

THE MOORPOOL DUCK

Residents' Newsletter

Issue No. 34

June 2008

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR.

Dear Residents,

Firstly, I would like to thank all of you who wrote to the Planning Department and voiced objections to the plans submitted by Grainger plc. The response was unprecedented and clearly showed that the plans were unacceptable. I received copies of many of the objections and the content was consistent with the comments made by residents throughout this so-called consultation phase. Maybe if those comments had been truly listened to we could have made some progress.

Secondly, I must place on record thanks to Andrew Hackett and the MRG group members, as well as Mike Parkes, Secretary of the MAA, who put enormous effort into analysis of the Grainger plans and preparing objection documents. Much of that work was shared with the MRA, enabling us to show along with the objections from residents, a united front. In particular, thanks must go to Emma Moyes who, despite being in the process of increasing the population on the Estate, worked tirelessly. Finally, I would like to thank our MP Gisela Stuart, Councillors John Alden and Peter Hollingsworth, and Phil Simpson who have given great support to our cause. I cannot tell you when the Planning Office will make a decision but it will probably be quite soon. What I can tell you is that we have done our best. If we have succeeded, then Grainger need to rethink. If we have lost, then that is only the first battle. They may have their piece of paper but there is much we can still do.

One of the reasons we are having to endure this application is that the architectural heritage of Moorpool has not been sufficiently recognised and protected in the past. Moorpool, like Bournville, Port Sunlight, and Saltaire etc., are architectural landmarks. I intend to work towards promoting this proper recognition and importance both to Harborne and Birmingham.

I do not intend to stand idly by watching it blighted in return for short term financial gain. To ensure the successful future of the Estate, we need **your** support too. You have shown that already, with the many objections you have submitted. However, that continued support is vital because the decisions taken over the next few months will probably set the course for the next 100 years.

Rob Sutton. (Chair MRA)

Coffee Mornings.

The next coffee morning is **this Saturday 28th June** starting at 10.30am. Another chance to come along and meet friends and neighbours. We hope the Coffee morning will be a catalyst for increased social events sponsored by the MRA. Further helpers are always welcome, as are donations of cakes and biscuits. Volunteers are welcome to turn up on the day or give Gill Morgan a ring on 0121 426 5497.

(We hope there will be at least one more Coffee morning before the Hall refurbishment work takes place).

Parking.

At the recent Ward meeting, residents were vociferous in wanting action regarding parking on verges and corners of roads. Such was the comment that the Police are likely to take action. I have since written to Rose Road asking that in the first instance only warnings should be

given, rather than penalty notices which could upset residents. Parking on corners is dangerous and contrary to the Highway Code, and causes larger vehicles to mount the verge in order to get around corners. Please be prepared to walk that little bit further from where you park or better still, ask Grainger for a garage.

One-Way and Verge Damage.

At the recent Ward meeting the go ahead was given, based on survey results, to develop a scheme for a one-way system in Margaret Grove and Moorpool Avenue. Some of you may have noticed that the 'Phantom Rocker' has been at work and cured the problem at no cost to the Council in parts of Margaret Grove. In Moorpool Avenue, a number of bollards have appeared over time. The latest rather attractive wooden ones with reflectors are from a company called Jackson's Fencing www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk under 'verge protectors' at £9.70 each. The MRA makes no recommendation, but you can go and look at the product for yourself. And of course seek any necessary permission before contemplating installation.

Moorpool Allotment Association (MAA): Allotment Club.

The MAA is pleased to announce the formation of a socially-based forum to discuss "growing matters", share expertise, provide advice to new plot-holders, organise visits, quizzes etc. The club is part of the MAA, but is open to anyone with an interest in allotment gardening, irrespective of residence on the Estate or MAA membership. The first meeting of the club was held on 10th June, and included a varied discussion on growing matters. The next meeting of the club will be in the form of an evening walk around the Moorpool allotment sites, and will take place on :- **Tuesday, 15th July 2008** at 7.00 p.m. (meet at The Small Hall)

Participants are advised to wear stout shoes and outdoor clothing! If the weather isn't suitable for the walk, a "normal" meeting of the Club will be held in the Small Hall.

For further details, please contact Mick O'Malley (0121 427 5051).

Hedges.

The sound of hedge cutting has dramatically increased over recent weekends. If you have not already done so would you please ensure access pathways are kept clear and cuttings green bagged for collection.

Grainger & Moorpool Hall: New Offices

Grainger plc have now completed their move from The Circle to Elm House, Edgbaston Park, 351 Bristol Rd, Edgbaston, B5 7SW. The full range of Estate Management services will continue to be provided from the new office, including all tenancy matters, repairs and maintenance, covenants, allotments, garages and open amenity areas. For initial enquiries, please contact either Louise Jordan or Ryan Tucker on 0161 929 0044 or by email:

ljordan@graingerplc.co.uk
rtucker@graingerplc.co.uk

Additionally, a new office for Moorpool Hall has been located in The Band Room, just inside the rear entrance to the Main Hall. The office provides a booking and information service for the Large Hall, Small Hall and Skittle Alley, and can also provide general information about clubs and classes that can be found on Moorpool Estate. The office is open on Monday (9.00am to 5.00pm), and Tuesday and Wednesday (9.00 am to 1.00 pm). Hall viewings for prospective customers can be arranged by prior appointment.

If you would like to make a booking, or require further information about events at the Hall, please contact Mick O'Malley at Moorpool Hall, on 0121 428 4644, or e-mail mo'malley@graingerplc.co.uk.

