

Royale Dunton Court Park Residents Association

Committee Meeting

Thursday 15 Feb 2024

7pm in the hall of the clubhouse

Present.

Chair: Gary Peckham

Secretary: James Hailes

Treasurer: Sheila Hobman

Helping hands coordinator: Lynda Gould

Entertainment coordinators: Mick Hilton and Julie Raby

Membership coordinator: Pat Moore

Banking/Defib management: Pat Stapleton

Equalities: Denise Rayner

+ 4 members observing.

Apologies - None

1. **Chair Gary: opening remarks and apologies.**

a) Gary welcomed committee members and observers.

b) Gary also welcomed Sheila Mead who is considering putting herself up as a committee member so had come to observe our meeting.

2. **Secretary James: recapped outstanding matters from the last committee meeting**

a) Last meeting we agreed to run an Easter family party where residents could invite grandchildren, etc. However, this was postponed because of the uncertainty over administration. The intention from the entertainment team is to run this at a later date.

b) Last meeting we discussed how we could make better use of the hall with other activities. Ideas already raised have been guest speakers in the hall. This has been progressing and we will soon announce a date for our first talk by Air Ambulance staff. Line dancing has also been requested and we are currently coordinating with residents Kevin and Sheila Mead to start lessons.

c) Last meeting we agreed to get a second karaoke screen so that guests in the hall could see the words rather than just the singer. The entertainment team have found a suitable secondhand screen and the next step will be to obtain permission to install.

d) Last meeting we discussed why our electricity rates were so expensive and James confirmed he had been chasing the administrators on a new deal. This has now been done and residents should now have seen a significant reduction in their unit rate

e) Last meeting we agreed to purchase a more professional accounts package to make it easier to report finances to members. This has now been done and we have started using a package called Club Treasurer. The ongoing cost is £5 a month. Members will start to see better reporting at the AMG in March.

f) Last meeting we discussed having proper membership cards for our members. This was agreed and we are in the process of ordering these so they can be given out at the AGM next month. Committee agreed to drop 'Royale' from the name of the association and from now on we will be known as Dunton Park Residents Association.

3. Chair Gary: update on the pitch fee tribunal.

a) The judge now has all our evidence and also the reply from the administrator's solicitor. We are waiting for the next instructions from the court. The judge can either make a decision based on what they have in front of them or they might decide to have a site visit and ask the Chair to attend court for an in-face hearing.

The pack of evidence and solicitors replies run into hundreds of pages so we can't supply each home with a copy. However, we will have a copy available in the club hall over the next few days for people to peruse.

Gary also updated us on the new CPI rate which will be used to set the pitch fee increase from April 2024. Regency Living should be writing to us all in a few weeks and the maximum increase we can expect this year is 4%.

4. Secretary James: statement on the future of the club.

a) The site is currently in transition. Regency Living now manages the site alongside the administrators but as soon as the site licence has been transferred and the fit and proper person appointed, the administrators will stop being involved

b) Recruitment of a new bar manager had so far been unsuccessful and the office was finding it challenging continuing to open the hall out of hours. So, in order to keep bingo, pool, monthly music events and quizzes running consistently, the residents association has agreed to step in so that there is no disruption to these activities.

c) Accordingly, The association are now keyholders, initially for a period of two months. The chair has had to sign for the keys. However, any committee members can lock/unlock the hall.

d) The office are confident the bar will re-open at some point in the future. However, until the new owners have got their feet under the table, recruitment for a bar manager is now on hold.

d) This is a big responsibility for us all on the committee (and at the end of the day, we're just volunteers). We have extensive health and safety obligations and will be taking responsibility for cleaning/toilets, etc. James thanked committee members for agreeing to collectively step up and help in this period of transition and in turn, keep activities consistent for residents.

5. Chair Gary: Reshuffling/resetting committee and roles

a) The chair discussed a number of role changes on the committee. We're always looking to make things more streamlined so we have created a role of membership coordinator. Pat Moore will set to work to digitalise our membership list and keep it updated.

b) Pat Stapleton currently does our banking role, paying money in at Metrobank in Basildon but he has agreed to also take responsibility for our defib machines. James agreed to show him what this entails in the week ahead and until then, James will continue responsibility.

6. **Secretary James: Proposal to pay expenses to quizmasters**

a) Our quiz-masters are volunteers. They don't ask to be paid, they're happy to help out. Normally we buy their drinks on the nights they present the quiz as a thank you. They can also claim expenses for printing and ink for all the quiz sheets.

James proposed giving all quizmasters a fixed rate of £25 to simplify covering their drinks and expenses. Committee members voted 7 in favour and 1 against so this was passed.

