

THE MOORPOOL DUCK

Residents' Newsletter

Issue No. 24

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GRAINGER'S PLANS FOR THE MOORPOOL ESTATE

EDITORIAL

Over the last few months "The Duck" has kept Residents informed as to the progress of the Conservation implementation and also the situation as regards Grainger Trust's ideas for the future of the Estate. Grainger outlined some suggestions as to a possible way forward to the Conservation Steering Committee. As these were first thoughts they were not presented as plans to Residents but floated to the Steering Committee. The result of this was that several strong representations were made by the Steering Committee as to aspects of a possible plan which they felt were unacceptable. Grainger has considered these representations, made some significant changes in response to the Steering Group's criticisms, and has now made a first set of proposals for the future of the Estate.

The Steering Committee, which comprises members of the Residents' Association, individual residents, Council officials (including the leader of the City Council) and representa-

tives of Grainger Trust, has arranged for a Public Meeting to be held in the Moorpool Hall to which Grainger is inviting all Residents to see a display of their preliminary proposals, hear a presentation from Grainger and to have a question and answer session. **Prior to this meeting Grainger will circulate a set of their proposals to every Resident on the estate with a covering explanatory letter.**

The "Meeting for Residents"

will take place on

Sunday 20th May

There will be an exhibition of plans available from 10.30am after which at 11.30am representatives from Grainger will present their plans. An open forum will follow at which Residents will be able to ask questions, state viewpoints and comment on the plans. This will be repeated in the afternoon at 2.00pm with a presentation at 3.00pm, followed by the open forum.

It is hoped that by holding the meeting on a Sunday as many Residents as possible will be able to attend one of the two meetings arranged.

There has been some understandable disquiet on the estate over the last few months with various rumours as to what was happening or

might happen . Some people felt that decisions were being made behind their backs and that they would not have a chance to comment on any proposals before they became fact. "The Duck" has been assured by the City Council that this is not the case and that Grainger will first be submitting proposals for the consideration of the estate's Residents to comment on, they will then consider their plans in the light of Residents' responses. After this any plans they have will have to go through the normal rigorous planning controls and processes. Nothing is yet decided or signed, sealed and delivered. We, as Residents, have a chance to consider these plans and perhaps help to make them something which will benefit the standard of life and continued well being of the estate.

We feel it is of the utmost importance that as many Residents as possible attend the meeting so that fact rather than rumour can inform our opinions.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Plans are now underway for organising the 100th Anniversary of the foundation of Harborne Tenants Ltd - "The Moorpool Estate". The Residents' Association has formed a group to put plans in operation. This group would welcome any input from Residents on the estate, either in the form of ideas and suggestions, or with practical help, also by joining the Centenary planning group. Contact the group via the Association post-box in the shop "Moorpool News and Wine" The Circle.

The celebrations are being planned to stretch over the period 2007 - 2012 to cover the time it took from the cutting of the first sod to the completion of the last house at the top of Carless Avenue.

The start of the celebration period will be on Sunday 28th October with a series of events to mark the cutting of the first sod. The Moorpool Players will help to set the scene with a re-enactment of the opening ceremony (they are already practicing serious Edwardian faces for the cameras!). During the day there will be a lantern making workshop for children (and adults) the culmination of which, weather permitting, will be a candle-lantern procession around part of the estate. During the afternoon there will be an afternoon tea for senior Residents of the estate. Further details of these events will follow in ensuing "Ducks.

A booklet is also being produced showing the estate in pictures over the years. If any Residents have photos we might copy, particularly of the inter-war years and the latter part of 'last century' we would be very grateful as we have a good number of early pictures we can call on as well as modern ones, but in between, at the moment, it is a little sparse.

Further plans include an Oral History project in which we hope to interview young and old alike for memories and views of what the estate means to them - this will be part of a larger project to build an archive of the last 100 years of the estate's history.

We hope to involve younger members of the community in the celebrations, and to this end we hope to develop a Community Allotment in conjunction with local schools, children and parents.

