



VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association held at Vinters Park Community Centre on Wednesday 19 April 2006

1. OPENING

In opening the meeting the Chairman, Gerry Kirrage, welcomed everyone attending. (The signatures on the Attendance List indicated that nearly 50 were present). The Chairman particularly thanked the Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor John Horne, for attending and agreeing to speak later in the meeting. It was much appreciated that the Mayoress was also present. Other notables present included: Councillor Bill Stead, the Chairman of Boxley Council; Councillor Dave Naghi; Councillor Wendy Hinder; County Councillor Margaret Featherstone; East Ward Candidates Ian Chittenden and Mark Wooding; Mrs Caroline Judge from Eastborough School; Katrina Kjoeller from the Downsmail and a representation from Maidstone Police which included Inspector Adam Jones, Sgt. Ian Jones and PCSO Matt Spencer.

The Chairman advised those present that, unfortunately, it had not been possible to have a representative from Kent Highway Services at the meeting. However, the Association had received a commitment that a meeting could be arranged soon after the AGM, between representatives from the Association and Kent Highways, if any related matters were raised at tonight's meeting. Apologies had also been received from Councillor Patrick Sellar, P.C. Georgina Messenger and the Executive Committee representative from Vinters Park W.I., Mrs Brenda Bodycombe.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 13 April 2005, having been circulated at the meeting, were approved and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

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 spoke of the many bonuses involved in his role (such as being asked to help at the Pre-School Christmas Nativity) which brought genuine pleasures throughout the year. He thanked the whole of the Executive Committee for their support during the year with special thanks, again, to Fred Burton, who continued to assist the Association as Premises Manager, 2 years after taking over the position on a temporary basis. The Chairman then took the opportunity to state that the Association was looking to appoint a permanent Premises Manager and asked those present to consider if they knew of a suitable person for the role.

The Association had received a commitment that funds would be made available again this year to provide summer activities for the youths of the estate, with help from Nicola Bowden of Valley Park School, although the events would probably be slightly different from those of last year, which had received poor attendance.

Finally, the Chairman drew attention to the improvements to the Community Centre that had been completed or paid for over the last 12 months, including the new floor, kitchen, storage cupboards and external notice board, which was available to advertise activities held in the Community Centre, and advised that bookings were still available throughout the summer.

There were no matters arising.



4. PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS

The Association's Finance Manager, Mrs. Sandra Shepherd, presented the audited Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2006 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.

Sandra reported that there had been an overall deficit of £384 due mainly to the expenses incurred in refurbishing various parts of the Community Centre.

The meeting duly **APPROVED** the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2006 and the Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2006, copies of which are inserted in the Minute Book.

5. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER/HONORARY AUDITOR

Sandra reported that Derek Parkhouse had agreed to continue in the role of Independent Examiner/Honorary Auditor. It was duly **AGREED** that Derek Parkhouse be appointed as the Independent Examiner/Honorary Auditor for the current year and that the Executive Committee be authorised to fix the payment to be made.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following members, having been nominated prior to the meeting and there being no nominations at the meeting, were duly **ELECTED** to the posts indicated:

Chairman: Gerry Kirrage

Vice-Chairman: Keith Rogers

Honorary Secretary: Barry Smith

Executive Committee:

(1) Individual Members: Carol Bell, Lesley Cannon, Elsie Harris, Tony Hewson, Chris Kirrage, Sarah Long, Peter Lott, Maggie Middleton, Val Nightingale

(2) Group Representatives: Jackie Young (Pre-School), Ian Humphreys (Verity Christian Fellowship)

The Chairman indicated that there was one place free on the Executive Committee (the constitution allows for a maximum of 10 individual members) and invited those present to consider if they or someone known to them would be interested in serving on the Committee.

Finally, the Chairman took the opportunity to offer his personal thanks, and assuredly those of previous Chairmen, to Mr. Keith Rogers who had moved over to fill the Vice-Chairman position after 12 years service as Honorary Secretary.



7. ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR - COUNCILLOR JOHN HORNE

The Chairman invited the Mayor, Councillor John Horne, to say a few words.

The Mayor began by referring to issues about the way in which our lives are lived today, such as increased movement and migration of the population – and therefore greater transience – which often lead to a lack of community identity or association with a particular location. The Mayor highlighted the work of local Residents' Associations as an important way to mitigate these problems, and thanked the Committee, and unpaid volunteers generally, for their work in the community.

He then spoke about the problems with youths – particularly bored youths – participating in anti-social behaviour and, although there is no easy solution to the problem, the Mayor felt that all children and youths would benefit from being involved in organisations like the St. John's Ambulance, Air Training Corps, Sea Cadets or Scouts where the discipline and training received would improve their own sense of self worth and hopefully respect for those around them. He also speculated that the youths might discover a greater sense of dignity through spirituality.

