

Trustees Second Open Forum

The Trustees held their second Open Forum on June 18. Just fewer than 70 residents attended. After welcoming everyone our Chair, Jeannine Kolodziejki, gave an overview of the Trustees first 8 months work. As the whole Board was new to the job there had been a steep learning curve for everyone. The new Trustees had held an "away day" in April to focus on some of the longer term issues facing the Park and this had proved very useful.

The Trustees then covered the following issues:



Health, Safety and Security

There have been a number of accidents involving slipping around the swimming pool and in the changing rooms. Two specialist contractors were brought in to advise on measures to reduce the risk. A specialist treatment has been applied and a revised cleaning regime implemented. The results are being monitored.

There was an incident at club in April where the fire alarm was deliberately activated by unauthorised entrants to the Clubhouse. This was referred to police but we are looking at various options for improving clubhouse security. These include a swipe card entry system and electronic door locking with remote release. More news as we make progress.

Complaints have been made about cars being driven at speed on the Park and vandalism around the edges of the park. Please watch your speed whilst driving around the Park and observe the speed limit, especially with the school holidays approaching. We have talked to the local PCSO and are looking at the costs of CCTV for the three road entrances. It would help if more residents were involved in the Park Watch scheme. If you would like to be involved please speak to David Bowker, the Homewatch Co-ordinator for the Park. If you do not have contact details please contact the Office.

Personnel

Ray Balmer had resigned as a Trustee and Paul Rogers had volunteered to be co-opted to look after finance issues in place of Ray. We had also said "goodbye" to Brian Elton, Pat Hunt and Barbara Buckley. We said "hello" to Alan Baskerville our new Facilities Manager, Jane Whittington and Cathy Woodward on Reception and Linda Caskie as Assistant Bar Manager.

Bar Project Working Group

The Group was set up after concerns were expressed at the previous Forum, to look at the quality and comfort of the bar and lounge furnishings and how to encourage new users of our improved facilities, taking into account the need to cater for all age and interest groups. The Group was also looking at providing a kitchen facility that meets the needs of Community User Groups and to provide a food sales capability to the bar operation.

The project group are finalising their recommendations which will be presented at the OGM in September. In the meantime a decision had been taken on replacement floor coverings for the Bar and Park Room following the water damage and this work will be carried out over the summer.

Community Groups

We want all community groups to flourish and new ones to start. Bridge and ballroom dancing are fledgling groups and the community groups 'expo' in April was successful in publicising all groups activities. The Trustees are indebted to all group organisers, but in particular Steve Parsons & co for the work they do with the Sports and Leisure Association in helping new Groups get established.

There will be a bonfire party this year! Put the date in your diary. Saturday 3rd November. If you would like to volunteer your help please leave your details at Reception.

A new policy for children being in the bar was introduced in March. This breaks the club down into areas, within the limitations of our facilities, and aims to create space and cater for groups with different needs – families, individuals and sports fans. Revised restrictions on the use of the snooker table and dart board were introduced. For details see the notice board in the Clubhouse entrance.

Buildings, Amenity Lands and Covenants

The snagging work to be done by the builders is now almost complete but we are having to chase the builder to get the remaining work done. Not an unusual experience!

As mentioned earlier the floor coverings in the Bar and Park Room will be replaced over the summer following the water damage in February. The work has been delayed to coordinate it with the work of the Bar Project Working Group.

The mowing season is in full swing. We got off to a slow start due to staff illness but are now back on track.

A Working Group has been set up to examine how we manage the Amenity Lands. Keith Glover and Alan Baskerville are being assisted by Brian Hoyland, Chris Knight and Karl Lummis, all residents with appropriate expertise. We expect to be able to make some firm recommendations by the OGM in September.

One piece of work which has been completed is an inspection of all the trees on the Park. The trees planted by the original developer 'Whelmar' were predominately of a forest variety and are now 30+ years old. Approximately 70% are on amenity lands and the remainder on resident's property. As a result of the inspection further action will be necessary. For safety reasons some work will have to be done as soon as possible, whilst other estate management work can be achieved over a longer timescale.

The work will fall into the following categories:

- Dead or diseased trees to be removed.
- Trees too close together resulting in die back, selective removal required.
- Pruning of trees with low branches to the height recommended by Vale Royal Council namely 2.5m for those overhanging footpaths and 3.5m for those overhanging roads.
- Trees obscuring street lighting require pruning.

Detailed planning will take place during July.

It is also recommended that residents undertake a similar inspection of any trees that they have on their land and where necessary take appropriate action. DPML can offer advice regarding contractors or in certain circumstances can offer practical assistance.