Winterbourne Botanic Gardens

Some of you may know that Winterbourne (part of Birmingham University) was built for John Nettlefold. Tina Hackett has met

their representative for a meeting as to how we can be of mutual benefit. They are in touch with a grandson of J. S. Nettlefold who is very interested in what they are doing and they feel will be interested in the Estate. We will be exploring this link further. They are keen to get information and artefacts (either to be donated or to be copied for the exhibition they are setting up). The following are examples of information they are asking for:-

Any people who either worked for GKN or knew of people living on the Estate who did so? ... People who worked for Winterbourne or know of such people? ... Any families who originated from back-to-back housing or very built up terraces? (Moorpool was built as an alternative to back-to-back) ... What artefacts do people have? Is there any correspondence with J S Nettlefold's signature?

Winterbourne are also keen to try to help record some of the wealth of oral history and are keen to put forward a proposal to the Heritage Lottery Fund to get funding for a paid recorder plus funding to train volunteer recorders to get this work done and recorded properly. It would be presented as a joint working partnership between the University and Moorpool.

If you think you can help with any of these requests, contact either Tina Hackett, drop a note at the MRA post box, or come along to the Coffee morning.

Duck Delivery

The number of issues earlier in the year put rather a strain on the Duck delivery system. It would be very helpful if a few more volunteers could come forward to share out the burden of delivery. One person per road would be ideal, as this would give extra cover when holidays intervene. If you would like to help, please contact Emma Gray or Rob Sutton via the MRA post box at the Circle Newsagents.

Moorpool Allotment Association

The Moorpool Allotment Association allotment plot application form has proved very successful with 23 applications of our own on file. Demand for the allotments is strong. We still have the problem at the moment that Graingers will not re-let allotments affected by the planning application unless revised boundaries are accepted.

The MAA have tried hard to negotiate temporary agreements until the applications are determined but to no avail. We are reluctant to sign any sort of agreement that will leave allotments void and untended for the future if the applications fail, particularly when there is such strong demand.

We hope that new prospective allotment holders can be patient until this matter is cleared up.

We have also been advised that 'patrols' will be out to monitor for illicit weeding and vegetable planting – so be warned! (This is not a joke).

Empty Estate Offices.

We are keen to ensure that these are retained for the benefit of the Estate. We are having preliminary discussions on a number of possibilities.

Update on Planning Applications.

We try to monitor all planning application particularly since the adoption of the 4(2) direction. Our aims are twofold:-

1. To ensure fairness and consistency in how the BCC Planning Department apply the planning rules.
2. To ensure that changes do not detract from the character of the Estate or set unwelcome precedents for future applications.

We realise that objections can sometimes seem trivial, but effects can be cumulative leading to irreversible changes and erosion of character. We also try to consider what conditions might be appropriate if an application is approved, such as materials and

maintenance of privacy for neighbours.

Events list, Local Clubs and Societies.

It was hoped to list recent events such as the recent Bowling Club open days and Moorpool Players productions. However events literally overtook this issues production. Still we are happy to promote Club events on the Estate when we can do so. Please forward details to Mike Frost or via the MRA post box (inside Moorpool News and Wine, The Circle).

Garage User Group.

After the success of the MAA allotment applications scheme maybe something similar is needed for the garages. Perhaps a Garage User Group? The MAA scheme means we have a good idea of how many applicants for allotments there really are and a GUG scheme would do the same, as well as promote proper use and maintenance. Is there someone out there who would like to run it? Advice and support would be available.

Rubbish Clearance and Hit Squad.

The Council have a 'hit squad' for special rubbish collections. They have agreed to work with us to help clear some of the accumulation which has occurred around the Estate. We need to gather it together at an agreed time and they will collect. Further information to follow.

Letters from Residents.

We are sometimes restricted by cost in the number of pages which can be printed in the Duck. However the Duck is for you, the Moorpool residents, and publishing letters from you would be desirable. For the next issue, provided they are short and not (too) libellous, we will attempt to include a few.

Deterioration of Footpaths.

We are aware of issues with various paths starting to break up in places. We have contacted Grainger when we have been informed of these problems, requesting them to take action to make paths safe and passable. If residents can keep us advised about these problems by dropping a note giving the location to the MRA post box we will continue to make Grainger aware and try to ensure repairs are completed.

Japanese Knotweed.

You will probably have read about this in the local paper. The problem has persisted for a number of years and really needs sorting. Japanese Knotweed is persistent and easily spread if not tackled properly. Treatment takes several years to be effective. We don't believe this can be done successfully by individuals but needs a collective effort by Grainger, BCC and residents. We are trying to ensure the various parties get together to carry out the work. Information is available on the BCC website.

Crime Survey (from Tina Hackett)

We continue to collect data on incidents occurring on the Estate. Happily from Jan – May '08 there were relatively few problems; 1 suspicious behaviour, 5 thefts, 11 antisocial behaviour and 2 other incidents. Total - 19 compared to 41 from Feb – May '07. It would be helpful if all residents could support the survey by reporting anything that causes concern. Reports can be written and delivered using the MRA post box in the shop at the Circle or emailed to <tina@thehacketts.fsworld.co.uk>

Information to include: date, time, location, what happened, what action was taken, were the police informed? If reported to police, it is important to request a log number.

Final Quack

My thanks to Rob Sutton for putting this edition of the Duck together as business commitments prevented me from editing it. (Editor)