

# *The Moor Pool Duck*

www.moorpool.com

Residents' Newsletter.

Issue No.40

May 2009

## *Grainger Planning Applications.*

Despite notice for the planning meeting coming during the middle of the Easter holiday week when many of us were on holiday, the 3-4 working days available, were just enough with an enormous amount of hard work, for the MRG and MRA to put on a strong rebuttal of the planning officer's report which had recommended approval of Graingers applications. In particular, thanks must go to Emma Moyes for the intense work she put in despite all the complications child care made necessary.

These reports are available to view on the MRG website or linked by the MRA one. Please take the time to read them as the content is unbelievable. Apart from the many and varied objections which seemed to have been ignored or glossed over, we were also dismayed that deals seem to be going on to determine the future use of parts of the Estate which are outside the planning applications. Not only that, but these deals are without any consultation with either residents or local Councillors. The Planning Committee have now decided that all the applications will be deferred pending a site visit on the 21<sup>st</sup> May. It still seems incredible that local residents have

to bend over backwards to meet the 4(2) Direction whilst despite the many robust points made, these plans have been recommended in their entirety. We shall see what the Planning Committee think when they see how our Estate has been treated.

## *English Heritage.*

English Heritage have recently revisited Moor Pool with their specialist landscape architect. A thorough tour of the Estate took place which allowed their expert to see the extremes of the Valley Site to the manicured front gardens of Carless Avenue. We looked at allotments, hidden pathways, arched entrances and the many other fascinating architectural details which make up Moor Pool's character. We have now received a report on the visit and English Heritage's view of Moor Pool which makes extremely interesting reading. There is not the space to print it here, but it is available on the MRA and MRG websites. Please take the trouble to read what they say as it very much supports the importance of the history and character of Moor Pool which we are trying to convey both to residents and the Planning authorities. What is clear is that if these developments do go ahead, Moor Pool's

heritage will be permanently damaged and will be a constraint on justifying future heritage support and funding.

### *Winterbourne Botanic Gardens.*

Lee Hale, the Head Gardener came to the recent coffee morning and presented a very informative and interesting talk on the renovation of Winterbourne and the forthcoming oral history project. As I listened to how Winterbourne has been turned around from the run down gardens to the beautiful and well cared for place it is today, it struck me that it is truly an example of what could be done with Moor Pool. Remember Winterbourne was Nettlefold's home when Moor Pool was built, so we have close historical ties. Lee has offered support and guidance based on their experiences which will be of great use to us if we are allowed the opportunity to take our restoration plans forward. Lee also talked about the oral history project which will enable us to build a collection of residents memories of Moor Pool. The process is simply sitting down somewhere comfortable and recounting stories and memories from days gone by. There must be many interesting tales from places children played, events, people, good times, bad times.....

### *MRG Reaction to Planning Reports.*

I am pleased to enclose a letter from Andrew Hackett Chair of the MRG. We fully support the comments he makes particularly regarding the Character Appraisal. The Character Appraisal was discussed at the

CAMP Committee meetings (remember those?) and chased as far back as April 2007!

*Dear Residents,*

*By now, I am sure everyone is aware of the current state of play. Grainger's application of February 2008 was submitted to the Planning Committee last month with a recommendation for approval by the planning department. They have deferred their decision pending a site visit, which is due on May 21st.*

*The many objections lodged by the MRG, MRA and MAA, as well as the Victorian Society, English Heritage, our MP, local councillors and hundreds of residents have fallen on deaf ears. The Planning Department's précis of over 200 pages of objection documents have either ignored or glossed over the many major points raised, including the loss of allotments, parking, open spaces and the character of the Estate.*

*As a sop, Grainger are offering to 're-instate' allotments that they have neglected in order to replace those lost on the Valley Site – double accounting of which any government could well be proud. Despite the very real parking problems on the Estate, the loss of garaging and Grainger's deliberate neglect are dismissed. There is, apparently, capacity on Ravenhurst Road. Those who rent garages but do not live on the Estate are ignored. Presumably they can also park on Ravenhurst Road, which must be welcome news to those living there.*

