

# THE MOORPOOL DUCK

Residents' Newsletter

Issue No. 18

February 2006

## RESOUNDING 'YES!' FOR CONSERVATION!

There was unanimous support from residents for proposals to upgrade the Conservation status of the Moorpool Estate. At the October 05 Annual General Meeting, the views of residents were sought by the Moorpool Residents Association Committee to assess whether the upgrade to a 4(2) level was one that the majority of residents would welcome. (A 4(2) level is the highest grade of protection available, short of being a stately home! Ed.) In front of specially invited guests Gisela Stuart, MP for Edgbaston, Councillors Mike Whitby, John Alden and Peter Hollingsworth of Birmingham City Council, and Chris Hargreaves of Conservation, (a Council Department) whole-hearted support was offered by all for the proposals which would ensure the conservation and protection of the Estate for future generations. The success of the meeting was due to the exceptionally large turnout of over 170 residents and by the support and encouragement offered by our special guests, for which the MRA Committee would like to extend their sincere appreciation and thanks.

### CONSERVATION STATUS ! WHEN?

The following letter was sent to Jackie Holder, the Moorpool Residents Association Chair, by Chris Hargreaves, Head of Conservation.

*"Dear Mrs Holder*

*Moorpool Conservation Area*

*The City Council regards the undertaking of an appraisal and management plan for the conservation area, which would include consultation on the possible introduction of an Article 4(2) Direction, as a priority. This is seen as a major opportunity to work with local residents and with Grainger to raise environmental standards and restore the general character of*

*the conservation area.*

*Grainger have appointed architects and surveyors to advise them on the area and officers have had a preliminary meeting with them when they expressed the desire to make a full and positive contribution to the appraisal and management plan exercise.*

*The Chairman of the Ward Committee, Councillor Mike Whitby, is intending to hold a public meeting in Moorpool for local residents in February or March and I am now arranging a suitable date and will advise you as this is arranged. I will also advise you of the proposals for the timetable for the ensuing consultation exercise.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Chris Hargreaves (Head of Conservation) "*

### STOP PRESS

The date for the above mentioned Consultation has been confirmed by Councillor Whitby's office. It will take place in the Moorpool Hall on Friday 24th March 2006 from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. Further details will be confirmed on the MRA noticeboards and on our website ([www.moorpool.com](http://www.moorpool.com))

A VIEW OF MOORPOOL from  
GISELA STUART MP  
MP for Edgbaston

Moorpool is one of Birmingham's treasures – a quiet oasis in the middle of a thriving industrial city and an architectural gem too. Ensuring it stays that way is one of my priorities.

Over the last year, we've seen some real progress. The campaign to get additional planning protection was supported by residents and has prompted action from the City Council. A working group is now being set up to draw up the details of the scheme. Grainger Properties is also getting

involved and I will be keeping up the pressure to make sure we see some positive action over the coming year.

I am also leading efforts to tackle the problems with Post Office provision in the area, following the loss of the Circle branch . I raised the issue in the House of Commons and am seeking a meeting with Post Office managers. I hope to have some more news by the time of the next issue.

Many of you have contacted my office for help over the past few years. I have a new telephone number! *If you need to contact me*, please ring 0121 454 5430, or e-mail [stuartg@parliament.uk](mailto:stuartg@parliament.uk). If there's a problem you think I may be able to help with, please do get in touch!

Finally, my thanks to you all for supporting the campaign to protect the Moorpool area. We are lucky to have an active community and a residents association that works hard on behalf of the neighbourhood. Let's keep up the pace so we see real progress in 2006!

PS: I celebrated my 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday at the Moorpool Hall in December . We all loved playing skittles there; it's a fantastic asset to our community.

### **A VIEW OF MOORPOOL from COUNCILLOR MIKE WHITBY**

Councillor for Harborne and Leader of the City Council

The Moorpool Estate is a very special place; it has a sense of community and is an attractive and historically and architecturally important residential area. This is why it was made a Conservation Area in 1970 and should be an area of which the whole City can be proud. However, over the last few years there have been signs of deterioration in the area such as chewed up grass verges, semi derelict garage courts and overgrown allotments, together with some unsympathetic alterations to houses and issues of traffic management. Collectively we need to address these issues, that is the City Council, local residents and Grainger Trust and ensure that the centenary of the Estate sees the area enjoying a renaissance and facing its second century in good heart. We shall shortly start this process with a public meeting in Moorpool Estate. Watch out Bournville!

