



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association held at Vinters Park
Community Centre on Wednesday 18 April 2007

1. OPENING

The Chairman, Gerry Kirrage opened the meeting with the extremely sad news that Margaret Featherstone, Kent County Councillor, had passed away that morning. Those present were shocked at the news and agreed that her passing was a severe loss for residents of the estate, since Mrs. Featherstone had always been a strong supporter of both local people and the Association in particular.

The Chairman then officially welcomed everyone attending. (The signatures on the Attendance List indicated that over 40 were present). The Chairman particularly thanked the Mayor of Maidstone, Councillor Mike FitzGerald, for attending and agreeing to speak later in the meeting. Other notables present included: Councillor Bill Stead, the Chairman of Boxley Parish Council; Councillor Dave Naghi; Councillor Wendy Hinder; Councillor Mark Wooding; Clive English from the Council Planning Committee; Alan Bennett from the Downsmail; representatives from Vinters Women's Institute and Inspector Adam Jones, Sgt. Jim Watson, PC Dave Jeeves and PCSO Matt Spencer from Maidstone Police.

The Chairman advised those present that, unfortunately, it had not been possible to have a representative from Kent Highway Services at the meeting. Apologies had also been received from Councillor Patrick Sellar, Conservative Councillor Candidate Jamie Devlin, Matt Roberts from Maidstone Council and Residents' Association Executive Committee member Maggie Middleton.

2. MAIDSTONE STUDIOS DEVELOPMENT – PETITION

Peter Lott, representing Vinters Valley Park Trust, asked the Chairman for permission to circulate a petition to those present at the meeting. Peter explained that the Trust was opposed to the planned development at the Studio site and were deeply concerned over the effect such a dense development would have on the nature reserve. The Trust were seeking to attend the planning meeting where the proposal would be debated but required a petition with 100 signatures before they would be allowed to participate. The Chairman approved the circulation of the petition.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 April 2006, having been circulated at the meeting, were approved and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

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". There were no matters arising

The Chairman noted that, upon reflection, the last 12 months had been a busy time for the Association. A new Police-led initiative, Partners And Community Together (PACT), had been introduced and it was hoped that this would lead to real solutions to some of the nuisance-level problems affecting the estate. The Chairman was part of the PACT committee, along with representation from the Police and local Council. The PACT committee also included residents from the estate, two of whom were at the meeting including the PACT Chairperson. The Association Chairperson then invited the PACT Chairperson to update those present with progress made so far.



5. PACT

The PACT Chairperson, Kay, explained that initially a selection of 500 homes on the estate had been surveyed to try to understand the key nuisance problems. At the first meeting before Christmas the main problems were identified and the PACT committee established. To date the PACT committee had met twice, in January and April. The three top priority problems on the estate were (1) graffiti / vandalism, (2) nuisance youth and (3) parking problems.

Kay, along with Julie, another PACT committee member had carried out a number of activities aimed at helping to identify solutions to these problems, including:

- A walking tour of much of the estate in an attempt to identify particular problem areas. The walkway between the Woodlands estate and Alkham Road, along with Mostyn Road were identified as particularly suffering with graffiti.
- A tour of the shops identifying the specific problems there.
- A tour of Ashurst Road park identifying the specific problems there.
- A visit to the Police control room to understand the scale of operations.
- Accompanying PCSO Matt Spencer on a typical patrol.
- Liaising with Boxley Parish Council to arrange a loan of equipment needed to implement Speedwatch.
- Attended a meeting with graffiti offenders under the Crime Diversion Programme, where residents' feelings regarding the damage were put to the offenders.

The Association Chairman thanked Kay and expressed the hope that in 12 months time the initiative would have had real positive effects, and also noted that key to obtaining the best possible Police resources on the estate is for residents to call in each and every crime. Even if not immediately actioned, each call is logged, and the resultant statistics generated allow the Police to identify growing trends and instigate actions to try to target any increase in crime.

6. FINANCE AND BOOKING MANAGER

Prior to the presentation of the Association's accounts the Chairman noted the loss of Sandra Shepherd to the Association. Sandra had been performing both the Finance and Booking Managers' role and her loss was keenly felt. Currently, Chris Kirrage was covering the Finance and Lesley Cannon was covering the Bookings on a temporary basis. The Chairman thanked Chris and Lesley for helping out and asked those present if they knew anyone who might be interested in taking over these roles.



7. PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS

The Association's Temporary Finance Manager, Mrs. Chris Kirrage, presented the audited Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2007 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 reported that there had been a small surplus of £2775 due mainly to the Executive Committee deferring major spending on the centre until the Lottery Funding application result was known.

The meeting duly **APPROVED** the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2007 and the Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2007, copies of which are inserted in the Minute Book.

8. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER/HONORARY AUDITOR

Chris 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. The Chairman thanked Mr. Parkhouse for agreeing to continue in the role.

9. 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

Executive Committee:

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

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

The Chairman noted that, currently, there were many roles which needed to be filled. The Association required volunteers for Vice-Chairperson, Honorary Secretary and Executive Committee members. Also, the Association was seeking paid managers for the Finance, Bookings and Premises Managers' roles. Those present were asked to consider if anyone known to them might be suitable in the roles. Anyone interested was asked to contact either the Chairman or current Secretary.



10. ADDRESS BY THE MAYOR - COUNCILLOR MIKE FITZGERALD

The Chairman invited the Mayor of Maidstone to address those present.

The Mayor began by expressing his own personal shock at hearing the news of Mrs. Featherstone's passing, noting how he had often worked with Margaret on various projects. He felt that the community owed her a great debt of gratitude for her commitment to local matters, especially those involving young people, over the years and expressed deep sympathy for her family.

The Mayor was pleased to see such a good turnout of Police representation at the meeting and praised the Association's work on implementing the PACT initiative. He observed that he was '100% behind' PACT, and that Vinters Park had led the way by being the first to introduce the initiative in Maidstone. Other areas, such as Staplehurst and Chart Sutton were also looking to introduce PACT in the near term.

He then spoke in support of the Committee's decision to seek Lottery funding for extending the community centre. Over the years, the Mayor had been involved in many projects, from Adult Education centres to new community centres in Lenham and Headcorn. He felt that providing extra resources at the centre would attract other organisations to the area, leading to a richer, more vibrant local community. He therefore expressed the hope that the application would be successful and that the Association would have the support of the local Council when implementing the scheme, citing the assistance of the planning committee as an example. He also suggested that the Committee look again at the possibility of forming an urban parish, as this might help with funding issues.

The Mayor then spoke about his time in office, noting how he was very near to achieving his target of visiting every school and every parish council in the borough. His office had arranged a 'Mayor for the day' competition with local schools, where the winner would be chosen from pictures submitted by the schoolchildren. He revealed that, in fact, there were 5 Mayors for the day, since no clear winner could be chosen, but that all of the entrants had provided 'amazing' work that had thoroughly impressed. The Mayor would be continuing to engage with local young people, being involved in the Mencap Kent Challenge, Kent Youth, Hotfoot, Rewind and various youth forums.

The Mayor ended by imploring those present, and especially the Executive Committee, to achieve success with both the PACT initiative and community centre plans, noting that any such successes would be 'delivering for ourselves.'

The Chairman thanked the Mayor for his encouraging words.

11. EXTENDING THE COMMUNITY CENTRE USING BIG LOTTERY FUNDING

The Chairman then invited Mr. Ian Humphreys to explain the background and current status of the Big Lottery Funding Bid.

Ian began by explaining that for many current hirers the community centre was 'creaking at the seams', with problems of space, storage and layout leaving some groups frustrated, and that an opportunity had arisen to alleviate some of the problems. Ian explained that during the previous summer the Executive Committee had been approached by Councillor Patrick Sellar who advised that there had been funding available at the time from the Big Lottery Fund for Community Centre projects (new builds or extensions).

The Executive Committee were keen to make use of this funding and therefore had put together a draft plan where the community centre would be extended to provide a community lounge and coffee shop. A series of consultations with existing regular hirers and local residents were held before Christmas where it became clear that many hirers and residents



were opposed to the coffee shop and lounge proposal, but not necessarily the extension. In January the Executive Committee decided to proceed with a funding application for the extension but to drop the coffee shop part. A steering group comprising members of the Executive Committee and representatives from regular hirers was formed to identify the best use of space for an extension. The steering group finalised on plans whereby the centre would be extended out from the front of the building. The existing small meeting room would be enlarged and a new chair and table storage room would be created between this enlarged room and the main hall. This chair store would solve the problem whereby groups hiring the smaller meeting room currently must go through the main hall to access the chair store, potentially disturbing users there. In addition to the new storage room and enlarged meeting room a third, small, meeting room would be created with the potential to be accessed from outside, and secured from the rest of the Centre. This would allow the room to be used for small meetings or surgeries when the rest of the Centre was already in use.

