



Dunton Park Residents Association

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Dunton Park Residents' Association Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday 5 May - 18:00

Attendees: All 9 committee members present.

- Sharon Stapleton (Chair)
- James Hailes (Secretary)
- Gary Peckham (Treasurer)
- Sheila Mead
- Lynda Gould
- Laurie Gould
- Mick Hilton
- Harry Lowther
- Sheila Hobman

1. Welcome from the Chair

Opening remarks. Now a new committee is in place for the coming year, this meeting was aimed at having a reset and clarifying policies moving forward to ensure everyone is aligned and working from the same page.

2. Recap of Last Meeting Action Points (Minutes from 30 March 2026)

The recap was accepted.

- **Disciplinary Warning:** Some committee members felt the code of conduct warning sent to a member was too soft. James explained that as secretary, he must decide on the tone and, even in cases of disciplinary action, there was no point in doing anything other than respectfully explaining the reason for the warning and asking for the behaviour to cease, to avoid inflaming things more.
- **Romford Dogs Trip:** It was raised that the RA could subsidise the trip. However, the committee agreed that the price of £37 per person (which covers a three-course meal, coach travel, and entrance) is already a good price. The decision was made to charge the cost price (no profit or subsidy) and instead look to subsidise a later event in the year, such as free entry to the summer party (despite the costs for the band). James will put tickets on sale soon at the full ticket price to secure bookings. Members of the RA will get priority sales for one week before opening up sales to guests.

- **Ground Control:** Concerns remain over Ground Control and the untidiness of the site. James explained that this is the same story across all Regency sites and everyone is in the same situation. Gary explained that while frustrating, the only thing the RA can do is keep records and photos of the decline for use at a pitch fee tribunal, which is the only way to get recompense for deterioration. If deterioration starts to become a site licence issue, that route can also be pursued, but James is already monitoring these things, but nothing will change overnight.

3. Treasurer's Statement (Gary)

Gary read out a personal statement to formally record that he was disappointed and upset by false rumours circulating on site about Sheila Hobman being "pushed out" of her previous role as Treasurer. Gary wanted to publicly acknowledge Sheila's important contribution since the RA was first formed.

Gary explained that he actually had no wish to rejoin the committee, but he was approached because of his accounts experience, as it was felt the RA was not meeting current expected standards with non-digital accounting. He noted this is no slight on Sheila, as everyone has different backgrounds and areas of expertise. Gary only considered returning on the understanding that the financial processes would be updated and simplified. It did not make sense to have two people sharing the role, especially when current methods are time-consuming. James had also asked for financial records to be kept digitally, as he and others spent many hours preparing the AGM accounts from paper records. Moving to fully digital systems also removes long-standing frustrations around ticket sales, as information can now be accessed immediately.

The committee voted unanimously to approach Gary and ask him to return and Sheila Hobman was totally in favour of the changes being introduced. Gary said he was especially hurt that his return to the committee was marked with rumours by some residents that Sheila Hobman was pushed out, and a few people even said they would boycott online sales presumably because they believed they were supporting Sheila.

Sheila Hobman has now put on record that she does not know how these rumours started and that she fully supports Gary's new role as Treasurer. Gary was happy to accept that Sheila is supportive of the changes and apologised to Sheila for thinking she might have inadvertently told residents she was unhappy - and perhaps discouraging online ticket sales.

The committee agreed that rumours like this cause an enormous amount of distress, affecting Gary, Sheila, and the whole committee. It was agreed to write a public statement showing unity and discouraging residents from starting rumours. James will issue a statement to clarify the situation. The committee also agreed to look at using the Code of Conduct for members who spread malicious comments about the RA or committee members.

4. Secretary's Statement (James)

James was pleased to be part of the new committee but as the team was aware, he had considered stepping down. Having originally co-formed the committee 5 years ago and been secretary since, he said he is disappointed the committee is regularly dealing with on site gossip, criticism, poor behaviour from members, and a great deal of ungratefulness and negativity from some residents, which was dragging him down. James stated that the whole idea of a residents association is that members support everything we do and we shouldn't need to spend our time handling criticism. The committee was quick to encourage James to stay, saying the committee cannot function without him, and wanted James to put things in perspective that the vast majority of members are fine, and very few drag us down. After a discussion, the committee agreed they shouldn't waste their time on members who do not support them or constantly moan. An agreement was made that we should remind residents of the hard work we all do on their behalf and that if some members don't support us we should encourage them to leave.

For example, recently one of the leaflet delivery volunteers was greeted rudely at the door by a resident who said, "I don't want it!" when handed our AGM newsletter - but days after contacted our Helping Hands service to get free help collecting a prescription and even asked for a lift for a hospital appointment! This kind of thing has to stop - if people are rude to committee members they should be subject to our code of conduct.

