



Royale Dunton Court Residents Association

meeting date: 5/10/2023

Location: Royale Dunton Court Clubhouse

Start time. 20:00.

Finish time. 21:50

Present.

Chair: Gary Peckham

Secretary: Pat Stapleton

Treasurer: Sheila Hobman

Helping hands coordinator: Lynda Gould

Entertainment coordinator: Julie Raby

Diversity coordinator: Denise Rayner

Communications: James Hailes

Committee member: Pat Moore

+ One member observing.

Apologies

Mick Hilton

1. Opening the meeting (Chair).

Gary thanked everyone for coming.

2. Last meeting's minutes (James).

James recapped the minutes from our last meeting on 3 August 2023 and updated on a few matters which arose from that meeting.

- In August we spoke about poor/missing street signs and today James confirmed he'd spoken to the office about these and new signs were on order.
- One new sign had still not been agreed with the office (back Orchard) but they have agreed to revisit this once gas changeover is complete.
- In August we agreed to approach the office to ask if they would re-commence pink sack storage so residents can collect from the office. We asked Toni to consider this and she has now confirmed, pink sacks are available from the office again.

- In August we agreed to look into buying a water urn for the hall so people can make tea/coffee during the day. This has been done and the urn has been a great help with things like our charity afternoon tea. Thanks to committee member Denise who managed to get this at no cost.

- In August the committee agreed to look at running a free or subsidised coach trip at Christmas for members. The cost of £1300 was agreed. However, this has since been put on hold during this uncertain time on the site.

3. Streamlining the workload (Chair).

Chair (Gary) spoke to the committee about the need to try and share the workload more evenly. There is a lot going on at the moment and some team members are putting in a lot of hours every week doing association business so it's important we try to share the load.

It was agreed that Pat Stapleton would leave his role as secretary and take over as treasurer from Sheila. Pat Moore will become assistant treasurer.

Sheila has done a marvellous job as treasurer over the last few years but also has an increasing workload in other areas so she was happy to hand the finances over to the two Pats to free up time for her other committee roles.

James was originally our communications person running the newsletters/website/Facebook and keeping in touch with residents. However, over the last year or so he has been a very valuable member of the team in the work he does dealing with the Dunton office, Basildon Council and other outside bodies so he will become the official Secretary.

(NOTE: Where there are two members of the same household on the committee it's considered best practice that only one member of a household is allowed to vote at committee meetings, so James will not cast votes at future committee meetings).

The new committee structure is as follows:-

Chair: Gary Peckham

Vice Chair: Pat Stapleton

Secretary: James Hailes (no voting rights)

Treasurer: Pat Stapleton

Assistant Treasurer: Pat Moore

Box Office/tickets/posters/knit & natter: Sheila Hobman

Helping hands coordinator: Lynda Gould
Entertainment coordinators: Julie Raby & Mick Hilton
Disabilities and Diversity coordinator: Denise Rayner

4. Entertainment update (Julie)

We had a discussion about how the reserved seating was going for events. We decided to keep the trial of this going and report back next time.

Julie set out upcoming events which take us through to the end of January 2024.

13 October - Live Music Just4Fun
4 November - Halloween Party Disco
17 November - Karaoke
1 December - Bill and Audrey's quiz
9 December - Christmas Party - Legends and Laughter show
31 December - NYE party disco
20 January - Roy Orbison Tribute

Julie thanked committee members for helping with clearing up after events. It was noted that we left the hall clean and tidy after all events thanks to people staying behind to help.

Julie also updated us on new halfway games for event nights.

Julie asked about permission to spend money to get the V boards recovered (these are the boards we advertise events on). All in agreement.

Julie asked about how things will work when Kim leaves on 11 October and James updated on what had been worked out with the office,

Bingo night, pool night, quiz night and music nights will continue as before and Toni will unlock/lock for all these events until a new bar manager is hired. Residents will need to take their own drinks to all these events.

Knit and natter and coffee morning will also continue as before.

Finally, Julie asked what will happen with the pool table and who will have keys to empty the money moving forwards. The committee suspects this will be the responsibility of the office but we will look into this.

5. Secretary update (Pat Stapleton)

No reports as James now covers this work

6. Treasurer update (Sheila Hobman)

Sheila is in the process of making up the full set of accounts for last year (last full accounts were last October). However, she was able to give an interim figure that, in the last year, the residents association had an income after costs of £3173.99.