*Despite Harborne being below the recommended area of public open spaces, this is also dismissed, as the Bowling Green and Moor Pool itself compensate for this. This will be news to the fishing and bowling clubs who no doubt pay good money to Grainger to retain these facilities for their members.*

*Most significant, of course, is the lack of a proper character appraisal of Moor Pool. The Estate has been a conservation area since the 70's with a more recent enhanced status, fully supported, incidentally, by the residents. It would seem to be common sense to define what is considered important or significant about an area to justify this status. This is what a character appraisal is supposed to do, preferably before the event, but there is still not one in place. So, how can any major development be considered that may be at odds with the very features considered important? Well, apparently, it can, at least according to the Planning Department. We disagree. And we think that legislation backs us up.*

*It is to be hoped that the site visit by the Planning Committee will recognise Moor Pool's historic significance and reject the application. At the very least they should insist that a full character appraisal is completed before any decision can be reached.*

*Andrew Hackett.*

*Moorpool Regeneration Group.*

### *Residents Coffee Morning*

The next coffee morning is on Saturday 30th May in the Lower Hall starting at 10.30am.

Website: [www.moorpool.com](http://www.moorpool.com)

As usual, any donations of cakes will be very welcome but more importantly, please come along and join in.

### *MRA Subs - reminder.*

Since our last reminder subs still trickle in. These are £5 per household or £3 per single person. Please pay either Gill Morgan (Treasurer: 80, Moor Pool Ave) Rob Sutton (64 Margaret Grove), or Mike Frost (1 Carless Avenue) and enclose your name and address so that a receipt can be sent to you.

### *Valley Site Garages.*

Following the inspection which took place within hours of the Planning Committee meeting, we thought we could perhaps expect an accelerated clear up of rubbish. It seems to have been half-hearted at best.

### *Vandalism.*

Pressure from local residents and ourselves has meant the Police have seemingly taken an increased interest and action against groups making a nuisance of themselves. Please keep it up and report any problems to the Police at Rose Road and the MRA so that our crime survey reflects the problems residents experience. We also expect that our local officer will be available at the next Coffee Morning for you to raise issues with.

### *Moor Pool News and Wine.*

The shop is very important to the Estate so please do use it whenever you can. Raj now has a cash machine, fax machine and copier

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all up and working along with some tempting special offers on wines and beers. The shop also has the MRA letter box just inside the door where you can post correspondence to us.

### *The Moor Pool website.*

Have you logged in recently? There are continuous updates so please do check for latest pictures and information.

The address is: [www.moorpool.com](http://www.moorpool.com)

The MRG website carries latest information and documents relating to the Grainger planning applications. You can access via [www.moorpool.org.uk](http://www.moorpool.org.uk) or the link on the MRA website.

### *The Moor Pool Leaflet.*

Enclosed with this Duck is a copy of our first leaflet for Moor Pool. We are in the process of contacting Birmingham City Council with a view to the leaflet being available in information bureau and libraries etc.

### *Pavement Damage.*

We are meeting Highways and Steven King to discuss the recent removal and tarmacing of areas of pavement. Whilst some areas of Moor Pool do have tarmac pavements, surfacing short stretches between areas of paving looks a real mess and detracts from the conservation area. Tarmac is also still prone to lifting when laid over tree roots. There is evidence that some stretches of tarmac have been laid where there was no apparent damage whilst elsewhere broken and raised pavings are left untouched. This is not a good way to spend our Council Tax.

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## *Final Thought.*

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May will be one of the most significant dates in Moor Pool's 100 year existence. That is the day when the City Council decides whether Moor Pool's heritage and character really do mean anything or whether they can be sacrificed to profit. There is nothing in the Grainger proposals that we can't better by restoring the areas which Grainger management have run down. It is understandably difficult because many residents will be at work but if you care, if you are able and if you are willing, please do attend and make your feelings known on Thursday. This is our opportunity to save Moor Pool for the future. It is a day when we can send a clear signal that the way in which Moor Pool has been treated is totally unacceptable and if Grainger cannot appreciate its qualities and its potential then that is their loss, but we won't allow it to be ours.**

**Rob Sutton.**

**Chair.**

The visit by the Planning Committee is expected in the afternoon of the 21<sup>st</sup> May. Any further details will be on the website and notices around the Estate.

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