

# VINTERS PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of meeting of Annual General Meeting

Held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at Vinters Park Community Centre

### Opening

The Chairperson, Kay Lowe, opened the meeting at 8.00pm by welcoming everyone attending. (The signatures on the Attendance List indicated that 28 were present).

### Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017, having been previously circulated, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairperson. There were no matters arising.

### Chairpersons Report

Welcome to all residents and thank you for attending. I've made it to my 2<sup>nd</sup> AGM intact, well just!

The last year has been a very busy one again with new events and hirings of the hall at an all-time high. We regularly hold Brownies, Rainbows, Slimming World, Pilates, Gymnastics, Ballet, Church meeting on a Sunday morning, Vinters Voices etc. as well as our popular and very well attended Woodlands Pre-School and party bookings at the weekends.

New events during the past year have included our first car show in May which was well attended and brought many old cars, vans and tanks out of hibernation along with their owners to put on a wonderful display. This year's car show will be on Bank Holiday Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May, 10 – 1 p.m.

Our first cream tea afternoon in June was a success and took place on one of the hottest days of the year. This year the event will take place on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2 – 4 p.m. as many residents have told us that they would like an event on a Sunday due to work commitments. We will be expecting a good turnout for this and ordering double the amount of scones and clotted cream (and that's just for me!)

In December we held our first Christmas Fair, complete with a Grotto and Father Christmas and raised £900. This year's event is on 1st December and it would be great if we could top the £1000 mark!

Our regular coffee mornings too are always popular with residents and could I just say that we welcome all ages to the coffee mornings as we have toys, books, puzzles and bean bags for the little ones. If the little ones could bring along a responsible adult with them that would be just great (!)

It is with your support at all of our events that we are able to continue with the improvement programme at the hall. You cannot fail to have noticed the new look of the hall, redecorated and completed during the Easter holidays, made possible by a £1000 grant from Ian Chittenden's Devolved Budget Grant via KCC, a kind donation of £100 and the money raised at the Christmas Fair. Gavin Beasley has done a grand job of the redecoration and I can recommend him. The curtains were dry cleaned (something I'm sure has never happened before!) and new curtain tracks put up. The fire doors purchased last April and the old noticeboards which were also replaced last summer means that the main hall is now complete.

I hope you are as impressed as I am by the improvements that have taken place in the whole building over the past two years. As well as the money spent on the new purchases it takes a lot of team work to get the projects finished on time and for that I would like to thank the Committee for their endless support. Thank you.

Our Bank balance too is looking healthier than ever and despite all the improvements is gradually increasing. Siobhan Wood our Finance and Bookings Manager retired last July and Emma Stannett took over the reins, not an easy job but she is doing incredibly well. We have recently changed from Sage to QuickBooks accounting system and also purchased a new laptop and printer for her and invoices can now be emailed to hirers instead of being posted. We have also applied for online banking so we really are moving into the 21<sup>st</sup> century ... finally!

Later in the Agenda there will be a chance for you to vote for the Committee to continue next year. I am willing to continue as Chairperson for another year if you will have me. All current members are willing to continue too which I am very pleased about.

There will also be an item later under Any Other Business when questions can be asked of the Committee or Ian Chittenden. Unfortunately PCSO Paul Nichols is unavailable to attend this evening. Please state your name and road for the Minutes and do not talk over each other as it becomes very difficult for items to be minuted.

So all in all a very healthy and happy Chairperson's report and Chairperson! We hope you will all continue to support us in the future at one or all of our events. Thank you.

### **Presentation of Accounts**

The Association's Finance Manager, Emma Stannett, presented the audited income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 January 2018 and the balance sheet as at that date. Copies of which had been circulated at the meeting earlier.

Emma reported that bookings are extremely healthy with currently only two time slots available for new bookings. There is a drop in the wage bill due to changes in the way in which people are now paid giving a saving of £932 on last year. There has been a rise in the cost of rates, gas, electricity and general maintenance but the bank accounts remain healthy showing a total profit of £7,383 more than in 2017.

The meeting duly APPROVED the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 January 2018 and the Balance Sheet as at 31 January 2018, copies of which are inserted in the Minute Book.