7. Equalities update (Denise)

Denise wanted to check that cakes being sold at our charity tea/coffee events have descriptions (e.g walnut cake) so that people with allergies are aware. The committee confirmed that each cake has a description.

It was generally felt that people with allergies would ask about ingredients if they weren't sure so the combination of this with labels was sufficient.

Denise also asked if we could have a system of reserved tables for wheelchair users at events because some tables were unsuitable. Sheila agreed to make relevant signs and we will ask wheelchair users to help with flagging up appropriate spaces.

Denise also noted that some of the sight-lines in the hall were difficult, especially on race night. Unfortunately some of the seating clusters have decorative panels and James confirmed he had already asked the office about improving things. This had been agreed and scheduled for when the gas changeover is complete because the office is maxed out at the moment.

Denise asked about prizes at events which tended to be wine/chocolates which a lot of people didn't like. The committee discussed alternative prizes and free tickets for future events was popular, as well as cash prizes. However, because our other entertainment host Mick Hilton wasn't with us at this meeting we decided to push this to the next meeting.

8. Helping Hands update (Lynda)

Lynda reported that Helping Hands continues to be a success and people use it for all sorts of things including home visits, GP appointments, shopping, help around the home and collecting fish and chips from the van on Thursdays. The committee thanked Lynda and her team for all they did with this scheme.

9. Communications update (James)

James reported that Royale is advertising for a bar manager. Zero hours contract, £10.42 per hour.

James reported that the administrator is in contact with alternative suppliers to restock the bar and in the meantime it had been agreed with the office that people can take their own drinks to all events.

James said he had told the office that the committee are happy to help out in the coming weeks to help keep the club open while they are recruiting a new bar manager. However, Toni had said she's happy to come in and oversee pool night, bingo night, quiz night and music night until a new manager is found. People will need to take their own drinks until further notice.

James spoke to the committee about introducing membership cards for our members which could eventually be used for discounts. All committee members agreed this was a good idea so we will set this in motion.

James reported that he'd raised a number of safety concerns with the office regarding the gas changeover. James wanted to reiterate that the whole reason the tanks were being taken away was because Calor themselves had safety concerns about our site.

James spoke about where we're at with administration. In a nutshell, Dunton is up for sale, as are dozens of other Royale sites. We understand there are interested parties including some of the big players in the industry and also some smaller operators.

James updated on the Site Licence. This is the licence park owners need from the local authority to legally operate. The current licence was put in place before Royale took over the site so Basildon Council is in the process of updating it.

James reported that since the site went into administration, Royale had removed all security. When we told the administrators about this they told us that the head office had told them security patrols weren't a feature of this site. So, we prepared a bundle of evidence for the administrator to the contrary. The administrator got back to us to say they had asked Royale to clarify and they had now said, there used to be security but it was only as a response to specific incidents.

The residents association believes this is a complete misrepresentation of the facts and we have filed an official complaint about the conduct of senior management on this matter. The administrator has confirmed they will use our bundle of evidence in their determinations about the overall conduct of Royale management leading up to administration.

James said he'd had complaints that some people on the Facebook group set up for association members, aren't actually members. James said up until now, he lets anyone join and the rules of the group state you have to be a member so only members should be applying to join. However, to tighten things up, in future he'll check new joiners against the association members list.

10. Any other business

Lynda asked if there's anything we can do about communal bins being moved out onto the road 24hrs before collection. Aside from the obvious unsightliness of having dozens of bins along Main Drive, we'd also had complaints about the safety aspect. James agreed to ask the office if there's any room for movement on times the grounds staff move the bins just to minimise the risk.

Lynda asked if there's any update on the missing street signs at back Orchard and Chestnut Close.

To recap, there is no road name sign for back Orchard so, it's not immediately apparent to new drivers that there are two Orchard Views. This means drivers looking for homes in 'Orchard View' tend to default to going up middle Orchard - and then have to go all around the one way system when they discover the number they're looking for isn't there.

James confirmed he'd spoken to the office and they didn't feel a sign at the start of back Orchard was necessary. We even offered to pay for the sign but we've had no movement whatsoever from Royale on this one. James felt it was a strange thing to dig their heels in over and that a new sign can only ever be a positive thing. So, we'll continue to push for this.