The Mayor concluded with a challenge to the community to participate in the St. George's Day Pageant taking place in Maidstone on 23rd April. It was the Mayor's wish that the Pageant - which was currently involving over 400 people in the parade followed by a Kentish fayre market, music and theatre – would become a regular event on the calendar and all local groups were invited to consider how they might wish to be represented in future Pageants.

The Chairman thanked the Mayor and Mayoress for attending and the Mayor for his contribution.

8. ADDRESS BY MR. IAN HUMPHREYS - VERITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The Chairman then invited Mr. Ian Humphreys, of Verity Christian Fellowship, to say a few words.

Ian began by revealing that the television programme 'Midsomer Murders' was a particular favourite of Ian's and his wife, indicating that the busy community of Midsomer, where activities often centred around either the Community Centre or Church was particularly appealing. Ian went on to say that it was his wish that Vinters Park would become more of a 'Midsomer Vinters' (without the murders, obviously!), with more focus on community events leading to a greater community spirit, but realised this was simply not possible without local residents getting involved.

Verity Christian Fellowship was a firm believer in community involvement and took every opportunity to 'get involved' with community projects, including assisting in the Pre-School's summer fun day, helping out with the Residents' Association's Artz activities, W.I. craft fairs etc. through to the Fellowship's own projects – for example the recurring Fair Trade Car Wash.

Having commended the ideal of Community, Ian cautioned that Community cannot be imposed on residents – not by the Police or local or national governments – it is a choice and can only be achieved through participation. Ian then concluded with a heartfelt plea that the local residents follow Verity's example and actively participate in their community.

The Chairman thanked Ian for his thought-provoking comments.



9. ADDRESS BY MR. STEVEN SONGHURST – VINTERS VALLEY PARK TRUST

The Chairman then invited Mr. Steven Songhurst of Vinters Valley Park Trust to say a few words to the meeting.

Steven began by introducing himself as the Warden of Vinters Valley Park Nature Reserve and commented that the Reserve, as a local amenity, should be considered part of the community. He then spoke of his concerns that local residents, especially children, are losing touch with the surrounding wildlife, and that schools are teaching children about Natural History and rainforests but little of the countryside and wildlife on their doorstep.

One of the many responsibilities of the Trust is to educate visitors about the myriad of species that live in the Valley and to promote the joy of the countryside by helping visitors engage with nature. The Trust arranges accompanied tours with the Warden at various times, each with a different theme (for example, one evening tour examines the variety of moths living in the reserve). The Valley, however, is not maintained at all by Maidstone Council and relies greatly on the 150 volunteers who currently support the Trust by making a monthly financial contribution. Boxley Parish Council also help fund the Trust. Further offers of help, either financial or physical (the Trust can always use people to help clearing brambles etc) would be warmly welcomed.

Steven then suggested that as Maidstone grows ever more populated and crowded it will become more and more important to engage with nature, hopefully through involvement in the reserve. He then challenged those in the room to ask themselves when was the last time they had visited the Valley? Was it time for them to visit again?

Steven concluded by reading aloud a poem he had selected which emphasised the importance of the wildlife surrounding us. The chairman then thanked Steven for his contribution.



10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman again thanked all speakers and opened the floor to any other business.

- (1) Access to footpath crossing the south side of the Estate. A resident from Mostyn Road raised the issue of closing some of the accesses from the Estate into the footpath that runs alongside the schools. This matter had been raised at an AGM 2 years ago but no action had been taken. Dave Naghi reported that such a scheme could only be considered with the support of a majority of the local residents, and at the time those residents were polled and many were in favour of leaving the accesses open, therefore no action was taken.
- (2) Nuisance motorcycles on the Estate. The problem of small, noisy motorcycles riding on the Estate was raised. The Police responded by indicating that they were aware of the problem, and had some powers – including confiscation – if the riders were behaving illegally. Many of the bikes were, in fact, completely legal, but the Police were certainly interested in those that were illegally modified or being ridden in an inappropriate manor. The Police appealed for witnesses to note the registration number, if possible.
- (3) Youths congregating in Ashurst Park. An Ashurst Road resident thanked the Police for responding to calls regarding anti-social behaviour in Ashurst Park but raised a question over whether a dispersal order could be applied to the area. The Police responded that it was possible, but a park is not an ideal location for a dispersal order, since it is contrary to the purpose of open spaces. Furthermore the consequences of displacement need to be considered. Often, when a dispersal order is in effect the result is simply that problems move to somewhere outside the area affected. It was noted, however, that if future dispersal orders are applied to the Snowdon Parade area a second order should be sought for the Park to run concurrently.
- (4) General problem with youths A resident from Birchington Close queried the extent of progress in dealing with youth problems on the Estate, since the issue seemed to be raised year after year. The Police responded that they are getting better at 'tuning in' to youth requirements and that this should help alleviate the problem. Often the main issue is a lack of facilities or meeting places, leading to congregation in public areas such as the shops or play parks. Margaret Featherstone reported that she had provided budget for a teen shelter in Penenden Heath and could possibly do the same for Vinters, but the problem still remained that the Estate lacked an ideal location for a shelter, with resistance from residents living near each likely site. Caroline Judge from Eastborough School suggested that one possibility may be to open the school grounds for local youths to make use of in the evenings. This was currently in discussion at the school, was by no means certain and would depend upon further infrastructure being put in place, such as CCTV coverage. Dave Naghi welcomed the idea, but suggested that to be fully effective it would require supervision, possibly by the Police Community Support Officer. Dave offered to work with Eastborough School to see if the proposal could be implemented.
- (5) Gaps in roadside pavements A resident of Alkham Road raised the issue of the roadside pavements on the Estate ending abruptly, before continuing further along the road. This was a particular problem for the resident since he was visually impaired. Mark Wooding mentioned that he had been contacted by the resident and had offered to contact the Highways Agency to highlight the problem. Margaret Featherstone stated that when the Estate was first built the design premise was to keep pedestrians away from the roads, hence the many footpaths through the Estate. This idea was predominantly abandoned a few years ago when partial funding allowed the construction of the roadside pavements in place today. Further works are planned – to complete the roadside pavement scheme – but are now awaiting funding.



