



# Royale Dunton Court Residents Association

AGM meeting date: 6/10/2022

Location: Royale Dunton Court Clubhouse

Start time. 20:00.

Finish time. 21:00

## **Present.**

**Chair: Gary Peckham**

**Secretary/vice chair: Pat Stapleton**

**Treasurer: Sheila Hobman**

**Council Members: Lynda Gould, Mick Hilton, July Raby, Pat Smith, Pat Moore, Denise Rayner, James Hailes**

**44 Member Homes signed in (this exceeded the minimum of 20% of homes that are required to attend to form a quorum)**

## **1. Apologies**

Laurie Gould.

## **2. Chair's Opening Remarks**

The chair opened the meeting and thanked people for coming. He highlighted some of the association's achievements since being recognised as a qualifying association by Royale on 18 July 2022.

- a new website made and maintained by James, our co-opted communications lead.
- also a thriving Facebook group with 90 members.
- delivered 3 packed newsletters to everyone on site.

The chair thanks James for his time researching, compiling articles and putting the newsletter together. Because it's fairly time consuming in terms of making a newsletter, printing over 150 copies and delivering, the Chair asked residents if they found it valuable bearing in mind we have a website too? Residents' were unanimous in saying they appreciated the paper newsletter through their door so this will continue.

The chair also thanked Lynda and her team of volunteers for making Helping Hands such a success. Lynda summarised what the Helping Hands scheme was to the meeting.

### **3. Update on Resolutions from General Meeting on 12 March 2022**

The Chair went on to provide the meeting with progress over resolutions from the General Meeting held on 12 March 2022.

#### **Review of on-site roads, paths, lighting and signage**

We have put together a report on issues with roads, footways and lighting round the site.

The Chair thanked Joy (who was not present) for her expertise and providing such a comprehensive report. The Chair also thanked James who went around the site reporting on street lighting. Together with residents' comments we sent a full package over to Royale and they have committed to work with us to make improvements.

The Secretary was due to present Joy with a bunch of flowers for her help with the roads report and also to thank her for resolving the food bin issue and obtaining fuller details for the roadworks starting next week (flowers have now been delivered to Joy).

#### **Installations of defibrillators**

The Chair thanked everyone involved in fundraising events. We reached our target (£1,207.00) on 16 August and our first defib was purchased. There was a special mention of Denise Rayner's union UNITE that contributed £500 and residents that made individual donations. The chair also thanked Royale who kindly installed the machine for us and agreed to pay for the electricity that feeds the cabinet.

The Chair went on to say the committee is working with local councillor Jeff Henry on getting funding for a second unit which we hope to have soon. This will be installed on the wall of the workshop at the top of the park as it needs an electrical source to heat the cabinet.

#### **Full fire safety risk assessment**

The Chair confirmed that we'd spoken to Royale (18 July 2022) about a Fire Safety Risk Assessment and they reassured us that one had been carried out in accordance with the law. The Chair said that if residents have any concerns then they should report these to the office in the usual way.

The association can take things up if people have concerns about safety issues not being dealt with but generally the office is the first port of call..

### **Issues with winter gas supplies**

The Chair updated residents on the problems last winter when some people were left without gas. Royale has assured the committee that they do all they can when people report issues but it's often outside of their control.

Calor Gas have admitted last winters' widespread supply issues were primarily because of a shortage of specially trained HGV drivers which resulted in tank levels for some customers running out before they were able to refill. However, they have said staffing levels are now back to normal so hopefully things will be much better this year.

### **Objection to the planning application especially around lack of consultation with current residents**

The Chair explained that Royale's application to site 85 new homes on the touring caravan field is still with the planning officer for her recommendation. She's expected to make a decision by the end of October.

The Chair thanked James for keeping on top of this.

One of the things flagged up in the pre-application report by planning officers was disruption to current residents. Royale has since confirmed to us that there will be 'zero interruption to people's daily lives'.

