

## **ROYALE DUNTON COURT RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

Committee Meeting – 26 January 2023

Attendees: Gary Peckham, Pat Stapleton, Sheila Hobman, Julie Raby, Mick Hilton, Lynda Gould, Denise Rayner, Pat Moore, James Hailes.

### **Welcome**

Chairman Gary welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Apologies for Absence**

Terry Rose.

Terry has decided to resign. He said he just wasn't able to give much time to the association so it wasn't worth him being part of the committee. The Chairman thanked Terry in his absence for all his help getting us set up.

### **Treasurer**

Our treasurer Sheila said the bank balance total is currently £2,644.48.

Part of this is money ring-fenced as insurance to pay for cancellations if the club is ever forced to close at short notice through staff illness (or any other reason). The association will be liable to refund tickets and pay for cancelled acts/catering.

There is also money ring-fenced for defib servicing.

### **Helping Hands**

Lynda said that the scheme continued to do well and her team was busy providing help to many people on the park.

### **Entertainment**

- We had a discussion about whether to continue helping Royale provide entertainment. It was felt that despite us volunteering to do what they're obliged to do themselves, we were given little support, in fact sometimes the opposite.

The entertainment team decided to soldier on in the hope that relationships with Royale improved. Julie and Mick are going to organise something for the King's Coronation weekend 6th May and as Monday 8th May is a bank holiday it has been suggested that the park has a street party. As yet no roads/site have been agreed upon.

- 17th February Valentines Night tickets are now on sale.

- March Quiz night is Friday 3 March.

- Various entertainment will be held from April – December. Dates and acts will be posted when confirmed. It was suggested that chicken/scampi/fish and chips in a basket were a good idea for the Christmas 2023 party instead of a buffet.

- The chair put forward a suggestion that we offer residents slightly cheaper tickets for events and guests continue to pay the normal rate. A vote was taken but the motion was defeated, with the majority of the committee supporting one fixed price for all.

## **Communications**

- James discussed how he communicates the association's news. We now have over 100 people on the Facebook group and lots of daily visitors to the website. He is able to update with news/info several times a week - something we're not able to do with a paper newsletter. James said a lot of people now keep in touch with the association digitally which means they are most up-to-date. For those not so tech-savvy, we do deliver a paper newsletter around 6 times a year. It's fairly costly and time consuming to print and deliver to every home so, to save waste, James said it's vital we only deliver to people who want one. James put forward that in the next newsletter he'll include an 'opt-in' slip for those who want to continue getting paper newsletters. James also said that outsourcing the printing would be cheaper than printing 1000s of pages at home - and he'd received a quote of £30 for 180 copies (6 page). It was agreed to try that.
- Joy Darch had done a detailed report on the state of the roads and lighting which was sent to Royale in October. James also did a street lighting report. However, there's been no reply to either from Royale.
- Residents have also told us they are unhappy with Royale withdrawing allocated parking. Other residents have told us they are unhappy with Royale's response to them when they've asked for help with Blue Badge parking. James said he'd taken legal advice on how to deal with these kinds of issues and he was advised to examine the site licence issued by Basildon Council for Royale's obligations. However, James reported that the licence Basildon sent him for examination appeared to be out of date so he's following that up with Basildon.
- James reported £400 + £200 Energy grants were still not open for claims his contact at the department for housing said it will be available by the end of February. James explained that the government will release a website for claims when the system is ready but there will be a telephone hotline to claim for those not tech-savvy.
- James reported that the residents who run bingo had asked the residents association to buy them a new bingo machine and PA system. However, we had to explain that when we offered to help with entertainment, Royale said we can deal with everything except bingo because that was already well established. This means the association has no control over the money Bingo raises. However, James said he'd approach Royale on their behalf to raise the fact the club's own equipment is no longer fit for purpose. Royale came back to James and agreed to purchase new equipment for use in the club.

- James discussed continued issues with gas supplies on site. Bulk LPG storage tanks are fitted with wireless monitors which enable Calor to view gas levels. When tanks reach a certain level it flags up on Calor's system and they schedule a delivery. During summer months Calor says it's around 20%; but in the winter it's 10%. When a tank flags as low level, Calor use the customer's usage history to schedule a visit to make sure a tanker is sent well before people run out. Unfortunately the system failed some residents over the last few days (as it did last winter). Royale have now launched their own complaint to Calor about failed deliveries and they will let us know when and how Calor responds. In the meantime, if your tank reaches 10% continue to let the office know so they can chase things up. However, like us, they're reliant on Calor doing what they're supposed to do. Separately, on 21 January the Residents Association sent a strongly worded email to Calor saying how shameful it was to leave people in their 80s without gas on one of the coldest weekends this winter. Calor has yet to respond.
- We went on to discuss Royale's emergency provision whereby the mobile phone number given to residents isn't answered.
- James reported that Basildon Council contacted the association to say Royale had informed them that the club house can no longer be used as a Polling Station after 30 years. James approached Royale to see if this decision could be reversed as some residents could not travel to vote.

### **Pitch Fee**

Royale are due to release their pitch fee review for 2023. We will wait to see what the increase will be. However, it's likely we'll need to call a general meeting to discuss this with members. As the March pitch review was likely to need a general meeting every year, Gary suggested we change our AGM from October to March so that we don't have to ask members to come to the hall twice a year. The committee agreed it was a good idea but we need to get members approval.

### **Any other business**

To investigate why heating in the main hall is not switched on for Coffee Mornings, Knit and Natter, Bingo or meetings? Residents have complained that the hall has had no heating on throughout the cold spell.

### **Members Questions**

4 members observed our meeting tonight. The meeting isn't a members meeting but to be fully transparent we allow residents to oversee our committee meetings and let them ask questions.

Meeting closed at 10.45pm