The committee voted unanimously to implement the following measures:

- Two separate Facebook pages (details under point 12).
- Stronger use of the Code of Conduct - to remove members who are consistently rude, unappreciative or unsupportive. The committee agreed they do not have to keep members who behave in ways that undermine the committee or make volunteers feel demoralised.

5. Bank Account & Payment Methods (Gary)

The bank account is all set up with extra options like a debit card. Discussion was held on payments to acts and the need to be more professional and avoid cash-in-hand transactions. The committee agreed that organisations like the RA have an obligation to ensure businesses they pay are legitimate, and one way to help with this is by paying no cash. It was agreed that moving forward, the committee would look to pay acts via bank transfer.

6. Online Ticketing Policy

The policy moving forward is to move to a position where nearly all ticket sales are online, a strategy previously voted on by all committee members to steer away from the amount of cash handled. For those who genuinely cannot use the system (not "won't"), someone else, such as a

friend, family member, or another committee member, can purchase tickets for them.

- **Guest List Query:** Laurie asked how the committee records the names of all attendees if one person buys multiple tickets, as the app only shows the purchaser's name. Gary explained that it is not necessary to know everyone's name; all that is needed is to know that the purchaser (e.g., Laurie) needs a table for their number of guests (e.g., six guests). Update: a text box has now been added so we can record attendees names.
- **Card Machine Feasibility:** Laurie also asked if a card payment machine could be considered. James explained that he had looked into it but did not see much use for it, as it would be more time-consuming for the committee.

7. Policy for Cash-Handled Events

It was agreed that events like quiz nights, line dancing, music bingo, and raffles would still attract cash, which is fine, as some cash is still needed. The committee agreed unanimously that refunds can be issued where people genuinely cannot make it, such as in cases of illness.

Also agreed was that committee members buying things under £10, should take the receipt to Gary for cash reimbursement; anything over might need to be paid by transfer.

8. Policy for Opening Doors at Events

Residents are increasingly arriving very early, even though door opening times are published, which can hinder the act from setting up. Since all tables are reserved, there is no need for residents to arrive and queue. The committee agreed on the need to reiterate opening times and keep doors locked.

9. Clarity on Entertainment Responsibilities

The entertainment roles for 2026/7 were agreed as follows:

- **Mick:** Overall entertainment booker and act-sourcing lead; Host for all monthly entertainment nights, including interval games and raffle options.
- **James & Gary:** Responsible for Pub Night dates, hosting, and format.
- **Lynda:** Responsible for special events such as Ladies Day, VE Day, etc.
- **Sheila Mead:** Responsible for quiz nights.
- **Sheila Hobman** agreed to continue helping on events and pub nights with checking people in and managing raffles and music bingo prizes

It was noted that if a committee member needs time off or cannot make a scheduled event, they will all help each other out.

- **Stars in Your Eyes & Football Night - Saturday 27 June:** The *Stars in Your Eyes* event was planned for 27 June, but due to the England football match at 10:00 pm, there was limited time beforehand. It was agreed to postpone *Stars in Your Eyes* and try to schedule it for one of Mick's Act nights rather than a Pub Night. Saturday 27 June would now be a shortened Pub Night with football screening at the end rather than disco or karaoke.

10. Club Operations & Workload Sharing

All items were agreed from the agenda.

- **Event Setup (Seating):** James and Gary will handle seating for Pub Nights, and Mick will handle seating for monthly act nights.
- **Library Opening Times:** New set opening times were decided upon.
 - **Tuesday:** Unlocked by Lynda and Locked by Sheila M.
 - **Thursday:** Unlocked and Locked by Laurie.
 - **Saturday:** Unlocked and Locked by James.
 - A poster will be displayed in the window for the new times.
- **Hall Access:** Sheila Hobman will take on the new Hall Access responsibilities (unlocks for Wednesday Coffee Morning and Thursday Knit & Natter) instead of James. As for locking up, Lynda always locks up after bingo and Laurie after pool night. James reiterated the need that when we shut down at the end of the night we need to make sure the heating/aircon is off in both the bar and hall.

11. Charging for Pub Nights

The proposal to charge for Pub Nights was agreed by a vote of 7 for (Mick, James, Gary, Sheila H, Harry, Sheila M, Sharon) and 2 against (Lynda and Laurie).

- **Proposal:** £5 entry fee, including one entry into the box and one music bingo ticket.
- Introducing a nominal charge would streamline knowing who is attending via online ticket sales, which helps solve the current issue of having to ask everyone individually to set tables correctly.
- It was agreed that even at £5, these nights remain excellent value, with the option to buy extra bingo cards/what's in the box tickets.
- Gary acknowledged differences of opinion are fine, but formally noted his disappointment with two votes against. He stated that opposing a nominal £5 fee undervalues the significant preparation undertaken by volunteers for this particular evening's events.