We welcomed Royale's announcement. However, it remains unclear how this will work in practice. We have asked but they won't share anymore information. So, we'd like residents to vote tonight for us to put a motion to Royale saying residents would like to know what their plans are.

### **Making best use of the clubhouse**

The Chair explained to residents' that we met with Royale's Head of Operations to see if we could help make better use of the club and they agreed for the association to take over running the entertainment and activities side of things so that Kim could concentrate on the bar.

The Chair thanked Mick and Julie who have been working on a programme of monthly events in the club as well as a monthly quiz night. Royale has also offered us use of the hall outside of normal club opening hours so we'll soon be launching some weekly daytime activities people have been asking for.

Royale have also agreed to pay for extra staff on busier nights and to keep the club open when Kim's on leave - subject to being able to recruit more staff.

Finally the Chair summarised what's coming up in the run up to Christmas.

Fri 14 Oct - Bill's Quiz

Sat 29th Oct - Halloween night (subject to available bar staff)

Fri 11 Nov - Bill's Quiz

Fri 18 Nov - Elvis Tribute - Delvis

Fri 2 Dec - Christmas Party Night - Buffet and singer Sam Knight

New Years Eve Party

#### **4. Treasurer's Report and adoption of accounts**

The Chair moved on to the treasurers' report which was distributed in the hall for approval. The report was unanimously approved and the accounts were officially adopted. The Chair thanked Sheila for her work.

#### **5. Nominations for Committee**

The Chair confirmed that all current committee members had offered to stand again. He also asked if anyone else wanted to join the committee. Nobody came forward so the Chair moved to ask members to vote that all current committee members be elected again. The vote was approved unanimously (no objections).

Chair - Gary Peckham

Secretary - Patrick Stapelton

Treasurer - Sheila Hobman

Entertainment - Julie Raby & Mick Hilton

Helping Hands - Lynda Gould

Equalities - Denise Rayner

Council members - Pat Smith, Terry Rose & Pat Moore

Laurie Gould and James Hailes are co-opted members of the committee so didn't need to be included in the vote.

#### **6. Motions**

The Chair asked members to vote on the following motion and it was agreed unanimously. We can now take this to Royale.

*This Association thanks Royale for clarification that the proposed entrance/exit points for the building works in the old touring caravan site will not impact on current residents. However the Association requests that more detailed plans are shared regarding the short and long term access to this site so residents can fully understand how this will work in practice.*

## **7. Any Other Business**

Members raised the following issues in any other business.

### **Speeding/road issues.**

A member raised a safety issue about speeding on site and vehicles driving up one way streets. Often this is visitors/couriers but sometimes residents too. There was a general consensus that this was getting worse.

The Chair suggested a lot of this was due to poor signage which has been raised in the roads report to Royale. However, we agreed to raise this in our next newsletter too.

Another resident suggested that a solution would be to have no entry signs painted on the actual road surface to make things clearer. The Chair suggested members' look at the Road Report at the end of the meeting to see if their concerns had already been raised re an urgent need for new signage.

One resident mentioned Westminster Homecare drivers were often seen speeding so this is something we'll take up.

### **Pink Sacks/Rubbish**

A resident asked why it was increasingly difficult to get pink sacks.

Gary asked our communications lead James to update on this.

James explained that Basildon Council's current system is to deliver 4 packs of pink sacks - 104 sacks in total - between October and December to every household. This is one year's supply.

If you run out, resident Joy Darch has managed to get hold of an emergency supply so please contact us after the meeting and we can hook you up.

Separately, James told the meeting that Basildon Council is considering stopping pink sacks in favour of a new system where we have separate communal bins for paper/card and separate bins for plastics. They have a consultation survey on their website where residents can read about this proposal and leave their views. If this gets the go-ahead it's not likely to come into effect for another year.

Other residents raised questions about bulky items now mounting up outside of the bin store near the park entrance. These are things residents' have left that are too big to be taken by the weekly collection service. As far as Royale are concerned they are waiting for the residents who left the items to come back and deal with them.

