

The Moor Pool Duck



www.moorpool.com



Residents' Newsletter for Moor Pool Garden Suburb. Nr 47 March 2010

A Chink of Light after a Cold Winter?

Letter from the Chair

Hello Everyone,

I hope you will all have noticed the work carried out by residents and also volunteers from the National Trust clearing up around the Estate. The neglect of open spaces that has continued for some years has left us with much work to do. The choice was to allow that state of affairs to carry on or do something about it ourselves. Well, we have started to do something about it, and I shall leave you to read elsewhere about the Moor Pool in Bloom plans. Many thanks must go to all those residents who have been very busy at many places around the Estate. (*pictures on website*) Hopefully, soon all the bulbs planted in the autumn will decide to show themselves too.

You may recall in our last Duck in December I reported we were still awaiting a response from Grainger to our proposal through Mike Whitby to make an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other grant bodies to acquire the Community facilities and Valley Site.

As we have heard nothing, I wrote directly to Grainger to try and get some sort of a response. This resulted in a meeting with Alex Greaves, the Fund Director, who came and spent the afternoon touring the Estate with me. The afternoon was quite positive and Mr Greaves asked various questions and listened to ideas. I also provided him with a document 'An Alternative Way Forward' which is available to view on the website and

at the next Coffee Morning. My conclusion is that our fate is not sealed yet, but we shall need to put forward a financially sound plan if we are to provide an alternative to development. Discussing this with Mike Whitby after the recent Ward meeting, he assured me that he is still negotiating on our behalf with senior Grainger board members and will write to Graingers again to reiterate that not only does he support our concept of a Trust, but he will lead through the City, a £1m Heritage Lottery Fund bid. I anticipate that we shall need to raise more than this, but the suggestions contained in 'An Alternative Way Forward' should attract a number of different grant bodies to form a pool of funding. In any event, we would obtain our own independent valuation for the cost of these facilities. If Grainger do signify they are prepared to do business, I shall endeavour to arrange a residents meeting to outline plans.

Whatever the result of this latest initiative be sure our efforts to save Moor Pool intact will go on. Any suggestion that building houses on allotments in the heart of a unique garden suburb is right, whatever a poorly decided planning decision may say, is unacceptable. Those that disagree are welcome to say so.

Rob Sutton

Moor Pool in Bloom

In spite of the snow, a lot seems to have happened this winter. The plan has started!

The budget for MiB which was based on the plan made by residents in October 2009 has gone to the Ward for Community Chest funding. We can happily report that at the recent Ward meeting the application for £1860 to support this years programme was approved. Many thanks to our Councillors for these funds which will not only benefit Moor Pool, but bring credit to Harborne too. This years plan is ambitious and there will

probably be challenges, but residents have already shown they are up for it.

(Considering the indicated £2000 cost for 5 direction signs this seems remarkably good value. Ed)

On 22nd January, Ken Whittaker from the Royal Horticultural Society visited. He is one of the RHS judges and he was delighted with the Estate and the work so far. He recommends that we enter part of the Estate for the Neighbourhood section of Britain in Bloom in July this year (bronze, silver and gold come later!).

Sites do not have to be perfect, no one has to take part - **so no pressure**; in fact children, community, sustainability and environmental improvements are far more important. Ken (RHS) will be visiting in March to give a seed sowing demonstration and answer questions about Britain in Bloom.

On the 23rd January, a group of Moor Pool volunteers, mainly from the Square, and a group of conservation volunteers worked to clear the area, leaving a swathe of ivy for wild life, but raising the canopy to allow for a greater range of planting. BCC has supported the work and we hope they will also improve the fencing. This job was done with Graingers' agreement and they have offered to deal with the Japanese knotweed.

The management of MiB was discussed just before Christmas. Nobody wants another committee and so we are going to try informal meetings every other month at the coffee mornings to give residents and volunteers a chance for input. Anyone is welcome and we do need your support!

Liz Muir (07792473975)

Japanese Knotweed

Several residents have raised this issue again. We have written to Grainger and also to BCC as the knotweed at the Circle is continuing to damage the pavement and will require treatment by the Council in cooperation with Grainger.