7. Mick/Julie: Update on entertainment

a) We now have acts booked until the end of the year.

b) Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, Mick has made a decision not to stand for re-election in March and will leave the committee. However, he has said he is always happy to help us out in the future.

The committee was unanimous in thanking Mick for all he'd done over the years and we said we'd welcome him back anytime.

c) We rarely get complaints about our events, however, several people were unhappy that one of the committee members was celebrating a 65th birthday and purchased a lot of tickets for his family. This generated some degree of chatter noise during the act which some people quite understandably, found frustrating.

The committee agreed that we need to apologise and learn from this. Although we need to sell tickets to pay for the acts so family and friends are vital, in future we all agreed we should not allow large gatherings of this kind.

d) It was also noted that there were two children present and members were under the impression our events were over 18s only.

Just for clarity, we normally say events are 18+ but we do have discretion to allow residents to bring older well-behaved children who might be staying over with grandparents for example. However, in view of complaints about under 18s, the committee has decided to make all future events 18 + with no exceptions.

e) The committee talked about ticket prices for events and whether we should give members a discount. Up until now we've always had a one-price ticket for members and their guests. It was agreed that from April, members will get discounted event tickets.

f) The entertainment team asked if we could try and recruit more quizmasters because everything is down to just two people. James agreed to put this out on the social channels.

8. Treasurer updates from Sheila and Gary.

a) The new system was working well. Sheila continues to deal with income and outgoings then at the end of every event she hands Gary the paperwork and he digitalises it with our new accounting software.

b) Balance as of 29 Feb 24 is £4,177.63 which is Cash 732.12 and Bank 3,445.51.

c) Full accounts will be available at the AGM in March.

d). The chair asked the entertainment team if they can try and keep the cost of acts under £400 so we can be sure we're not making a loss on events. The committee agreed that the entertainment team should have free range to book acts £400 and less but if the cost of an act is over £400 they should consult with the committee first.

9. **Equalities updates (Denise)**

a) Denise told us that she'd had a fall due to the poor state of the site. We asked Denise to make sure this is logged with the office ASAP.

James explained that another resident had had a fall as well. However, the company has said it's down to carelessness, not poor conditions.

We agreed that we're all getting a bit fed up with the company saying there aren't any safety issues with the site. So we will, again, raise both of these cases and the continued deterioration of the site with the local council ASAP.

b) Denise has been able to secure a £500 donation to the residents association in the new funding year April 2024. The committee thanked Denise for her continued support.

10. Helping Hands updates (Lynda)

a) Helping Hands Coordinator Lynda said the scheme continues to tick over.

b) Lynda expressed her disappointment that a number of street signs were still outstanding and every time we ask about these we're told they're on order. The committee felt that these things were dragging on for too long and needed escalating. James agreed to escalate.

11. Getting ready for AGM on 14th March (Gary)

a) The chair reminded us the AGM is 14 March.

b) James will notify residents by way of newsletter.

c) Committee agreed to arrange a basic drink selection for members to enjoy a free drink before the meeting.

d) The chair explained that when we formed the association we used a basic stock constitution and we now needed to build on that.

e) Firstly, all the best advice says that it is in the association's interest not to make a committee too large, as this may prove to be unmanageable. After discussion, we propose to add to the constitution that our committee should have a limit of 10 people.

f) Secondly, it was agreed to ask members to allow James a vote.

Normally with committees the best practice is that only one person from a household should vote at committee meetings so up until now, James has never been allowed to vote.

The committee agreed unanimously that James plays such an important role on the committee that we should ask members of the association if they will allow James a vote as an exception (the rules of running a residents association mean the committee can't decide on things like that, it's up to members).

For the record, James has said he's not particularly worried about not having a vote but thanked the committee for thinking of him.

g) The chair asked who is seeking re-election at the AGM and the following confirmed they would be.

Gary Peckham
James Hailes
Sheila Hobman
Lynda Gould
Denise
July Raby
Pat Moore
Pat Stapleton

Additionally we have a new person Sheila Mead who will be standing.

12. Questions from members

A resident asked why they continue to get bills on Royale letter-headed paper?

We believe this is just a transitional thing because the administrators have had to keep sites running so it will take time to transition from one to the other (changing companies can't be done at the flick of a switch).

Some committee members said they were already seeing updated letterheads with the new Regency Living logos so things are happening.

13. Any other business

James wanted to make sure it goes on record that we are eternally grateful for Mick's hard work on the committee and he will be missed.

Mick has said he will always be around at events and is always happy to help where needed.

Meeting finished at 10pm