committee this year.

My thanks to all members of the Committee for their support throughout the year, especially to Keith Rogers for his invaluable work as secretary and to the Community Centre Managers - Bernard Bellchambers, Margaret Stubbins and Avice Harms for their support, advice and assistance.



PARK RANGER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All residents of Vinters Park including Woodlands Estates are invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of the Vinters Park Residents' Association, to be held in the Community Centre on Monday 30th April, starting at 8.15pm.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM.
3. Matters arising therefrom.
4. Matters arising from the Chairman's Report.
5. Presentation of Accounts
6. Election of Officers and Executive Committee members.
7. Appointment of Hon. Auditor.
8. To consider a proposal to abolish Annual subscription and amend the Constitution accordingly. NB. See note of explanation at base of adjacent column..
9. The Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Dan Daley will speak on "Getting Involved".
10. Superintendent Mick Matthews will speak on local policing.
11. Question Time - A chance to ask speakers and other guests questions on local concerns.
12. Any other business.

Chairman's Report

Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Report of the Executive Committee to the Vinters Park Residents Association. In case you are wondering how you became a member then you should know that all residents of Vinters Park estate and Woodlands are automatically members and have the right to ask to be represented, when appropriate, by the Association. As you will see we do discuss a wide variety of subjects each month and welcome comments from anyone living on the estate.

Where we Live

Crime and Policing

The Committee continues to receive regular reports from the "Crime Prevention Unit" about incidents on

Abolition of Annual Subscription [Agenda Item 8]

The Executive Committee supports a proposal for the abolition of Annual Subscriptions and the alteration of the Associations Constitution to give effect thereto by the deletion of Paragraph 5 and Paragraph 9 (vii) which contain the provisions relating to Annual Subscriptions. The meeting will be asked to vote on this proposal. NB. The Association has not collected these Annual Subscriptions from members for many years because its revenue is now obtained from lettings of the Community Centre. These provisions are therefore obsolete. Anyone requiring further information should contact the Chairman or Secretary.

the estate and the surrounding area. As many will remember there were several incidents last year when vehicles stolen on the estate were set on fire. Most memorably when one was first driven into a subway. There have been far fewer such incidents this year but instead we have had several trees and hedges in residents' gardens set on fire, some of them adjacent to residents' houses and therefore potentially hazardous to life as well as property. No culprits were identified, at the time, but security videos had been made by some residents and the police have been extremely active in trying to stop the incidents.

Towards the end of last year a number of burglaries were reported all bearing marked similarities to each other. The police were able to arrest someone and will no doubt be prosecuting in due course.

There have also been the usual problems with bunches of young people generally being unpleasant. Most of this seems to have centred around the shops. The worst incidents seem to occur when most of them should have been at home, if not in bed. The Executive Committee would strongly urge parents to help by ensuring that they have a good idea of what their children are up to at any time of day or night, certainly until they are 16 or over.

Traffic

The Committee had very few matters to discuss in this area. There are still problems in some areas with vehicle being driven at excessive speeds and perhaps most of us need to be reminded that a 30 mph speed limit does apply on all the estate. It is very easy to forget that young children could be using the roads at any time of the day.

The Committee was also consulted upon a proposal for cycle routes through the estate. This apparently is part of a government sponsored initiative to encourage children to walk or cycle to school. The Committee members able to attend the meeting felt that the proposed routes were not likely to attract much use, that they should not share footpaths often used by parents with young children and that

they took little account of children from the estate who might wish to cycle to school. Suggestions were made that it was felt might be more practical and the scheme was withdrawn for further consideration.

Condition of the Estate

Subways - As many will be aware, at this time last year, the more southerly of the two subways on Hampton road, after being repeatedly graffitied, finally had a car driven through it and set on fire. Despite repeated reminders to the council officials concerned nothing happened to clean up the effects of the incident for several months. In the end we had to resort to sending photographs to all our local councillors and those directly involved in the committees responsible for maintenance. The responses were interesting. However it still took a considerable amount of time before any cleaning up was done and repairs effected. It is sad to note that it is rapidly returning to its former condition. I find it very difficult to believe that nobody ever sees anything. The police are keen to find the culprits of this sort of damage as they are responsible for tens of thousands of pounds of such damage throughout the town all of which is paid for by our taxes.

Bus Shelter - The state of the bus shelters was raised at the same time as the subways and did produce the promise of action. I'm glad to see that the matter has now much improved although it would have been nice to have had Vinters spelt properly!

Overhanging Trees - On a number of occasions the Committee has raised the matter of dangerously overhanging trees. In general the matter has been dealt with promptly.

Slabs on path to school. - Two or three times a year one or more of the slabs on the path (Vinters Lane) from the estate to Eastborough school slides onto the path. This is always drawn to the councils attention, repaired and then happens again. It would be nice to see a permanent solution.

New Developments

Planning Applications - Very few major developments in this sphere. The Committee does not feel able to intervene in disputes involving neighbours - as both are residents of the estate - unless one person's action may affect many other residents. It was felt necessary to express our concern about another fast food outlet at Snowdon Parade. The major problem with applications of this sort is that the Council has no legitimate reason for refusing them and so can very rarely turn them down. It was felt therefore that nothing would be achieved by an Association representative speaking at a Council Meeting although all members were sympathetic to the concerns of residents of the area. It is also difficult to know whether empty boarded up shops are more of a liability to all residents of the estate than a row of fast food outlets.

Valley Park

Financial State - The Committee was very concerned to hear that the Valley Park was running short of money for its upkeep. Currently the Association gives a sum to the Park to meet certain specific needs. However the Park's needs are really for regular sums of money to pay wages etc. If you use the amenities the park provides then may I suggest that you contact the warden - Ms. Morley - the amounts involved on an individual basis are very small but could make all the difference in the preservation of such a beauty spot.

Walks - Walks were arranged last year, by the Valley Park Trust to allow residents to see and enjoy more of its beauties. It is hoped to arrange one or two more such events in the coming year. Please speak to someone representing the Valley park at the Association's AGM.

Representing You

The Association has been asked to send representatives along to certain bodies these included:-

Police Liaison Group - This is a body drawing representatives from most of the areas covered by Maidstone Police Station. Although it includes many rural parishes much of what is said is relevant to our own locality. It does provide a direct connection to senior officers at the local station that would otherwise not be available.

Maidstone and Malling Primary Care Trust Consultation - The Committee has sent two representatives along to this very important consultation upon the future organization of Health Services in the area.

The Association

Community Centre

I am certain that most of you are familiar with the Community Centre. It is available at very preferential rates to all residents of the estate and provides most of the facilities required by small to medium sized groups. The centre is managed very ably by Bernard Bellchambers, who handles all matters relating to the Community Centre other than Bookings - handled by Margaret Stubbins our Bookings Manager. The Committee which is responsible for approving any major expenditure or material improvements to the Centre receives regular reports. Among those matters reported on have been -

Vandalism - There has been one incident of locks being glued up causing considerable difficulties for the Play Group.

The cover on the gas meter and the flues to the central heating have been badly damaged. Repairs were effected promptly but obviously any damage relating to gas appliances could be potentially dangerous.

The safety glass in the doors was cracked by person or persons unknown. This could have been accidental but that is doubtful.

The large sign above the doors has been progressively destroyed by footballs - or something harder. It was felt to be more effective to replace it with a sign behind the glass above