

The Moorpool Duck

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Residents' Newsletter for Moorpool Garden Estate: Issue No.41: July 2009

Grainger Planning Applications.

Dear Residents

Despite all your objections, the complex and thorough objection documents from the MRG, MRA, and MAA, Emma Moyes superb legal submissions, support from Councillors and our MP Gisela Stuart and finally expert submissions from people who actually know something about Garden Suburbs, we lost the vote on the 9th July. I had been hoping to be able to thank this Planning Committee for having the same foresight in saving Moorpool as John Nettlefold had in building it in the first place. It was not to be.

We are not a political association but it is not unreasonable to make you aware of how the voting went. Even that was a shambles as it was recorded incorrectly at first and the sound system had failed so it was difficult to hear. All the Conservative Councillors voted with Grainger. The Lib Dems voted the same on the key Site A (Valley Site) but split their vote on the others. The Labour Councillors voted for us on all the applications. The only comment came from the Labour Councillors who said they felt it would harm the Estate. Otherwise there was no discussion. Legal

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advice was given to the Planning Committee on how they should vote if they felt the new build would harm the area. From the vote, Members obviously interpreted that advice differently or had already made their minds up. The shameful lack of debate over new build in a rare and almost complete historic area was lamentable. Unfortunately the Council or those responsible for making such important decisions are incapable of appreciating something which many other City's would love to have. Sadly in future if I am still taking visitors on tours of the Estate I shall have to make apology on their behalf for the out of character houses to the rear of listed buildings.

There are still options open to us and Judicial Review is one of them. I do not think it is a matter of whether we have a case but rather the chance of success. At the moment all the documents are being reviewed by an independent legal advisor. We have up to 3 months to instigate an action.

I feel sorry for Councillors John and Deirdre Alden and Peter Hollingworth who have supported us staunchly throughout. They have been hung out to dry by their colleagues' dreadful decision.

Chair: Rob Sutton. 426 5669.

Do the Council and Grainger think this is the end of the matter and everyone will forget what has happened? If they do, then they have badly underestimated (again) Moorpool and its spirit. Do they think they are going to bulldoze allotments, cut trees down and it will be ignored? These actions and this decision will hang like an albatross around their collective necks for a long long time.

There is a key player in this sorry saga that I have not mentioned yet and that is Councillor Whitby. Like it or not, Cllr Whitby still has a role to play in whether Moor Pool is scarred forever. I shall be asking for a meeting with him to discuss ways in which the demands of Moor Pool and Grainger can be met without jeopardising investment elsewhere in the City. These houses have not been built. All that has happened so far is that the land is more valuable.

The battle is not over yet.

Rob Sutton. Chair.

I am pleased to enclose a letter from Andrew Hackett, Chair of the Moorpool Regeneration Group.

MRG Reaction to Planning Decision.

By now you will all have heard that the planning committee approved Grainger's applications at their meeting on July 9th, by a majority of 9:4 for sites A and C and by 8:5 on site E.

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All the objections raised by individuals, resident groups, local councillors, our MP, and august bodies and individuals such as English Heritage, Hampstead Garden Suburb, Dr Mervyn Miller and the Victorian Society have been dismissed in the way one would a tiresome child. And this from a council which boasts "Democracy in Birmingham" on its web site.

Despite the incredible cross-party support from Gisela Stuart, John and Deirdre Alden, Peter Hollingworth and Phil Simpson, the vote taken by the planning committee fell along party lines, raising speculation of the local equivalent of a three-line whip on the Tory councillors who supported the application, leaving only the outnumbered Labour councillors as objectors.

And speaking of politics, where has Mike Whitby been in all this? For all his high office within the council, he is still a local councillor whose job should be to represent his voters in local issues. To say that he has been keeping a low profile would be a gross understatement, and, although he is seen on the patch from time to time, he seemed to be pretty much out of touch with what is happening in Moorpool. The Moorpool which is a part of his constituency, and on which he will be relying for votes when he comes up for re-election. Which is next year in 2010.

This is a sad day for Moorpool and a sad day for democracy. Where we go from here is yet to be decided and will be based on legal advice. But we have already seen that Chair: Rob Sutton. 426 5669.

Moorpool has a strong community spirit and is prepared to stand up and be counted. And that is worth a lot.

Andrew Hackett (MRG: www.moorpool.org.uk)

Harborne Ward Meeting.