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- (6) Parking restrictions in Hampton Road A Crayford Close resident raised the problem of daytime parking in Hampton Road and queried whether further parking restrictions should be sought. The Secretary replied that, in fact, full parking restrictions on Hampton Road, from the junction with Sittingbourne Road to the junction of Alkham Road had been sought and approved by the Council. Implementation of the scheme was now simply awaiting allocation of the necessary funds.
- (7) Planning application for 19 properties, Sittingbourne Road A resident of Matfield Crescent brought up the issue of an application for development of 19 new properties on land adjacent to Sittingbourne Road and questioned whether access to the new road would be through the Estate. The Vice-Chairman replied that, in fact, an earlier application for a different site in Sittingbourne Road had included access through the Estate but this had been refused. The latest application had provided for access from Sittingbourne Road. An objection to the application had been sent to the Council from the Association.
- (8) Resident problems with parking restrictions A resident of Crayford Closed explained the problems caused by restricted parking (vs. resident's parking) on many roads on the Estate, which lead to problems when tradesmen and other service related professionals (e.g. window cleaners) felt unable to park in restricted areas. The resident cited the example of a British Gas engineer's van being ticketed whilst on a service call. Dave Naghi responded by assuring the resident that permits were available for workers.

11. CONCLUSION

There being no other business the Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking those present for their attendance and the speakers for their contributions. Special thanks was made to the Police for the excellent service provided by both PC Georgina Messenger and PCSO Matt Spencer. The Chairman then closed the meeting at 9.40 p.m.

APPROVED

(Chairman)

Date:

12/4/02



VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2006

	2005/06		2004/05	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
Community Centre hire				
Regular hirers	12169		10146	
Casual hirers	1609		1354	
Bank Interest	124		229	
Insurance claims	0		0	
Funding for Community Events	3483		0	
Other Income	80			
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		17464		11729
EXPENDITURE				
<i>Community Centre Costs:</i>				
Premises Manager's salary	345		571	
Cleaning wages & materials	2847		3209	
Feminine Hygiene Service	309		0	
Maintenance & fittings	3757		2979	
Plumbing, electrical, heating	0		129	
Grounds maintenance	238		108	
Equipment: new & maintenance	3323		489	
Electricity	588		648	
Gas	996		507	
Water	159		238	
Sewerage	210		84	
Insurances	939		1229	
Performing rights	135		125	
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	13846		10316	
<i>Administration & Other Costs:</i>				
Bookings & Finance Managers' Salaries	1800		1262	
Secretarial expenses	284		263	
Subscription - Kent RCC	35		51	
Grant: Vinters Valley Trust	300		375	
Community Events	1280		0	
Parkranger	115		99	
Bank charges	0		0	
Audit fee	50		50	
Other expenses	138		618	
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		17848		13033
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR				
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		-384		-1304

Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2006

	2005/06		2004/05	
	£	£	£	£
Accumulated Funds:				
At start of year		7856		9160
Add: surplus for year		0		0
Less: Deficit for year		<u>-384</u>		<u>-1304</u>
At end of year		<u><u>7472</u></u>		<u><u>7856</u></u>

Represented By:				
Bank current account		4720		2228
Bank savings account		<u>2752</u>		<u>5628</u>
		<u><u>7472</u></u>		<u><u>7856</u></u>

SANDRA SHEPHERD - 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 2006.

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

