

DrewsNews

The Newsletter of Drews Park Village Association - Autumn 2008 - Issue 20



MARCH'S WINNER OF THE PHOTO COMPETITION - see pg 4

DEAR RESIDENTS OF DREWS PARK



I am really delighted to be writing to you in this particular edition of the Drews News.

After a long struggle for recognition, which is covered in the article on the opposite page, the Drews Park Village Association is now recognized by the Sarsen Housing Association and we can get back to the important issues which have had to be put on hold since last year. This Drews News heralds the beginning of a new constructive and productive relationship with Sarsen.

As you know we have had a very busy year with the Town Green Public Hearing and the recognition of the residents association. We are now looking to the future and the new committee will ensure that Drews Park is properly maintained whilst keeping a close watch on costs.

There is so much going on around us that we must remain vigilant to make sure we maintain the integrity of our environment and our surroundings. The Katherine McNeil Clinic has now got final planning permission; the plans have been improved to our benefit since our input into the exhibition by the developer at the Fox and Hounds. Of course in the present climate we may be staring at the hill for some time to come. The Drews Pond Wood project is being passed on by Kennet and although we don't know at this time who will take it on, we must do our best to support this fantastic wood and nature reserve. More about this on page 10. We also have to keep an eye on the Local Development Framework for Devizes as one of the areas they are looking at developing is right on our doorstep.

Lastly the Drews is produced, edited and published by Lisa Penington. This is a tremendous amount of work and I am sure we all appreciate her hard work on our behalf.

Very best wishes

Gail Nugent



The Long Road to Recognition

Residents' aim to have a voice in management of their Properties

Committee members apologise for the long wait for a new Drews News; most of this year has been taken up with the work of forming a recognised Association that conforms to the requirements of their Landlord and Managing Agent, Sarsen Housing Association. Furthermore we have been told that Sarsen are unable to continue to print our Newsletter. As we now have no membership fee, we can no longer provide a printed copy to every house but we will run some off at cost if you apply to any of the committee members. We estimate 50p a copy - to be confirmed.



Everybody will have received their letter of 14th April setting out the criteria for an association acceptable to them. The main objective was to have at least 51% of house owners signed up.

Following Sarsen's various communications people were asked to say if they believed there was a need for owners to have a concerted voice, although we are all aware that each and every owner and resident has the right to voice their individual concerns to their Landlord. To date 62% of owners have agreed that they should be represented by a

Residents' Association and have signed up to this which, according to Sarsen's letter of 14th April gives them the right to participate in, and express their views on, tenders and appointment of contractors in certain cases, certainly where costs are estimated to be more than £250 per house, and in some cases, even less.

At the AGM on 17th July the new Constitution was accepted and a report on the previous year presented. (See details and minutes on the website.) We have achieved well in excess of the membership demanded and proof of all signatures has been conveyed to Sarsen.

We are pleased to say that Sarsen have now formally recognised the Association and we would like to thank not only those who worked so hard to get to this stage, but all the members, both new and long term, for their support.

Finally - Membership is not confined to owners. All residents including tenants of absent owners have a right to have their views represented (with the exception of matters regarding service charges). Tenants or owners who are not already members - Just contact any of the committee members or email drewsnews@drewspark.co.uk with your name and house/Court number and we will add you to the list.

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Photo competition – March 2008



The photo competition announced late last year was won by Thurnham Court resident Jo Geraghty and you will see her very evocative black and white study taken in the Drews Park area on this issue's front page. A bottle of bubbly was duly delivered to Jo with our congratulations. You can see the photo, along with two other entries better on the web site.

The second part of the competition has been cancelled due to insufficient entries but we may run this again some time in the future. Residents are invited to send their pictures of the site to our Webmaster who already has an archive of photos on the web site.

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CONTACT DETAILS FOR SARSEN

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Sharon Wadsworth

Home Ownership Team Administrator

Sharon.wadsworth@sarsen.co.uk

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Gail Deimert (now on extended leave)

Home Ownership Co-Ordinator

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Book Club News

Here are the books we will be reading during our second year of the book group. You can join by emailing Norma on norma@drewspark.co.uk or calling on 724950

September

October

November

December

The Flanders Panel

Cousin Bette

Winter in Madrid

Utz

Arturo Perez-Reverte

Honore de Balzac

C.J. Sansom

Bruce Chatwin

Happy reading!



