

THE MOORPOOL DUCK

Residents' Newsletter

Issue No. 26

July 2007

WHAT DID THE ROMANS EVER DO FOR US ?

A question famously asked in the film "A Life of Brian" by Monty Python's Flying Circus. It is also a question which can be asked of the Residents' Association. As we approach Autumn and the next AGM, the Residents' Committee felt it would like to outline what it is doing for Residents as much of the work is untrumpeted and behind the scenes.

The Committee has various sub-committees which oversee and work on various aspects of concern to Residents.

Mick O'Malley, the out-going MRA Vice-chair, has outlined for the "Duck" some of the areas of work covered by members of the Residents Committee.

THE WORK of the RESIDENTS COMMITTEE

The last couple of years have been quite lively for Moorpool, and with much debate still to come on Grainger's development plans, we felt that this may be a good time to look back at some of the MRA committee's achievements over this period.

Introduction of Article 4(2) Directive

Several members of the Committee joined with other Residents and interested bodies on the CAAMP working Party which introduced the higher level of Conservation protection now in place. Although it doesn't give us all of the planning controls we would like, it is a useful start in protecting frontages and overlooked areas.

(What is wanted, and what the "Duck" hopes the Committee will be pressing the Council for, is a full implementation of this Directive which at present does not seem to have been fully engaged. {Ed}.

It should also be remembered that the pressure to upgrade conservation protection came initially from the MRA, in particular, from the efforts of its then Chair, Mrs Jackie Holder. {Ed. again})

Inappropriate planning applications

Several applications, which would have damaged the visual amenity of the estate, and affected rights of light and privacy, have been challenged by members of the Committee and subsequently withdrawn or rejected. Direct support has been provided to enable residents to deal with these matters. The MRA is always willing and able to offer assistance to any Residents affected by such applications.

Tenancy Issues

Rent increases and tenancy changes are issues which can be of considerable worry to tenants on the estate. The MRA over the last few years has been able to

provide advice to tenants on these matters and is very happy to help whenever asked.

Anti-social Behaviour

The last few years have seen something of an increase in this unacceptable form of behaviour. Following representations from some Residents the MRA has begun to work with the police and voluntary agencies and they are discussing ways and means to reduce this problem. Early days, but a start has been made.

The MRA, in conjunction with Neighbourhood Watch, also records any instances of anti-social behaviour and crime. This involves a network of "crime surveyors" (volunteer Residents) who record incidents on a monthly basis. The information is collated and shared with the local police. This forms an accessible record of crime / anti-social behaviour on the estate. {Further information on page 4}

Centenary Celebrations

The MRA have already begun to create a programme to celebrate the Centenary of the estate. We have applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund for help with the various aspects of this project and at the moment await a decision from the Fund.

{ Again the "Duck" asks anyone who has ideas, can help, has connections with the media to help publicise the Centenary etc. to contact the Editor }

Publicity

The committee helped to ensure that Moorpool had a major chapter in the recent English Heritage book "Played In Birmingham", and have recently assisted in a walk of the estate by EH members. A network of "Friends" has been set up for non-residents with an interest in the estate.

The Duck

The Duck now appears at regular intervals, and provides an unbiased, impartial view of issues on the estate.

Community Development.

The MRA is always willing to help and encourage individual interest groups within the estate. This is seen in the formation of such a group as the Allotment Association and in the body in the process of creation, the Moorpool Regeneration Group.

Allotment Association

Although now an independent body, the Residents Committee were instrumental in helping to set up the Association.

Moorpool Regeneration Group

Following the presentation of Grainger's plans it became clear to the MRA that a meeting of Residents would be needed to determine the response of the estate to the development plans and the further suggestion of a trust to run the public buildings and spaces on the estate. The MRA called this meeting which decided it would like an independent group to be formed to represent the views of residents about any development plans which might arise affecting the estate and also to consider the position / possibility of a trust. A working party independent of connection to MRA was thus set up and will report back to Residents. This group is currently receiving "start up" support from MRA.

Future of the Estate

As part of our concern for the future and in particular with the possibilities of a 'trust' running the public buildings and spaces, we have commissioned Land Registry searches to determine the ownership of all parcels of public amenity land on the Moorpool estate.

We are thus working in many areas to look after the various interests and aspects of life in and on the estate. We hope to make some alterations in the Constitution at this year's AGM in order to provide greater opportunities for Residents to participate in areas of special interest and decision making. More on this later in the year.