It was also noted that on several of the pathways shrubs and hedges planted on residents land were restricting pedestrian access. We would remind residents that it is their responsibility to ensure that these plants are cut back appropriately. Fence and hedge lines are not necessarily residents' boundaries. If you are unsure where the boundary line of your property lies please check with the office.

There seem to be some misunderstandings about the Covenant dealing with the keeping of caravans and commercial vehicles on residents' properties. The covenant states:-

"No caravan, commercial vehicle or unroadworthy motor vehicle shall be kept or remain in front of the line of the existing building on the premises other than in the garage forming part of the premises"

Such vehicles behind the line of the existing building are NOT in breach of the covenant. The covenant does NOT apply to motorhomes, camper vans, boats etc. Much depends on the precise layout of individual properties but if anyone feels the covenant is being breached please advise us in writing and if there is a breach we will discuss it with the resident concerned.

Finance

Expected operational costs for the year to September 2007 are, overall, largely in line with Budget. Gardening costs are running a little below Budget. Gas costs are above Budget, which was set without the benefit of actual usage data. Administration costs are a little above Budget. Bar takings are expected to be some 11-12% below Budget, with purchases and staff costs correspondingly lower than Budget.

Financial statements will be circulated in advance of the Plotholders' Meeting, to cover the expected costs for this year and the Budget proposals for 2007/08. The Trustees will recommend that a sum equal to the potential VAT charge on the 2007/08 contributions be included.

The Trustees advised residents last year of the issue surrounding repayment of VAT incurred on the cost of the clubhouse rebuild. We have, within the past couple of weeks, received a repayment of £58,000 of VAT, which refunds to us the VAT incurred on the rebuild, but the HMRC 'provocative' assessment also incorporates their calculation of VAT on residents' contributions for one part only of the period they are claiming.

If it is eventually held that DPML has to account for VAT on residents' contributions, and if VAT was held to be chargeable on the full contribution, then we are looking at a cost of around £95,000 to £100,000, for the period of January 2004 to September 2007. We have lodged our objections to the assessment, and are awaiting the HMRC response. This is the reason why the Trustees considered it necessary to issue the May special edition newsletter advising you of the possibility of DPML having to charge VAT on contributions.

We have not given up on this issue. But we do have to recognise the likelihood of some VAT being charged on residents' contributions. As far as the current year is concerned, we don't expect to have a final resolution of the VAT on contributions matter before the OGM. Indeed, it is quite likely that we will have had no further correspondence at all on the matter by then. The Trustees, by looking to existing bank borrowing facilities, will endeavour not to apply a retrospective charge to Plotholders for the current (2006/07) and prior year contributions.

Puddleducks – A New Initiative

The Trustees have teamed up with Puddleducks, an organisation which provides swimming lessons for pre and early school children. From September Puddleducks will run two sessions per week with discounts for residents. The lessons will run in term time only and have been timed to minimise any disruption to residents' use of the pool. Puddleducks are distributing leaflets to all properties on the Park and more information is available at Reception.

The Trustees feel this will make better use of the pool and bring us some welcome additional revenue.

Resident Issues

Our bus service is due to be stopped on 14th August. If you wish to object please raise this urgently with Val Godfrey, one of our local councillors.

A question was raised on whether the signing in data was used to analyse use of the various facilities. This is not done at present but we will look at what use can be made of the information we collect.

parktalk

Delamere Park community news and events

July 2007
SPECIAL EDITION



Help Save the Planet!!

We are all becoming increasingly conscious of the need to reduce our carbon footprint. As you can imagine, a great deal of paper is consumed in the production of Newsletters and the like which are delivered through your door.

Email Newsletter

In an effort to reduce this consumption we are asking that residents with computers register their email address on the Delamere Park website

www.delamerepark.co.uk/talk_reg.asp

From October 1 those email address we collect will only receive communications electronically. This will also include 'news flashes' and reminders of forthcoming events.

Paper copy newsletter

For those residents who still require a delivery through their door would they please complete the form below and hand in this into Reception by August 31.

Please note if residents do not register their preference for one of the two methods described then they will not appear on any mailing list and therefore will not receive any official communications.

Subsequently if for one reason or another you do not receive anything by your preferred means copies will be made available at Reception.

We do hope that residents will review the need to receive paper copies in order that we can both save money and help prevent climate change.

Delamere Park Communications Paper Delivery Request

I would like to receive Delamere Park Newsletter and communications by post.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No.: _____

Please return form to Reception by August 31