



Royale Dunton Court Residents Association

meeting date: 9/11/2023

Location: Royale Dunton Court Clubhouse

Start time. 20:00.

Finish time. 23:00

Present.

Gary Peckham (Chair)

Sheila Hobman

Lynda Gould

Julie Raby

Mick Hilton

Denise Rayner

James Hailes

Pat Moore

+ One member observing.

Apologies

Pat Stapleton

1. Opening the meeting (Chair).

Gary thanked everyone for coming.

The chair also took the opportunity to clarify the position with our Facebook group because some residents were upset that they hadn't been unable to join.

The Facebook group is for members of the residents association. When you join you have to confirm you're a member. The reason for this is that committee members all put an incredible amount of work into running the association and providing information. We're all volunteers, we don't charge a membership fee so the least we ask is for people to show support of the association by joining. Of course nobody is forced to join, but residents who don't want to join shouldn't expect the benefits of those who do.

2. Last meeting's minutes (James).

James recapped the minutes from our last meeting on 5/10/23.

3. Entertainment (Julie/Mick)

- Ents team currently booking acts for the period February 2024
- Ents team said they'd like to run an Easter fun day so that residents could bring their children/grandchildren. Easter Egg hunts, entertainers etc. All committee members agreed this was a good idea and should progress.
- Ents team informed us that some residents who have been involved in running the bingo evenings have stood down. Historically, the people who run bingo haven't wanted the residents association involved in these sessions (although we did help organise new equipment for them when their machine/PA got too old). So, it was felt we should encourage them to keep the sessions going with their own volunteers.
- Committee discussed ticket prices and the build up of funds. Essentially, the whole residents association is funded by people who come to events (we don't have a membership fee). Currently we have around £4000 in the bank. We don't need to keep building up the bank account BUT we have to be careful to keep money in the pot for running costs. Examples of running costs include -

Currently over £1000 a year just on admin/paper/printer ink.

Defibrillator batteries £260 each

New defib pads (need renewing every time a machine is used) £75 each.

Act cancellation insurance (we are responsible to pay acts if the hall can't open for whatever reason and functions are cancelled.

- Committee agreed to look at ways to give something back to those who fund the association. We decided that, where we can, we'd reduce ticket prices (the next event is reduced from £8 to £6). This isn't always possible because sometimes acts cost more but we'll do it when we can. We also decided to look at doing a subsidised coach trip next year.
- Committee spoke about trying to get more daytime events to attract new people. Guest talks were mentioned and also Line Dancing lessons had been requested. Committee members felt this was a good idea but we need to be mindful of the fact we're all already spending lots of our time on residents association stuff so not to over-commit ourselves. We decided to pursue these kinds of activities but try to get residents involved in running these sessions.
- Committee discussed having a Christmas craft fair in the hall but all agreed that the last one we arranged was so poorly attended, we'd give this idea a miss.

- Committee discussed trying to get a screen in the hall to help with karaoke (so the audience can see the words too). Julie had managed to blag a secondhand screen from the family but it was too heavy for the wall structure. Julie and Mick agreed to follow this up.
- Committee discussed if we should hire a caterer to do a buffet for our Christmas party but it was felt people would prefer to bring their own food. Instead we agreed to do a secret santa and we'd ask Pat Stapleton if he'd help by being Santa giving out presents.
- Committee discussed event leaflets. At the moment we design, print then deliver flyers to all 187 homes on site. This was costly and time consuming and it was felt that the posters on A-boards by the office and advertising events on Facebook and our website was sufficient in future. Committee agreed that from now on, we wouldn't deliver event flyers through letter boxes.

4. Secretary update (James)

- James said he'd been in touch with administrators about why residents haven't had updated electricity prices. The last fixed rate deal (0.39 kWh) expired with the supplier in September and current fixed rate deals are around 0.29 kWh so we're all going into winter paying more than we should be. The administrator had reported back that they have been trying to get a new deal but Pozitive Energy (our supplier) had delayed the process in terms of new contracts for certain sites and as such, the administrators have escalated a complaint.
- James explained that it remains difficult to keep all residents up to date with news.