## **EDITORIAL NEWS.**

In following editions of the Duck we would like to include a short letter or article from a member of the community - to be called for the moment '***My View of Moorpool***'. There is no doubt that our estate is a treasure, a special place. For those of us who have lived all our lives here it has an extra meaning borne of our love and familiarity with the estate.

It is heartening as well to find that newcomers to the estate can also feel the same. Here then is an extract from a letter received by the editor from a new resident.

### **My View of Moorpool**

"Dear Editor,

As a child I lived in Sutton Coldfield and I went to school in Edgbaston . Many of my friends lived locally as did my future husband. Romantic walks around the Moorpool Estate sparked my interest in the history of the estate and fuelled my fantasy of one day being able to live in one of those beautiful houses, sitting peacefully in a quiet haven, millions of miles away from the hustle and bustle of everyday city life. I never realised that one day my dream would become a reality. Fourteen years on and we have been, for 6 months, the proud owners of our very own house , in the beautiful estate of Moorpool, that we had aspired to all those years previously.

My family and friends thought us mad, as like many other ex-rented houses on the estate, our dream home was in desperate need of TLC , but despite the project we have undertaken, our love for the area grows daily. We have been warmly welcomed into the community by our neighbours and can regularly be seen walking to the shop in the Circle, covered in paint, looking dishevelled, but still with a smile on our faces and a spring in our step.

One evening, last Autumn, I picked up my first copy of The Duck. I learnt about the AGM of the Moorpool Residents Association and decided to see what it was all about. As I came out of my house, I was overwhelmed by a sense of community as loads of doors opened and people filed out , all heading in the same direction. I was also astounded to find that when I got there, it was standing room only and

and I was one of approx 170 residents who had attended. I learnt a lot that evening, not only about the clubs and groups available to residents and non-residents alike, but also the responsibility that comes with owning my dream home and the issues facing tenants and owners on the estate. Residents aired their problems, Councillors and our MP made us promises, but the responsibility seemed to lie with a dedicated group of volunteers to ensure that the voices are heard and the promises made good.

Having been involved in voluntary committees in the past I know what a thankless task this can sometimes be, however there was obviously a large amount of people out there who wanted their voices heard and were all focussed on one aim – to uphold and maintain the beauty of the estate we have all grown to love. I would therefore like to give my support to those volunteers on the MRA and urge others to do the same, in whatever way they can – large or small and thank *The Duck* for keeping us all informed.

Yours sincerely ,

A New Resident on the Estate.

## **MOORPOOL PLAYERS**

The Players are pleased to announce that 'Day of Reckoning' which was due to be staged last November will now be presented from 14th - 18th March at The Moorpool Hall and that John Healey whose illness lead to the postponement, will be appearing *live*. Some readers may be aware that rumours spread rapidly not only about the seriousness of John's illness, (it was acute bronchitis) but also within days the rumour of his departure to a better place. He was particularly touched by the messages of sympathy which he received when he answered the box office number.

Tickets are available from the Box Office ( 426 2134 ), Moorpool News and The Dove Bookshop in Vivian Road.

The play starts at 7.30pm but for those of you who dash home late from work, did you know that baked potatoes with delicious fillings, trifle and home made cakes are on offer before the curtain goes up. The doors open at 6.45pm so, even if you have already eaten, why not come along and enjoy a glass of wine. We look forward to seeing you, or rather to you seeing us!

## **MOORPOOL NEWS & WINES**

One of the Estate's greatest assets has always been the shops at The Circle. From the Co-op in the early years through to the Post Office, Birch's then Clarke's and latterly Yvonne's Grocery. Although we have lost the Post Office we still have A general stores, '*Moorpool News and Wines*' , ( 0121 428 1061 ) which has recently changed ownership and is now being run by Raj, her husband Dip and their family. This shop has greatly expanded its stock and there have been significant price cuts on many items. It has a licence for alcohol with special offers on wines and spirits . A wide selection of groceries, milk and bread is available, as are snacks, chocolates and crisps.

On the Stationery side of the shop, daily & evening papers are on sale and can be delivered ( am & pm). There are top up machines for gas and electricity cards and mobile phones, plus birthday cards , general stationery, stamps 1st & 2nd class, a photo copy machine and various toiletries. There is also a dry cleaning service.

