

# VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION.

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION HELD AT VINTERS PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE ON WEDNESDAY 21 APRIL 2004.

### 1. OPENING.

The Chairman, Gerry Kirrage, welcomed everyone to the meeting. (*From the signatures on the Attendance List, at least 56 were present.*) The Chairman particularly thanked the Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Morel D'Souza, for attending and agreeing to speak a little later in the meeting. It was much appreciated that the Mayoress was also present. He went on to explain that a number of formalities had to be dealt with first before the Mayor spoke and that then there would be a time for questions from the floor.

The Secretary presented apologies on behalf of County Councillor Margaret Featherstone, Mrs S. Glanville (Invicta Grammar School), David Abrams (Eastborough Primary School, Ron Armstrong Senior Highway Engineer with MBC, Lesley Cannon, Jackie Young, Neil Sinclair and Peter Lott.

### 2. MINUTES.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 30 April 2003, having been circulated at the meeting, were approved and signed by the Chairman. On the only matter arising, Councillor Dave Naghi explained that to close any of the accesses from the footpath by the Valley Park Community School would require the consent of all the residents immediately affected by such closure. He had understood that consideration was being given to the way such approval might be sought, possibly by way of petition.

### 3. 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". The Chairman thanked Mark Cannon from whom he had recently taken over again as Chairman for writing this Report and for all he had done during his time as Chairman. There were no questions raised on the Chairman's Report, but there were comments from the floor commending the report which it was felt would make those who read it consider their position in relation to the local community.

### 4. PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS.

Chris Kirrage, the Finance Manager presented the audited Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2004 and the Balance Sheet as at that date with the Independent Examiner's Report; copies of this Account, Balance Sheet and Report had been circulated at the meeting earlier. Chris explained that the decrease from last year's balance was due to essential expenditure on the painting of the Hall and replacement of light fittings. Discrepancies from last year's accounts were due to the change in the method of accounting adopted this year. This was only a passing problem and would not recur next year when the same system would have been used for both the past and current years.

**5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS.**

The following members were duly **ELECTED** to the posts indicated:

Chairman                      Gerry Kirrage

Vice Chairman                Neil Sinclair

Honorary Secretary        Keith Rogers

**Executive Committee.**

(1) Individual Members:     Carol Bell, Elsie Harris, Peter Lott, Maggie Middleton,  
Val Nightingale and Barry Smith.

(2) **Group Representatives:** Jackie Young (Playgroup), Ian Humpreys (Verity Church Fellowship) and Brenda Bodycombe (W.I.).

The Secretary explained that there were still vacancies for individual members and asked anyone present who became aware of a resident who would be interested in serving on the Executive Committee to let him or a member of the Committee know as it was possible for the Committee to fill such vacancies by co-option.

**6. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER/HONORARY AUDITOR.**

Chris Kirrage reported that Derek Parkhouse had agreed to take on the role of Independent Examiner during the previous year and was willing to continue. It was duly **AGREED** that Derek Parkhouse be appointed as the Independent Examiner for the current year.

**7. ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR - COUNCILLOR MOREL D'SOUZA.**

The Chairman invited the Mayor - Councillor Morel D'Souza to say a few words to the meeting.

The Mayor started by referring to the problems in Vinters Park mentioned in the Chairman's Report in Park Ranger. He pointed out that these were not uncommon and that there were many in Maidstone who would regard the residents of Vinters Park as living in a privileged area with so many open spaces here. This was not so in Fant where the Mayor lived. For example, St. Michael's School, of which the Mayor was a Governor, had no playing field only a concrete playground.

So, although we may have problems, we should not exaggerate them but see them in a wider context, bearing the good points in mind. Good things will come. Perhaps the proposals for a possible shelter where young people could meet may be a solution. We need to contribute to the local community as stated in Park Ranger, not just leave it to Councillors to do something. They were not all powerful, although, of course, they can help with problems as can the appropriate officers. So contact your Councillor or phone the Council Offices on Maidstone 602000 and make sure you speak to the appropriate Officer. You may need to persevere. They can help - provide information or get things done - that is what they are there for.