The next Ward meeting is 7pm, 27th July at Harborne Primary School, Station Road. You may wish to attend and share with local Councillors your thoughts on the decision of the Planning Committee.

The Moorpool website.

Please log in and keep up to date. If you have any suggestions email them to us at : www.moorpool.com . The MRG website www.moorpool.org.uk also carries latest information re the planning applications.

Residents Coffee Morning

The next coffee morning is on Saturday 25th July in the Lower Hall starting at 10.30am. As usual, any donations of cakes will be very welcome but more importantly, please come along and join in.

Spurgin Pharmacy.

Gareth Spurgin has asked us to inform Residents that although his pharmacy is now shut, a full pharmaceutical service including collection and delivery is still available from him at his pharmacy at Lordswood Medical Centre. This is available to all, not just those registered at the Lordswood Practice.

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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 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.

Moorpool in Bloom - update

Summer annuals from Cofton have replaced the pansies under the street signs on the estate.

Lee Hale (Winterbourne) visited and met with Rob Sutton and Liz Muir to discuss more long term plans. Several groups and individuals are interested in trying out these ideas involving cutting back overgrowth and undergrowth and planting with bulbs and wild flowers. The aim is to create a more managed look with planting which also takes account of wildlife. Park Edge have volunteered for a workday on 26th July and are also in contact with the Wildlife Trust about conserving the many toad habitats in this area. This will be a pilot which it is hoped will encourage the general interest. There is liaison with the anglers who are planning on tidying up the Moorpool end.

At the coffee morning on 27 June a number of people showed interest in helping the project and this session will be repeated on 25 July, the aim being to enlist more

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interest. One or two people would welcome help and advice with gardens.

Possible activities for consideration are:

- A seed-collecting walk perhaps linked to a plant exchange/gift evening to help people just starting. Perhaps this could link with MAA
- The planting of bulbs in the autumn might be a residents' "event" but would need some organisation.
- Perhaps Winterbourne/WLT would do a Q/A evening in the winter.

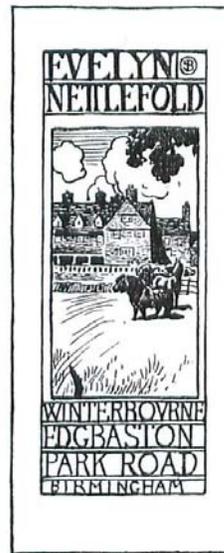
Winterbourne Botanic Gardens.

The open day if you get this Duck in time, is Sunday 19th July. A leaflet has been circulated giving more information. The minibus will run back and forth to Winterbourne leaving from by the Moor Pool. Please do take advantage of this opportunity to see Winterbourne and meet the team who will be doing the oral history project. If you would like to help with the project either recounting stories about the estate or helping to actually record the stories please contact Anna Keast on 0121 414 9115

The Winterbourne Open Day will be a fascinating day discovering the rich heritage of the House and Garden since it was built in 1903. Winterbourne will be telling stories and calling on visitors to share their own photographs and memories for their oral history project. If you have stories of living or working at Winterbourne, memories from Guest, Keen and Nettlefold (GKN), stories of the Moorpool

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Estate or of living in back to back housing, this is a day for you.



A Bookmark belonging to Evelyn Nettlefold, daughter of John and Margaret Nettlefold.

Open 10am – 5pm, Free Entry for Volunteers and Participants.
University of Birmingham, 58 Edgbaston Park Road, Birmingham, B15 2RT.
For more details contact Anna 0121 414 9115 or Reception 0121 414 3832.

- ❖ Guided Tours and Storytelling
- ❖ Displays and Talks from Winterbourne, National Trust, Smethwick Heritage Centre and Moorpool Residents.
- ❖ Tell your own stories about Winterbourne, GKN, Moorpool and living in Back to Back housing.
- ❖ Share your photographs of Winterbourne, GKN, Moorpool and Back to Back housing.
- ❖ **BECOME A VOLUNTEER!** Winterbourne are calling for volunteers to help with the day and be involved with the Oral History Project.
- ❖ Tea and Homemade Cakes
- ❖ Plant Sales

MRA Subs - reminder.

Subs still continue to 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.

Final Thought.

Your support has been tremendous! I very much hope that the community spirit that has been rekindled amongst residents will continue to grow whatever happens next.

Rob Sutton. Chair.

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