Video Grant Application

The MRA has made a grant application for funding to buy video film and editing equipment. This will enable us to make visual history documentaries. The important aspect is to look at the community facilities and their membership and to understand how the community provision has interacted with and bonded people together. Community facility spans everything from open space, shops, allotments, hall with stage, tennis courts, orchard, bowling green, wooden skittle alley and billiards club. What we want to demonstrate is that with a community of around 500 houses, if the right facilities are provided, people will take care and pride in their community and each other. This is what makes garden suburbs and cities so unique and historically important but also is a pointer to how contemporary small communities should be designed.

Moorpool News and Wine

Our shop at the Circle, 'Moorpool News and Wine' is a focal point for the Estate. Without it, the community life of Moorpool would be much poorer. As we all know, the economic situation is not good at the moment and it is at times like this that we need to help safeguard some of our assets – like the Circle shop. If we don't help it, no-one else will (*well not quite – see later*). Please do use it whenever you can. If we all shopped for just a couple of extra items each week from Raj, instead of going to the supermarket, it would make a big difference to the shop's viability. Raj has a cash machine, fax machine and copier, all up and working, along with some tempting special offers on wines and beers. The shop also has the MRA letter box just inside the door where you can post correspondence to us. Opening times are on the website.

Easter Scarecrow Competition

This year we are again running the Scarecrow competition. It's open to individuals, groups and organisations. All you have to do is build a scarecrow of your own design using whatever materials you have to hand.

Full details are on the entry form available on the website or the Circle Newsagent. Entries can be from 1 person, up to 6 people and any organisation (e.g. Tennis club, Moorpool Players, allotment gardeners, rifle or bowls club).

Scarecrows must be erected in the front garden of participants or in the case of a society, in a nominated garden, by Sat 17th April 2010 and judging will be carried out from 2pm onwards. All entrants will receive a certificate with cash prizes and medals awarded for first (£20), second (£10) and third (£5).

Entry forms have to be received at the MRA post box in the Circle Newsagents by 5.00pm on Friday 16th April.

Pictures of last year's entries are available on the website.

Last year several roads scored 0 points on our round up afterwards because they didn't enter. This year let's try and get everyone to join in the fun! And remember it's for all ages too!

Easter Egg Hunt

April 17th 2010. 11:00am-12:00

Another new event for 2010. We shall be holding an Easter egg hunt around the Estate.

Cadburys are generously supporting us and have provided chocolate eggs as prizes.

Starting Point: The Square on Carless Avenue

Entry (pay on the day): £1

All children of primary school age are welcome to take part under adult supervision

There will be a separate egg hunt for pre-school children based at The Square. £1 entry.

Mums & Toddlers Seed Sowing.

26th March 2010. 10:00-11:30am
(Large Hall)

The Mums and Toddlers from Moor Pool and the wider community will be sowing hardy annuals for summer flowering. Rachel New, of Heart Radio's 'Ed and Rachel' will be attending the event.

Coffee Morning & RHS Visit.

27th March 2010. 10:30-12:30 pm
(Lower Hall)

- Coffee morning and visit by Ken Whittaker, RHS judge, Heart of England.
- Ken will tell residents about the In Bloom and Neighbourhood projects
- Give a seed sowing demonstration for summer planting
- Answer Questions from residents

12:30-1:00pm. Ken and residents will walk the proposed entry level route for Moor Pool in Bloom, July 2010.

Daffodil Walk

27th March 2010 - Afternoon.

In the Autumn of 2009, residents planted 4000 small daffodils and 150 kg of standard size bulbs. Provided the bulbs are in flower, the route will include the Circle to the Spinney, back to North Gate, down Margaret Grove, Moor Pool Avenue, the top of the Valley and Park Edge.

Cinderella

The Residents Association would like to thank Mike Frost aka 'Major Mustard' who kindly performed at the Christmas Carol Walk free of charge. As this would be one of Mike's busiest times of the year, this generous gesture is much appreciated and will enable funds to be earmarked for other causes.

Coffee Morning

The next coffee morning as mentioned previously is on Saturday 27th March in the Lower Hall starting at 10.30am. As usual, any donations of cakes will be very welcome on the day. Please come along and join in.