### **Appointment of Independent Examiner**

It was duly AGREED that Steven Hill be appointed as the Independent Examiner for the current year.

### **Election of Officers and Executive Committee Members**

The following members have indicated their willingness to continue on the Committee for the year 2018-2019:

Chairperson	Kay Lowe
Vice-Chairperson	Barry Smith
Secretary	Caroline Corry

### **Appointed Manager**

Finance and Bookings Manager	Emma Stannett
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## **Executive Committee**

Individual Members

Amanda Rose, Tony Hewson, Fred Burton, Maggie Middleton, Chris Shiers, Craig McAteer, Sarah Long

Group- Representative

Anne Taylor (Pre-School)

There are still a few places on the Committee so if you are considering joining us please speak to Caroline at the end of the meeting. We meet once a month and need volunteers to help out at all of our events and regularly attend the evening meetings.

The Chairperson then invited Ian Chittenden to present his latest report – a copy of which is filed in the Minute Book.

### **Ian Chittenden**

Ian's report outlined the issues involving Government budget cuts and the impact it was having on Vinters Park. He also covered the A249 Bearsted Road new major infrastructure improvements, play areas, Marks and Spencer at Eclipse Park, new local schools, pot holes and Spreadwatch.

A copy of the full report is in the Minute Book.

### **Any Other Business**

The Chairperson opened the floor to any other business.

#### **Jane Morgan – Goldthorne Close**

Jane wanted to know why Jubilee School in Barming was not granted planning permission for expansion. Ian explained that as far as he was aware there was insufficient information submitted in the application.

#### **Rose Harding – Goldthorne Close**

Rose wanted to know why last year KCC only managed 4 out of the 8 grass cutting sessions they were contracted to do. Ian explained that KCC has this year changed contractors and they should be cutting 6 times. There has been a delay due to the snow causing the first cutting to be put back.

#### **Craig McAteer – Bargrove Road**

Craig was speaking on behalf of a resident who is visually impaired and has problems with cars parking, and completely blocking, the pavement in Alcham Road. He was forced to walk on the road and was nearly hit by an electric car which he did not hear. Ian agreed that parking on the pavement should not be allowed. There are some areas in the centre of town where it is permitted but that does not include Vinters. Unfortunately the police will not enforce unless it is blocking pushchairs/mobility vehicles. They will act if it is blocking drives. There is a general lack of funds and people to do the enforcement.

#### **Peter Lowe – Blendon Road**

Peter asked if we could have some clarification on who is saying that this cannot be done.

#### **Rose Harding – Goldthorne Close**

Rose pointed out that there is a lot of broken glass on the footpaths at the back of the shops and surrounding area. Ian said that he will get it dealt with and to let him know immediately in the future so that it will be picked up quickly.

**Tony Hewson - Spindle Glade**

Tony pointed out that on the litter pick they did a few weeks ago there were a very large number of empty alcohol bottles in the bushes behind the shops. Ian said he will make a note of it. Ian is planning to arrange some litter picking in a few months. He will put it on the Vinters FaceBook page so that residents are aware.

**Peter Lowe – Blendon Road**

There has been a young lad riding round the play areas and down the footpaths during the early evenings on a motorbike and without a crash helmet. This has been reported to 101, but as it takes so long to get through he has gone before anyone can get here. The PCSO has asked that photos/videos are taken and sent to him. Ian suggested that if he is causing danger then phone 999.

**Jane Morgan – Goldthorne Close**

Jane suggested that the price of the coffee morning should be raised to £1.50 as it is well worth this. Kay Lowe said that it will be discussed at the next VPRA meeting. Ian suggested that we ask opinions at the next coffee morning.

**Conclusion**

There being no other business, the Chairperson concluded the meeting by thanking those present for their attendance. The Chairperson then closed the meeting at 9.02pm.

**Approved .....**(Chairperson)

**Date:.....**

## **Report for meeting of Vinters Park Residents Association AGM on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

Our thanks to the Residents Association for inviting us to the meeting today and allowing us to present an annual report to you.