The finale will be in 2012 with a Grand Summer Fete. If you would like to take part, or if you have other ideas you'd like to see (particularly our younger residents) **do let us know!**

OPEN LETTER

The "Duck" is always keen to give Residents, and others interested in the estate's well being, a chance to express their views to the Estate as a whole. We were pleased to receive the following letters - first from Rob Sutton (Chair of Moorpool Allotment Association. Tel: 426 5669):

*Dear Residents, You will shortly be able to view Grainger's proposals for development on the estate. As part of the Conservation steering group it is my understanding these are for consultation and not intended to be fixed in stone. You will have the opportunity to comment and I hope you will do so, both to Graingers and to the Residents Association. As far as allotments go, I am not happy with what is to remain of the allotments on the Valley site in particular. This reduction not only conflicts with the original design ethos but also the whole point of enhanced conservation status. Some of you will have heard that Notices to Quit have already been issued to certain allotment holders. This is very unfortunate and has not helped in maintaining trust in the consultation process. However, we have to keep talking because at stake is a unique development, the first of its kind in Birmingham, which we as residents and Graingers as Landlord have a duty to care for and preserve for the future. **Rob Sutton.***

Rob touches on issues there that I am sure will be raised at the meeting between Graingers and the residents of the estate on May 20th. The "Duck" would urge you to attend one of the two meetings so that you can hear directly from Grainger exactly what they are planning for the estate.

If you want further information about the Allotment Association, or if you are worried about a Quit notice and are not yet a member of the Association, Rob's contact number is given above.

- the second letter is from Councillor Whitby, Harborne Ward Councillor:

As Chair of the Steering Committee I am pleased to support the consultation day which Grainger have arranged and hope that as many of you as possible can contribute. It will be invaluable in building channels of communication between residents of the estate and Grainger.

The Steering Group has been meeting regularly and has achieved a considerable amount - although there is still plenty more to do. I would like to thank members for their diligence and I hope we can continue to work together productively in the future.

*However, I am aware that recent events have heightened concerns over possible development on the Estate. I am particularly pleased that Grainger have now arranged their consultation event so that everyone has an opportunity of making their views known. **Mike Whitby***

MOORPOOL NEWS and WINE

We would once again urge you to continue to support your local shop run by Raj and Dip. They have various special offers running, including any 3 bottles of wine for £10 from an extensive selection. There is also a fax machine available now as well as an ever widening stock of goods. It is good to see our shop looking as flourishing as it is. So many urban and rural communities are losing their local shops - let's keep ours. Use it!

SKITTLES CLUB

Never Too Old! Congratulations to Resident Ted Boughton, who in only his second season, has won the Knockout Cup at the tender age of 85 years. Well done Ted!

KEN ABBOTT

It is always sad when we lose an old friend, and recently when Ken died, the estate as a whole lost a very good friend. Ken was a part of the estate from his early childhood in Moorpool Avenue through to his later life in Carless Avenue. He was for many years a Director of Harborne Tenants and always carried the interests of the estate at heart. In his latter years he was instrumental in working with Gisela Stuart, our MP, in fighting to ensure that fair rents were not lost to the estate.

Gisela remembers Ken in this letter -

...the first letter I received from Ken shortly after becoming MP for Harborne in 1997 was handwritten, carefully crafted and courteous asking for my advice on legislation dealing with protected tenancies and their rents. In time I learnt that Ken not only did not need my advice, but that I could do no worse than rely on his meticulous research and careful reasoning. He fought for fair rents for the estate - I just checked that he had not overlooked anything. He never had!

Over the years I came to think of Ken as a friend. He cared for the Moorpool Estate and the people living on it. Above all he wanted to see everyone treated fairly. Ken's legacy is still with us. Without his work the estate would not have the protection it has now. We all miss Ken. Gisela Stuart.

The help and advice that Gisela refers to was also placed at the service of the Residents' Association in recent years. Thank you, Ken.

MOORPOOL PLAYERS

The next production is a Triple Bill running from 16th - 19th May. All three plays are set in the early 1900s, deliberately chosen to coincide with the Centenary Celebrations of the Moorpool Estate.

“Our Branch in Brussels” and “Cards Cups and Crystal Ball” are both by David Campton and in very funny, contrasting and chaotic ways, examine the nefarious activities of middle class ladies who really ought to have had better things to do with their time. The third play, “Borderline” is by Wyn Davis and is set in a girls school. It examines the conflict between the headmistress and a member of staff who each have different ideas about the future of one of the school's servant girls.

There will be five performances; Wed - Sat at 7.30pm and a Saturday matinee at 2.30pm. Doors open at 6.45pm when baked potatoes with various fillings, trifles, cakes, hot/cold drinks and wine can be purchased. Tickets price £5 will be available at Moorpool News (The Circle), Dove Bookshop (Vivian Road) and the Box Office (426 2134).

The Group always welcomes new members - if you are interested in any aspect of amateur theatre, please give Norma Mason a ring on 427 6795.

THANKS

To Chad Vale School for printing this edition of the “Duck”.

FINAL QUACK

Summer is once again upon us - our estate is flowering and flourishing - let's take that as an inspiration in the next few months of planning and discussion and by our efforts try to ensure that the next hundred years see the estate ever improving.