Plant Sale

There are moves afoot to possibly hold a plant sale to raise some additional funds for MiB. Watch this space.

The Moor Pool Website.

Have you looked recently? Are your clubs details correct? Do you have an announcement or want to buy or sell an item? Then don't forget to look at the constantly updated information on our website including pictures, historical information and events. Please log in and keep up to date. If you have any suggestions or pictures old or new, please email them to us using the link on the site: www.moorpool.com.

The MRG site www.moorpool.co.uk also carries information re the planning applications etc.

The 'Items for Sale', 'announcements' and 'Wanted' section on the website is free.

Please be aware that we will shortly be moving the Moorpool Residents' Association web site to a new server. While this should, in theory, be a seamless process, there may be some inevitable disruption. As the web site is now also mirrored at www.harbornetenants.co.uk, you may wish to bookmark this site to cover such eventualities.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Following the delay in refuse collection over the recent snowy period I was struck by how much litter was left in the streets around the Moor Pool Estate. What really saddened me, however, was that only a small number of residents attempted to tidy up the rubbish left

for days outside their homes. Unfortunately, this was not a one-off. On a regular basis our picturesque streets are littered with old food packaging, empty yogurt pots and even dirty nappies (obviously originating from the house outside which they lay) seemingly oblivious to the majority of residents.

In an ideal world people would not drop litter; bin bags would not be put out 24 hours before collection time; foxes would not rip open the bin bags and festoon the contents over the streets and pavements; refuse collection workers would place the bags with care into the refuse truck and daintily pick up any spillage. But while we are waiting for such miracles to happen perhaps each resident could just keep the pavement outside their homes litter-free and the Moor Pool Estate would look instantly prettier with very little effort and no expense.

Dear Editor

It is now accepted that we all have to leave our rubbish bags on the kerbside for collection, but I was appalled to discover residents actually dumping, not only their rubbish bags but recycling boxes right on top of crocuses, snowdrops and new daffodil shoots!! After the dreadful winter we've just endured, surely there is nothing more beautiful than seeing carpets of spring flowers bursting through the ground - and then nothing more annoying than watching them being destroyed by acts of thoughtlessness!! PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE could residents take a little more care and avoid crushing these beautiful spring flowers. They're not with us for long, so let's enjoy the pleasure they give for as long as we can.

The Bowling Club

The club are on the lookout for new members with the new season imminent. New members of all ages are welcome, including juniors up to 16 years. The club runs various social activities and is a great place to meet and make friends. If you haven't played before tuition is available. Please telephone

the Club Secretary, Pam Doubleday on 550 1316 for more details.

Verges

The problems continue at several areas on the Estate, but particularly the Circle and roads leading up to it. Residents have reported that the refuse lorry reverses and cuts across the grass at the corners. Liz Muir took this up with Nick Reid, the constituency waste manager, at the local Ward meeting. Although there is a possibility smaller vehicles might become available, this is unlikely before the autumn, but it is imperative that the problem is reduced before then. In discussions with Cllr Mike Whitby at the meeting, we were very pleased to hear that he has secured funding to re-turf the badly rutted verge at the bottom of Margaret Grove. This remedial work would have happened imminently but we pointed out that bulbs have been planted along the verge and requested that the work be delayed a few months until they have flowered. Cllr Whitby asked the Duck to make it clear to residents that despite the delay at our request, the funding will be retained, and the work carried out. In the meantime as grass along pavement edges is trimmed back, we suggest residents use this to fill deep ruts.

Signs to Hall and Shops

Good and bad news here. The Ward Committee of Cllrs Whitby, Alden and Hollingworth supported our suggestion to signpost the hall and shops from 4 locations. However Council rules apparently dictate that shops can't be seen to be supported, so must not be mentioned on the sign. The Newsagent which is more of a general store is very important to our community. We think it unlikely that sales at Waitrose, Marks and Spencers, etc, will plummet because of a little extra trade at the Circle! Perhaps there is something wrong with the rules if residents can't be encouraged to use local community shops, particularly as the government is spending what must be a fortune telling us to drive 5 miles less each week. We will ask the additional cost of adding the letters 'and shops' with the possibility of raising the additional funds ourselves in mind. There is also the possibility that a precedent may

have been set elsewhere in which case the position might change. If you are out and about and you see any Council signs directing 'to the shops' please let us know. Even better send us a picture as well.