Small shops by their very nature cannot compete in price with the large supermarkets, but they can compete for convenience and helpfulness. *Moorpool News and Wines* is one of these. If you want to have a local shop it must be supported. We all know how much we miss the Moorpool Post Office - does anybody enjoy visiting Harborne High Street Post Office? !! - Let's try and keep our remaining friendly corner shop . (even if the Circle doesn't have a corner!)

### **Opening Hours:-**

Mon - Fri	: 7.00 am - 6.00 pm
Sat	: 7.30 am - 5.00 pm
Sun	: 7.30 am - 1.00 pm

## **MUCK & MAGIC AT MOORPOOL**

The Moorpool Allotment Association (MAA) was formally inaugurated in November, 2005, and has a current membership of 20 'allotmenters'. As a member of the National Society Of Allotment And Leisure Gardeners, the association will work to promote and protect allotments on the estate, and help maintain the green environment of Moorpool. The next meeting of the MAA will be held on 14<sup>th</sup>. March, 2006, and new members will be very welcome. For further details , contact Mick O'Malley on 0121 427 5051.

## **MOORPOOL SKITTLES REVIVAL !!**

Recent media interest, (two publications from English Heritage) together with the formation of a Ladies Club, has demonstrated that skittles is alive and well in Moorpools' unique alley. New members are always very welcome so, to find out more, contact Mick O'Malley about the Mens Club meeting on Monday and Friday nights (Tel: 0121 427 5051 )or Jenny Cobley for the Wednesday night Ladies Club (Tel: 0121 420 1641. )

## **COMMITTEE NEWS**

Jackie Holder is taking a sabbatical until the end of May, when she will resume her duties as Chair of The Residents Association. Mick O'Malley, Vice-Chair, will cover for Jackie in her absence.

In order to improve service to residents, and better address the variety of issues which affect the estate, a sub-committee system has been developed. These are Conservation (led by Jan Scott), Maintenance and Amenities (Gillian Morgan, Mick O'Malley), Public Relations and Marketing ( Griff Griffiths), Communications ( Mike Frost), and Rents and Leasehold (Jackie Holder, Mick O'Malley).

The Maintenance and Repairs group are seeking the voluntary services of a person with knowledge of building construction, repairs management, and cyclical maintenance to advise the committee. If you are interested and can help please contact the editor.

## **PLEASE HELP US TO HELP YOU**

The residents of the Estate were overwhelmingly in favour of upgrading the Conservation status of Moorpool. Jan Scott (Conservation sub Committee) asks for your help in keeping an eye on building development on the Estate.

The MRA committee needs your help in compiling a list of Planning Applications (both successful and unsuccessful) for the Estate. Members of the Conservation sub-committee regularly check the paperwork, plans etc. of Planning Applications at the Library (currently Quinton) when they see the orange notifications on the

lamp-posts around the Estate or if they hear by word of mouth. In this way we hope to compile realistic information on the current amount of development ( either planned or unplanned) which is taking place on the Estate. With the Spring coming we can expect an increase in building activity and a corresponding increase in planning applications. There was a flurry of these especially in Carless Avenue at Christmas time.

We would, therefore, be very grateful if you could let me or one of the committee know if you see or hear of any building work taking place on the Estate. My telephone number is :0121 427 5962 .

## **SECURITY**

Don't forget now that Spring is on its way , (I'm typing this with crossed fingers !!) , that as gardening jobs and household repairs take place very often ladders are used and perhaps at the end of the day are not secured or put away. Please do make sure such tempting and burglar-friendly objects aren't readily available.

## **FINAL EDITORIAL QUACK ! . . . .**

### **NEW YEAR 2006 : and YEAR 98 !**

It is never too late to wish well , so to all our readers a Happy New Year for 2006 and also Kung Hei Fat Choi to all those born in the year of the Dog.

As well as 2006 it is also the beginning of the 98th year of the Estate and as mentioned in earlier editions of *The Duck* it is hoped to mark the Centenary with suitable celebrations. Various ideas are being discussed and as soon as any plans are confirmed we will let you know. BUT . . . we really would like some ideas from residents about ways they would like to see the Centenary celebrated. Ideas please to the Editor (Mike Frost Tel: 0121 426 4329) or any member of the Committee.

## **. . . . & THANKS**

To Chad Vale School once again for printing *The Duck* .