The application would be submitted at the end of April and the Committee would hear later in the year if the Centre extension proposal had been approved for the next stage.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

- (1) Cars parking near junctions on Hampton Road. A couple from Challock Walk queried if anything could be done about cars being parked on Hampton Road near to junctions. This was making exit from some of the roads, such as Farningham Close, onto Hampton Road extremely dangerous, as visibility was restricted. It was often necessary for cars to pull right out onto the opposite carriageway in order to manoeuvre around the obstruction and it was felt that it was only a matter of time before an accident occurred. It was also felt that, in the past, both the Police and local Council had sidestepped the issue by indicating it was the other's responsibility. Therefore both bodies were asked to resolve the issue and to take responsibility for enforcing the existing law in this area. Sgt. Watson advised that the best approach was to continue to report any cars parked unsafely and that any cars blocking access would be treated as a priority and notices served. Sgt Watson also suggested that the matter be tracked by the PACT committee, who would work with PCSO Matt Spencer to try to alleviate the problem. The Association would also write to the Council to investigate the possibility of having restrictions put in place near the junction.
- (2) A question about graffiti. A further question from the same couple asked the Police what should a resident do if they encounter an offender in the act of committing vandalism or graffiti. Sgt Watson again advised that, although property owners were entitled to use "reasonable force" in detaining someone caught committing such a crime, the Police were primarily concerned for residents' safety and therefore the best approach would be to get a description if possible and to dial 999 if the offence was actually occurring at that moment in time, and make it clear to the operators that this was the case. Sgt Watson noted that, from a Police perspective, they would much sooner deal with a criminal damage call than an assault.
- (3) Urbanisation of the area. The Chairman of Boxley Parish Council, Bill Stead, took the opportunity to advise residents of a number of large-scale planning applications that would affect the surrounding area, including the Maidstone Studios development, Eclipse stage 2, Medical facilities at Newnham Court and a 375,000m² development at M20 Junction 8. Bill also noted that there was an upcoming planning meeting at the Marriott Hotel and urged those present to attend and object.



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- (4) Access to footpath crossing the south side of the Estate. A resident from Mostyn Road, Jim Henson, raised again the matter of closing the access to the footpath from Mostyn. At last year's AGM the matter was raised, but Mr. Henson was told by local councillors that the opinion of residents in the road had previously been sought and the majority of residents had wanted the access to remain open. Mr. Henson informed the meeting that he had personally canvassed his neighbours in Mostyn Road, none of whom had ever been asked their opinion he said. Councillor Naghi agreed that the matter needed to be looked at again. The Association would write to the council on Mr. Henson's behalf to try to start the process, although this would lead to residents' opinions being canvassed before a decision was taken.
- (5) Provision of youth facilities at East Borough School. Councillor Dave Naghi commented on an item from the previous year's minutes, where East Borough Primary School had indicated that they may be willing to open their playing fields for local youths to use in order to try to prevent the vandalism that was occurring at the time. Dave noted that he had followed this up with the school, but because the vandalism problem had not persisted the school had decided not to proceed with the idea.
- (6) Adding seats to bus shelters. Councillor Naghi also raised the possibility of having the seats returned to the bus shelters. These had been removed due to vandalism and Councillor Naghi suggested that the matter be added to the PACT agenda to decide when it was a safe time to install them.
- (7) Parking in Hampton Road. Tony Hewson raised a query regarding the general issue of parking in Hampton Road by motorists leaving cars all day and walking into town. The Association had previously asked for parking restrictions to be put in place on Hampton Road and the scheme had been approved and funding made available. The Council had consulted with local residents in nearby roads and, at the time, there had been significant objections to the scheme. Given the ever worsening situation in Hampton Road it was felt that the Council should re-consult and the Association would write again to the Council to ascertain if this was possible.
- (8) Community centre extension. The Chairperson of the Antiquarian Horological Society, who use the centre, asked if it would be closed during any extension building work. Ian Humphreys indicated that, at this stage, it was not anticipated that the centre would need to close at all.
- (9) CCTV at the shops. A resident asked if the CCTV installed at the shops was actually operational, given the problems still occurring there. Recently the fence surrounding the car park had been vandalised, and many residents were convinced that the illegal sale of alcohol to under age children at the shops was leading to much of the antisocial behaviour occurring (such as loud music from cars and football being played in the car park, often until late). The Councillors present noted that the CCTV in place did work, but was a 'broadband' camera which meant that it was not operational 24 hours a day. It was possible to upgrade the camera but in total this would cost approximately £22,000 and funding was not currently available, but it was suggested that the Association could look to local Councillors and other funding opportunities to raise the money itself. It was also noted that KCC had in fact carried out some test purchases at the shops which had refused to sell on that occasion. Sgt Watson noted that the area surrounding the shops was an alcohol restricted zone, meaning that the Police had the powers to intervene if it was being openly consumed. Sgt Watson also noted that the local Council had powers to prevent noise pollution and should be contacted if loud music or other noise was occurring.