## **Security**

A number of residents' complained about how some of the security staff on site sit in their car all day. However, it was also flagged-up that others are always actively patrolling the site with visible SECURITY uniform. Residents' said they asked the office about this and they were told that the security is primarily to protect building plant on the site, not the residents.

James told the meeting that this seems to contradict the sales pitch and whole ethos of park sites being 'gated, safe and secure'. James also told residents how, before signing the contract to move to Dunton, he'd sought written assurances from Royale senior management over security via his conveyancing solicitor and he'd been assured Royale were "committed to providing safe, secure and sociable communities". Royale also confirmed Dunton "benefited from 24/7 on development security with patrols and monitored CCTV" - so this is something the committee needs to raise with Royale.

## **Paul**

A resident asked about Paul the groundsman and if he was keeping well. However, there was no one able to update on this.

## **5 Year Home Check**

A resident asked if this was still applicable. However, the committee weren't able to offer any advice as they're not up-to-date on this matter. The committee said they will endeavour to find out more.

## **Subsidence**

A resident spoke about how many of the site's roads are cracked and whether residents have any recourse to Royale if poorly maintained roads caused any kind of subsidence issues. The committee said they will endeavour to find out more.

## **Power Cuts**

Residents asked about why we suffer so many power outages. The Chair said this had already been passed on to Royale at our last meeting with them as they were unaware this was such a regular occurrence.

## **Update on Energy Bills Grants/Pitch fees**

The Chair asked James to summarise the situation with government energy bill schemes and James updated members as below -

### *£400 Energy Bills Support Scheme.*

All households including park homes will receive a £400 non-repayable grant. For bricks and mortar people this is being paid by the energy companies directly to their

customers in 6 instalments from October.

Because most park homeowners don't have a contract with an energy supplier (the site owner has the contract) we'll receive our £400 another way.

The last we heard the government was finalising the mechanism of how we get our £400 and they will announce that soon.

#### *Energy Price Cap ELECTRICITY.*

The Energy Price Cap limits the amount you can be charged per unit of electricity. However, this scheme is only for people who have direct domestic contracts with an energy supplier. Unfortunately we don't because Royale are business customers.

The government has recently introduced a similar scheme for business customers but it's not easy to work out because the discount only applies to the wholesale cost portion of the energy contract. Royale has assured us as soon as they know the new price of our electricity they will write to all of us.

#### *Energy Price Cap GAS.*

LPG isn't included in the gas price cap but the government is giving us a one-off payment of £100 to help with increases. Strictly speaking, bottled gas shouldn't be rising as steeply as mains gas but OfGem don't have any regulatory powers over

LPG suppliers so there's evidence many are profiteering. Once again we have no details of how they will get this money to us but we're promised an announcement soon.

#### *Pitch fees.*

Currently site owners can increase their fees every year by the Retail Price Index (RPI) but the government has committed to change that to the lower Consumer Price Index (CPI). Trouble is, this has been long-grassed for the last 4 years BUT all the pressure in the last few weeks means it's now listed to be heard in parliament in November.

James explained the difference between RPI and CPI and how, ultimately, our pitch fee increase could be less in April if the government does change how it's worked out and legislates before then.

#### *10% Commission charge*

James explained that the government is considering changing/scrapping the 10% charge site owners can levy on home owners if we sell our home and The Park Home Owners JUSTICE Campaign is holding a rally outside parliament to protest over this charge which many feel is unfair. The rally is on Monday 24 October.

James also updated us on the roadworks about to start on Lower Dunton Road.

**The Chair brought the meeting to a close at 21:00.**

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**After the meeting committee members were available for Q&As.**

**Q&A on Pets** - A resident came to speak to us about the increase in dog barking noise especially when they are being left alone during the day. We agreed to monitor the situation in the coming weeks.

**Q&A on Pitch fees** - A resident asked us why some people with similar pitches pay different pitch fee rates. We weren't able to offer an answer but said we'd look into it.

**Q&A on solar panels** - A resident asked about this and it was agreed to approach Royale to obtain their policy in regard to installation of panels.