The Mayor concluded by wishing the Association and the residents well for the future.

## **8. QUESTION TIME.**

### **(1) Meeting re Provision of Facilities for Youngsters on the Estate**

Before opening the meeting to general questions, including the matters set out below, the Chairman said there were two specific matters to be dealt with. The first one related to a recent meeting which the Executive Committee had arranged with local Councillors and Officers of both Kent County Council (KCC) and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and representatives of the Police who work in the community to discuss the possibility of the provision of some facility enabling youngsters to meet on the estate of an evening.

The schools are not able to help at this time although there are plans which might provide a solution in the long term. The shelter to which the Mayor had referred earlier is a possibility to be explored in the meantime; the problem would be funding and more particularly finding an available site on the estate acceptable to both youngsters and residents. A further meeting had been arranged for June when it was hoped some of the youngsters would also be present to indicate more clearly what they were looking for. Nothing would be done, however, without consultation with residents living in the area concerned.

At the moment there is nothing definite planned, but the Executive Committee is anxious to try and keep the momentum going with a view to more positive action in the near future.

### **(2) Proposed 'Dispersal Order' for Vinters Park Estate.**

The Chairman then introduced Chief Inspector Dan Murphy to talk about the second matter of general concern. In explaining why new forms of policing were required the Chief Inspector described the present day situation. Whereas in the past a constable could tell a crowd of youngsters creating a nuisance to move on, nowadays he would be told to get lost. He illustrated the current climate in which the Police worked with a couple of stories. When an eleven year old was taken to the Police Station he produced a Solicitor's card and asked for him to be called. When another youngster was caught shoplifting the Constable, not wishing to give the lad a criminal record, persuaded the shopkeeper not to press charges and took the youngster to his home. There the parental response was "Get upstairs and don't get caught next time!" Another aspect of the local problem was a developing practice for parents living outside the estate to bring their children in their cars and drop them off in Vinters Park of an evening. Things are very different these days.

The Chief Inspector went on to explain that the Police in conjunction with MBC were proposing to bring into effect some of the powers contained in the Anti Social Behaviour Act in respect of the whole of Vinters Park estate. The Act provided for the introduction of a "Dispersal Order" which would apply for 6 weeks in respect of a designated area. Such an Order would empower the Police to require groups of youngsters causing a nuisance to disperse and go home. It also enabled the Police to take anyone under 16 home.

Before moving on this proposal the Police and MBC would wish to gauge the reaction of residents and the Chief Inspector would be asking those present to indicate their views. There might be a concern that there would be an effect on house prices. This proposed Dispersal Order was the first in Maidstone, but where it had been tried elsewhere in Kent there was no evidence that it had affected house prices. The proposed area was also important to ensure the whole area needing to be protected was included and a map was circulated showing that the whole of the estate was included.

## **8. QUESTION TIME. (continued)**

### **(2) Proposed 'Dispersal Order' for Vinters Park Estate. (continued)**

Police Sergeant Bryan Whittaker, P.C John Ansell and Vicky Hart, the Police Community Support Officer for Vinters, as well as Richard Powell, the Assistant Director for Economic and Social Well-being MBC, all helped to explain the way the Order would operate. The procedure would take two to three weeks to complete and during that time the group of Police Officers dedicated to applying the Order would be visiting the estate to identify problem areas and learning the layout . They would be working as a team to apply the Order only where there were problems, damage was being done or a nuisance created. However care would be taken to ensure there was no harassment and action would only be taken if there was a problem. Vinters Park was also included in those areas where drinking in public places was prohibited and this would also be enforced where appropriate.