12. Facebook Strategy

The new Facebook strategy was fully agreed upon. The committee agreed to create two separate Facebook pages to manage communication and address negativity:

- **Resident Chat Page:** One page for resident chat, managed by Sheila Mead.
- **Announcement Page (Read-Only):** One page as a read-only/no-comment announcement page run by James. James finds the current page difficult because the moaning, negativity and residents digging at each other often drown out the actual news. This approach would allow James to focus on clear communication while still giving residents a space to chat.

James will set up the new social page but will then remove himself and leave the group for Sheila Mead to run with the help of Sharon as a second admin.

13. Newsletter Strategy

The current newsletter strategy involves distributing news updates across Facebook, the RA website, and printed newsletters delivered to every home. Recognizing that this duplication is unsustainable, inefficient, and costly, and noting that the website is a far more effective channel with around 1000 visits a month, the committee proposed a change.

Evidence of low engagement from paper newsletters was presented, including James's report that approximately 70 homes did not respond to the paper newsletter distributed before the AGM, and a separate letter about the negotiated pitch fee discount received virtually no acknowledgement outside of social media channels.

Furthermore, the committee expressed disappointment that many residents admit to throwing the printed newsletters away. Therefore, the proposal is to discontinue door-to-door delivery because it's one of the most time consuming things we do but there is evidence it's the least effective. Instead, a small batch will be produced for collection at the library and hall, accommodating residents who can't access a website - allowing them to collect one themselves or ask a neighbour to do so.

14. Collection of Subs (£5 Membership Fee)

It was agreed that James will send a letter to all households with details of how to pay, making residents responsible for paying subs within the permitted period. It was agreed by all committee members to have a strict pay-by date.

15. Code of Conduct

The stronger use of the Code of Conduct was agreed unanimously.

16. Any Other Business

Mick asked about looking into improved TV screens in the bar. James agreed to look at this.

Ladies Day Event: Ladies Day is being organised by Lynda. James will get tickets on sale for £5 each, which will include strawberries and bubbly. The first race is at 2:30 pm, and doors will open at 1:00 pm. Gary will present the races as Mick is away. A smart dress policy was agreed.

Club Keys Issue: It was flagged up that there are continued issues with the keys to the club getting stuck, and it was suggested that the problem might be the barrels.

Sheila Mead: James wanted to put on record the enormous help Sheila had been with his busy secretarial duties. Long may that continue.

Meeting started at 18:00

Meeting ended at 21:20

(3hrs 20mins)

Key Decisions

- **Code of Conduct Enforcement:** Unanimously agreed to implement a stronger use of the Code of Conduct to remove members who are consistently rude, unappreciative, or unsupportive. This was reaffirmed at the end of the meeting.
- **Treasurer Rumour Management:** Agreed to write a public statement to clarify the situation regarding the Treasurer role and discourage residents from starting rumours, with James issuing the statement.
- **Acts Payment Methods:** Agreed to move away from cash-in-hand transactions by looking to pay acts via bank transfer once the current bookings are out of the way.
- **Ticketing Policy:** The policy moving forward is to conduct all ticket sales online with exception of quiz nights.
- **Pub Night Charge:** Agreed by a 7-2 vote to introduce a £5 entry fee for Pub Nights, which includes one entry into the box and one music bingo ticket.
- **Facebook Strategy:** Agreed to create two separate Facebook pages: one for resident chat (managed by Sheila Mead) and one read-only Announcement Page (run by James).¹
- **Newsletter Strategy:** Agreed to discontinue door-to-door delivery of printed newsletters due to low engagement and costs. A small batch will be produced for collection at the library and hall instead.
- **Membership Subs:** Agreed to set a strict pay-by date for the £5 membership fee, with James sending a letter to all households with payment details cash/online.
- **Romford Dogs Trip:** The decision was made to charge the cost price (£37) without subsidy, and instead, look to subsidise a later event like the summer party.
- **Entertainment Schedule Change:** Agreed to postpone the *Stars in Your Eyes* event (originally 27 June) and replace it with a shortened Pub Night featuring a football screening.

- **Library/Hall Access Duties:** New set library opening times were decided - Tuesdays (unlocked by Lynda/locked by Sheila M), Thursdays (unlocked and locked by Laurie) and Saturdays (unlocked and locked by James)
- **Sheila Hobman:** will take on Hall Access responsibilities for coffee morning and knit and natter) instead of James
- **Sunday afternoons:** Mick agreed to look at another Sunday Souiree - possibly Delvis