The continuing cuts in Government finance over the past 7 years to both Borough and County Councils finances is making life very difficult when trying to get anything done. It has, unfortunately, also required that some non statutory services such as weed control and grass cutting have particularly been affected and others such as tree replacement have had to be stopped altogether. This situation can be frustrating for residents and Councillors as problems that we used to be able to deal with in days can now take weeks and even months or cannot be done at all. The art of making things happen, from a Councillor point of view is to continue to apply pressure and to make sure that what you need doing is on the list when money is made available.

As Councillors, we report anything we see that needs dealing with such as lights not working, potholes. Broken street nameplates, overhanging hedges etc. Borough Councillors deal with the many aspects of planning, play areas and control of our parks, waste collection, parking including Park and Ride, heritage issues, Licencing, social housing, local environment and of course tax collection. County Councillors you deal with highways including drainage, school and waste planning, education, All aspects of adult and children's services, social services, waste disposal, soft landscaping and country Parks, emergency planning, public health and libraries We do not control the police although, with others, we have an overseeing role in relation to the Police Commissioner. We have a different relationship with the Fire Brigade with Councillors from KCC and Medway Unitary authority forming the membership of the Kent and Medway Fire Authority.

Overall we act as the middle man or woman between the residents and the Council and others when residents are having problems that they cannot resolve direct through the normal contact systems.

Before I go onto general items, I still as County Councillor get a small devolved budget which I can use to deal with local problems in North and East Wards. This year about 25% of the money has gone on Road and other safety initiatives with more going on dealing with resurfacing of pavements and replacement trees. The remainder is used to support local organisations or charities.

### **Update on local issues:**

#### **A249 Bearsted Road Maidstone Major Infrastructure Improvement**

Following the successful National Productivity Investment Fund bid, Kent County Council has been awarded £9.399m of Government allocation combined with £1.5m developer contributions and £500k Maidstone Borough Council investment to deliver a congestion busting improvement on the A249 Bearsted Road including the widening of the carriageway between Bearsted Road and Bearsted Road/Newcut Road roundabouts. The outline design commenced in December 2017 and numerous investigatory works are ongoing which will assist in the design of the scheme. It is anticipated that engagement with the local community and stakeholders will commence in the summer

months with a newsletter being distributed to the surrounding businesses and residents accordingly.

It is anticipated that the detailed design will be completed by December 2018. The construction phase of the project will then start in the summer of 2019 with an 18 month construction period.

In connection with the above, KCC have submitted a Growth and Housing Fund bid to Highways England for release of funding to deliver the signalisation and localised widening of M20 J7

**Play areas and green spaces** – 2017 was a good year with the planned improvements to 33 of the main play areas throughout Maidstone having been completed, including Ashurst, Upper Fullingpits Wood and Penenden Heath. Also through grants and 106 planning money we have instigated the formation of a new Historic Garden at Penenden Heath to celebrate the history of this area.

**Marks and Spencer– Eclipse Park** – In late 2017 Waitrose unfortunately withdrew their application for a new Maidstone Store. This is now being replaced by a proposal for a new M & S store and following the exhibition at the Hilton, talks between M & S representatives and Maidstone Borough Council has been ongoing. As yet we do not have a date for submission of a planning application

### **New urgently needed local Schools still delayed**

It has been a number of years since the Government took away the responsibility for providing new schools from the County Councils,

Both the Senior and Junior schools much needed in our area continue to be delayed, The Maidstone School of Science and technology sited behind the existing Invicta and Valley Park schools is subject to a formal planning appeal with a Government Inspector due to take place in May.

The developer submitted the appeal on the basis of non-determination one day before the application went to the Planning Committee with a recommendation for approval. It seems that they object to the landscaping conditions and to providing a contribution to support improvements to the local bus service needed to accommodate increase in usage.

The Junior and special school on KIM land is awaiting decisions by the Government's Education and Skills funding Agency and we have no information as to when and whether a planning application will be made.

**Another pot-hole blitz** – There is another pothole blitz ongoing partially funded by the Government. If you see a pothole please report it using the Kent County Council web site or ring 03000 418181 or let Ian know.

**Speedwatch** – Once again Speedwatch has been delayed for a number of reasons. I hope to attempt to start it again during May. More volunteers required.

Lastly I want to congratulate the Residents Association team for the excellent year. Dealing with the serious problems of the leaks and then putting in place new ideas such as the coffee mornings, which I can recommend to you, all to help bring the local community together.