Pains had been taken to ensure that bringing in the Order for Vinters Park was justified especially as this was a pilot scheme for Maidstone and, from the record of troubles here of recent years, the Police and MBC were satisfied that this was so. MBC, whose approval was required, was anxious that this should be a collaborative project and consultations had been held with all agencies working with the youth in the area to make sure this was so. The support of local residents was now being sought at this meeting.

As to the future it was hoped that an effective use of the order for a relatively short period would act as a deterrent to further problems, but if necessary the Order could be extended.

The usual phone number for problems was Maidstone 01622 690055 and Vicky Hart could be contacted on 01622 608136. For real emergencies the usual 999 call would still be appropriate.

When asked to indicate their approval the vast majority of residents present indicated their approval of the introduction of a Dispersal Order on the estate and the proposed area as shown on the map circulated. No-one voted against.

### **(3) Difficulties in Contacting the Police.**

In response to serious concerns about the poor service given by the Police, it was accepted by the Police that there had been difficulties in contacting them on the telephone when action was requested and failure to respond adequately on occasions when contact was made. This had largely been due to a new system and inexperienced staff. Things were much better and it was important that complaints were communicated to the Police, even if this meant repeated calls, so that they could build up a complete picture of the position on the ground.

### **(4) Incidents caused by people coming back from town late at night through the estate.**

It was agreed that some problems of this nature did arise and not necessarily just caused by youngsters. Again these incidents did need to be reported.

### **(5) Surgeries to be held by the Police Community Support Officer for Vinters.**

Vicky Hart confirmed that she would holding surgeries in the Community Centre from 4.30 to 6.30 pm on Thursdays 6 May and 3 June when anyone could come and see her with problems relating to the estate.

**VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

**Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2004**

	2003/04		2002/03	
	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>				
Community Centre hire				
Regular hirers	9356		10449	
Casual hirers	1289		952	
Bank Interest	214		222	
Insurance claims	0		0	
Sale of second-hand computer, etc	0		0	
Jubilee Event takings	0		349	
Other income	45		30	
		10904		12003
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
<i>Community Centre Costs:</i>				
Premises Manager's salary	862		838	
Cleaning wages & materials	2680		2383	
Structural maintenance & fittings	4613		434	
Plumbing, electrical, heating	122		339	
Grounds maintenance	0		0	
Equipment: new & maintenance	430		592	
Electricity	261		547	
Gas	347		438	
Water	67		113	
Sewerage	85		145	
Insurances	1199		1045	
Performing rights	216		59	
	10881		6933	
<i>Administration &amp; Other Costs:</i>				
Jubilee Event	0		658	
Bookings & Finance Managers' Salaries	1180		892	
Secretarial expenses	178		128	
Subscription - Kent RCC	47		30	
Grant: Vinters Valley Trust	225		300	
Donation	0		0	
Parkranger	112		172	
Bank charges	0		0	
Audit fee	50		50	
Other expenses	75		75	
		12673		9238
<b>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</b>		-1768		2765

**Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2004**

	2003/04		2002/03	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Accumulated Funds:</b>				
At start of year		10928		8163
Add: surplus for year		-1768		2765
Less: Deficit for year		<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
At end of year		9160		10928
<b>Deposits Held:</b>				
At start of year		60		155
Received		15		583
Returned		-75		-678
With-held		<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>
At end of year		0		60
		<u>9160</u>		<u>10988</u>
<b>Represented By:</b>				
Bank current account		1260		2801
Bank savings account		7899		7685
Debtors		0		915
Payments/Receipts in advance		0		82
Creditors		<u>0</u>		<u>-495</u>
		<u>9160</u>		<u>10988</u>

CHRIS KIRRAGE - Finance Manager

I certify that proper accounting records have been kept and that the income and expenditure account is consistent with the relevant records and that the balance sheet gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Vinters Park Residents' Association as at 31 January 2004.

DEREK PARKHOUSE - Independent Examiner, appointed in accordance with the Charities Act 1993, Part VI

*Derek Parkhouse*

10/3/2004.