Update. We are now informed the cost will be £2000 for 5 signs and we would need to fund half the cost ourselves!!

Rubbish Clear Up

We are very pleased by the work carried out by the 'Hit Squad' around the Estate. They had their work cut out clearing up all the waste from The Square. There was more than any of us imagined, but finally it was all removed. They have also targeted the Valley garages and one section has been cleared completely. The work involving the fencing and bench was carried out by the Edgbaston Neighbourhood Assistants funded via Future Jobs Fund(FJF). A great job and thanks to the hard work of those involved and Sue Hickin from BCC. This work is not related to the separate tidying operations taking place along various local roads by the Council.

Now that these areas are clear, it is up to residents to make sure that we monitor what is happening and stop dumping. It may be convenient for builders but we should not tolerate it. We also have a responsibility as residents to dispose of rubbish properly (see letter) and ensure that when builders are employed to carry out work that they take their rubbish away. Builder's rubble has already been dumped behind some of the cleared garages and it is very likely it hasn't come far.

The Square

The next important stage after some replanting is to sort out the old fence with its peeling paint. We are in discussions with the local residents about ideas and want all those who live nearby to get involved. We can then put a proposal to Grainger. Local contact: Paula McGee 0121 426 2842

Subscriptions

There is a full programme planned for this year and although we have funding for

Moor Pool in Bloom we still have to raise funds for the other events, and publications including the Duck. Events such as the Festival, Scarecrow competition and Carol Walk raise the profile of Moor Pool and are essential if we want to encourage support to save your Estate. Subscriptions of £5 per household or £3 per single person are not only financially important but show your support and commitment.

Please make your payment to either Gill Morgan (Treasurer: 80, Moorpool Ave) Rob Sutton (Chair: 64 Margaret Grove), or Mike Frost (Duck Editor: 1 Carless Avenue).

Moorpool Players

The MOORPOOL PLAYERS will be staging five hilariously funny short 'Course Acting' plays by Michael Green from 12th to the 15th May.

Streuth, a tense tightly scripted thriller with a twist that will leave you gasping;

The Cherry Sisters, an early experimental work attributed to the Chekhovian School;

Last Call for Breakfast, the Company's first venture into experimental theatre and dance;

A Collier's Tuesday Tea, a look at life in the raw in a Yorkshire mining village;

Present Slaughter, an early piece from The Master.

Tickets at £6 are obtainable from Moorpool News and Wine or via the Box Office on 0121 426 2134

Advertising

A scale of charges is available for placing a commercial advertisement in the Duck newsletter and on the website. The Duck is delivered to over 500 homes on and around the Estate. Details can be downloaded from the website. Sponsors are also invited for the forthcoming events.

We are very grateful to Cadbury for supporting the Easter egg hunt.

Crime

The following number can be used for reporting minor incidents to Rose Road Police Station. 0845 113 5000 ext 6426

You should ring 999 when:

there is a danger to life or a risk of injury being caused, such as a serious road accident or assault.

a crime is in progress, such as robbery, burglary or theft, and the offender is still on the scene or has just left the area.

the immediate attendance of a police officer is necessary - such as someone acting suspiciously and obviously about to commit a crime.

Coffee Morning - Toys

The coffee morning is a chance for all ages to meet up. That means children and toddlers are always welcome to come along too. If you have items you think might be suitable for the children to play with and you would like to donate them, please let us know.

Dates for your Diary

Played in Birmingham

23rd March. Barber Institute.

A lecture by Simon Inglis & Steve Beauchampé. (details on website)

Coffee Mornings

Sat 24th April 10.30 Lower Hall.

Sat 22nd May 10.30 Lower Hall

Note this is not the usual last Saturday in the month.

Moor Pool Festival 2010.

Sunday 12th September. Various venues.

Hall Centenary

Friday 5th November 2010.

Unveiling of Civic Society Plaque.