We have around 130 out of 186 homes on our Facebook page and we also have lots of people using our website. With these two platforms we're able to get news out every day so these people are always up-to-date. However, there are around 50 residents who don't use Facebook/websites. We do produce a paper newsletter but we can't write, print and deliver newsletters every time there's news so, unfortunately, these people will always be behind with the news and there's not really a way around that.

- James updated about the pitch fee tribunal and said that he and the Chair had put together a 4-page letter to the administrators in an attempt to negotiate a smaller increase. This would save the need of going through the tribunal process. The administrators have confirmed their legal team is considering it and will revert back to us soon.

- James was pleased to report that Toni agreed we could remove the stage curtains in the hall and replace them with our own snazzy ones. The entertainment team were thrilled.
- James reminded the committee that we'd agreed to start giving out membership cards to all our members but we hadn't yet found time to look into getting these made.
- James explained the new bins arrangements which start on 27 November.

Black Bins (non recyclable rubbish) - no change

Recycling - Basildon Council is splitting recycling into two so the Pink communal dustbins will be replaced with a Blue one for paper/card and a Grey one for plastic/cans. This means no more pink sacks.

Basildon Council will supply us with one reusable bag to transport our recycling to the communal bins where we will have to sort it into the respective bins.

James has spoken to Toni about this. Toni confirmed she'd had a site visit from Basildon council to go over arrangements and to arrange a visit to give residents a talk about the new system. However, there's a sticking point.

Toni has said that Basildon Council aren't happy with the level of contaminated waste in the borough (people putting things in the wrong bins). This is likely to increase with the new system so the council was introducing a three-strikes approach with Dunton that if they have to deal with the wrong things in the wrong bins more than three times they might withdraw collections from Dunton. Toni has told the council she doesn't agree with this because it's penalising all residents who do things properly. So, the council has gone away to discuss the situation with seniors at the council.

5. Treasurer's report (in transition between Sheila, Pat Moore, Pat Stapleton)

- Current financial position.

£3,855.07 bank

£535.24 cash

Total credit £4,390.31

- The chairman firstly thanked Sheila for all she'd done keeping the books since the association formed. However, it was felt that some of our processes are cumbersome and time consuming and it's a good time to move our accounting practices up a gear.
- With that in mind the chair has been looking at proper online accounting packages which would streamline everything we do and make reporting to members on a monthly basis much easier. We had a trial with a package called Club Treasurer and Pat Moore had agreed to be our digital-treasurer.

Pat M had a training session with the chair and felt comfortable using it so from now on, Shelia will continue to handle all the money on the night of events and produce a paper summary and Pat Moore would digitalise everything once a month. Pat Stapleton has agreed to take cash to the bank as necessary.

- James was asked a question on behalf of a member. The member wanted to know, when will accounts be published for this year and last?

Answer: James has already published all income and all outgoings for the year up to October 2022 on our website. Sheila had also given out income/outgoing sheets at the last AGM.

As for the year just gone (October 2022 to October 2023), this period only finished a week or so ago so the relevant people do need a few weeks to finalise these before publishing.

6. Equalities update (Denise)

- Denise said the new system of reserving seating for those with extra needs had worked really well at the last event.

7. Helping Hands (Lynda)

Lynda reported that Helping Hands continues to be a success and people use it for all sorts of things including home visits, GP appointments, shopping, help around the home and collecting fish and chips from the van on Thursdays. The committee thanked Lynda and her team for all they did with this scheme.

10. Any other business

- We'd been asked why residents weren't informed the Fish and Chips van had changed times. The fish and chip van had only announced this week that he's only on site from 4pm to 6.30pm. He used to stay until 8pm but very few people used the service after 6.30pm so he'd found a new pitch up the road for the extra time.

Meeting ended at 22:55