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(10) Speedwatch. PC Dave Jeeves explained the processes behind the Speedwatch scheme, which puts some powers into local residents' hands in an attempt to tackle excessive speeding locally. Speedwatch relied on volunteers who would receive interactive signs to warn passing motorists that they were exceeding the limit. The equipment would also record each motorist who would be sent a letter by the Police. If 'caught' 3 times a second letter would be sent to the motorist warning them they would now be targeted by Police. The scheme, when run effectively, would provide the Police with information that would allow them to identify where and when speeding was occurring in a given area, allowing more focused enforcement. The scheme had been reviewed by the PACT committee who were keen to participate. However, one potential problem was that the necessary equipment needed to be purchased by residents' associations or parish councils at a cost of £2500. The Association gratefully accepted Boxley Parish Council's offer that their equipment be periodically loaned to our Speedwatch volunteers.

13. CONCLUSION

There being no other business the Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking those present for their attendance and the speakers for their contributions. The Chairman then closed the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

APPROVED

(Chairman)

Date:

30/04/2008

Date: 21/02/2007
Time: 19:09:04

Vinters Park Residents' Association

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Balance Sheet

From: Brought forward
To: Month 12, January 2007

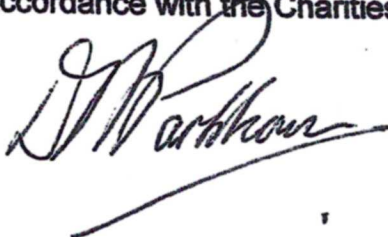
Chart of Account: Default Layout of Accounts

| | <u>Period</u> | <u>Year to Date</u> | |
|---|---------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Fixed Assets | | | |
| | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Current Assets | | | |
| Debtors | 902.00 | 902.00 | |
| Deposits and Cash | 2,845.00 | 2,845.00 | |
| Bank Account | 7,385.49 | 7,385.49 | |
| | 11,132.49 | | 11,132.49 |
| Current Liabilities | | | |
| | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Current Assets less Current Liabilities: | 11,132.49 | | 11,132.49 |
| Total Assets less Current Liabilities: | 11,132.49 | | 11,132.49 |
| Long Term Liabilities | | | |
| | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total Assets less Total Liabilities: | 11,132.49 | | 11,132.49 |
| Capital & Reserves | | | |
| P&L Account | 11,132.49 | 2,775.81 | |
| Previous Year Adj | | 8,356.68 | |
| | 11,132.49 | | 11,132.49 |

CHRIS KIRRAGE
Temporary 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 2007.

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



Date: 07/02/2007

Time: 21:43:02

Vinters Park Residents' Association

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Profit & Loss

From: Brought forward

To: Month 12, January 2007

Chart of Accounts:

Default Layout of Accounts

| | <u>Period</u> | <u>Year to Date</u> |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Sales | | |
| Main Income | 14,591.65 | 14,591.65 |
| Other Sales | 92.98 | 92.98 |
| | 14,684.63 | 14,684.63 |
| Purchases | | |
| Purchases | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| Costs | 368.14 | 368.14 |
| | 371.64 | 371.64 |
| Direct Expenses | | |
| Miscellaneous Expenses | 123.17 | 123.17 |
| vpra Promotion | 114.70 | 114.70 |
| | 237.87 | 237.87 |
| Gross Profit/(Loss): | 14,075.12 | 14,075.12 |
| Overheads | | |
| Gross Wages | 4,275.48 | 4,275.48 |
| Rent and Rates | 1,433.15 | 1,433.15 |
| Heat, Light and Power | 1,577.21 | 1,577.21 |
| Printing and Stationery | 1,055.04 | 1,055.04 |
| Professional Fees | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| Maintenance | 2,573.43 | 2,573.43 |
| General Expenses | 335.00 | 335.00 |
| Suspense & Mispostings | (8,356.68) | 0.00 |
| | 2,942.63 | 11,299.31 |
| Net Profit/(Loss): | 11,132.49 | 2,775.81 |