Mick O'Malley

{ In answer to the question which has been posed several times to the "Duck" and the MRA, the new group being established is quite separate and distinct from the Residents Association, and its concern is to address issues of development, current and future which may affect the estate. (Ed.) }

The working party which is formulating the Moorpool Regeneration Group referred to above has been working on a constitution and agenda for its work. The Duck has asked Andrew Hackett, the chair of this working party to explain to Residents how they have been progressing.

MOORPOOL WORKING GROUP

As you are probably aware, Grainger are proposing housing development on a number of areas on the Estate. At a Special General Meeting of the Moorpool Residents' Association on June 14th, it was agreed to establish a working group to develop an independent body to directly address issues of future development. This remit would not be restricted to simply responding to Grainger plans, but to reflecting residents' wishes on the future of their estate.

The group was briefed to initiate a process to collect residents' views on the future of the estate and to suggest a future structure for the group for democratic ratification at a meeting of all residents. Accordingly, there will be a residents' meeting at the Moorpool Hall on July 19th at 7:30pm when this group, which proposes that it should be called the Moorpool Regeneration Group, will report progress to date, submit a draft constitution for agreement by the residents, and invite residents to formally stand for the group.

So what have we done in those few weeks? You will, by now, have had a survey pop through your door which we would urge you to complete. Individual responses are, of course, confidential, but we will collate and use the results to promote the wishes of the residents to Grainger and the planning authority. Gisela Stuart is also taking an active interest and we will share the results with her. There will, in all probability, be subsequent surveys to respond to Grainger's formal presentation on August 8th at Harborne Junior School (when the proposals may change), and to gain further information following the results of our first questionnaire.

We have also drafted a constitution for the group, which we will present for discussion and approval on July 19th, and set up a web site (www.moorpool.org.uk) and e-mail contact (contact@moorpool.org.uk). You can read our meeting minutes and draft constitution from here, and get copies of Grainger's plans and further

copies of the survey questionnaire. We also have a news section where we will post items of interest as we hear about them.

I very much hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend on the 19th so that the Regeneration Group can be seen as an authoritative voice expressing the views of the residents in the future of our homes.

Andrew Hackett

CRIME SURVEY REPORT

Following an increase of anti-social behaviour and drug dealing on the estate, the MRA formed the "Crime Survey" to provide reliable documented proof of crimes which could be presented to official bodies who might help stop these problems. There are 31 surveyors on the estate.

Feb - May 07 :- Crimes / incidents.

Anti-social behaviour 30

Suspicious behaviour 5

Theft 1

Vandalism 6

Total of surveyed incidents = 42

Some incidents are caused by residents but most are caused by incomers. The areas most affected being The Circle, the Pool, the Spinney and the Valley site.

Always report incidents directly to the police - (Rose Rd Police Station 0845 113 5000 ext. 786 36441 or Emergency 999) It is very important to remember to ask for a log number otherwise the incident will not be recorded. If the incident is considered a crime do get a Crime number as well.

We welcome any information that Residents can give us to help make our estate safe and secure. If you would like to help or have any queries please contact me – daytime tel: 0121 427 5962.

Jan Scott (Crime Survey Co-ordinator)

STOP PRESS

GRAINGER POSTPONES PUBLIC MEETING UNTIL SEPTEMBER

The "Duck" has just received an email from Tim Nicholson of Grainger announcing the decision of Grainger, in response to representations from Residents, to postpone the scheduled public meeting of the 8th August until a date in early September. Grainger will announce the new date shortly.

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FUTURE DATES of INTEREST

6th August : Ward Meeting at the Moorpool Hall. The issue of Grainger's plans will be part of the agenda .

Early September: Rearranged meeting for Grainger's formal presentation of revised plans for the estate. At this meeting there should be a chance to put questions to the representatives of Grainger Trust.

28th October: Opening celebrations of the Centenary of the Moorpool Estate.

FINAL QUACK

There is a great deal at stake for the future of the estate and the next few months will be critical in formulating the direction it takes.

The Moorpool Residents Association, the Allotment Association, the currently being formed Regeneration Group are all concerned for the future well being of the estate. Whatever your views are on the direction that the estate should go, please make them known. It is only by making **your** voice and wishes known that the true feelings of all the estate can be made clear.

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