Minutes of the 8th Annual General Meeting held on THURSDAY 17th July at 19.00hrs at The Black Swan Hotel, Market Place, Devizes.

1. Present: Gail Nugent – Chair, together with 20% of the current DPVA membership and three non members.

Apologies received from K. James, H. James, L. Penington, D. Mumford, C Hayes, R Williamson, M. Cooper, M. Martin, R Edwards, M. Rennie, J. Harpham, B. Harpham, and S Holmes.

Proxy votes were held by the Chairman from M. Rennie, L. Penington, R. Williamson, M. Cooper, J. Harpham and S. Holmes

Auditors for voting at the meeting Jenny Benns, Elaine Collier

2. Chairman's Report Overview

Gail Nugent report that a new management team of three headed by Sue Robinson, Home Ownership and Commercial Manager took over from Paul Crovella at the Sarsen Housing Association at the end of 2007. There has been continual discussion regarding recognition of the DPVA and we have now exceeded the criteria laid down by Sarsen HA of at least 51% membership and have rewritten the Constitution in consultation with Sarsen HA. The increased Management fees of 44.3%, increased maintenance and doubling of the sinking fund to owners was highlighted as well as the postal costs i.e. 12x 1st class letters to owners equates to £430 and the street lighting was totally replaced at a cost of £11,011.47p without full consultation with owners.

Town Green Application – Following the 2007 AGM when it was agreed to continue with the Application we proceeded to the enquiry as we did not want to lose by default by not pursuing our case - the enquiry started on 19th May and lasted for 3 days. We recently received the Inspectors 56 page report which disappointingly did not recommend the registration of the land as a Town Green on legal issues. The huge amount of work undertaken by committee members to prepare and present evidence for our case was recognised by the meeting.

Cont'd on page 6

Items from 2007 meeting.

Car Parks - untaxed cars and caravan have been removed.

Refuse collection - backlog has been cleared and is being monitored.

Gardening - maintenance of grounds, replacement shrubs and trees will be continued under the service charge but finance for any new planting will have to be funded separately by fundraising.

Bike Racks - the meeting was advised that a number of cycles and bike parts have been stolen recently and although Sarsen HA have advised there are not sufficient funds for addition racks, it was considered a matter to be urgently pursued.

Road Signs - still to be tidied up.

Exterior painting - Sarsen HA have made it clear they are in favour of painting the site in one go and based on a estimate from their partner company Seddons the cost would be over £100K. This would totally deplete the sinking fund, causing in the sale of properties with inadequate sinking funds to become extremely difficult. Discussion between DPVA members and Sarsen HA to continue.

Lease enforcement - under continued discussion as a balance needs to be negotiated and members will be consulted on this issue. Recently DPVA were asked to assist a member



selling their property whose purchasers had a cat - we were able to provide historical proof that pets had been allowed on this site and the sale was successfully completed.

Drews News - Autumn edition planned. A vote of thanks to Lisa Penington for editing, producing and often delivering the Drews News was given.

Katherine McNeill Clinic - a final application has been made by the developer and we have again objected to the lack of sufficient parking for

residents and visitors.

GN closed by thanking the committee for their support during a particularly challenging and busy year and offered thanks to those members who have resigned this year, John Fitzmaurice, Gail Mumford, Lisa Penington and Clive Rowland. With particular thanks to Lisa Penington for the huge workload she has carried out over the past years.

3. Treasurer's report.

In the absence of L.Penington, Norma Humphreys reported on her behalf. A recorded delivery letter and email had been received from a resident asking to inspect accounts prior to the meeting. Although the resident

was informed on both occasions that the accounts were available for inspection at 12, Wyatt Court he failed to make contact. The accounts, cheque books, paying in books, bank statements, receipts etc., were available for inspection at the meeting.

Bank Balance at 19th July – Deposit Account £1,845.46 Current Account £27.68, Petty Cash £45.65. Subject to the acceptance of the new Constitution in future the accounts will be audited by two members not on the committee.

4. Constitution:

Proposal to replace the present Constitution with the updated version previously circulated to all members prior to this meeting and agreed with Sarsen HA. It was agreed under item 8d in future the financial year will end on the 30th September. The current year to run from 20th July 2008 to 30th September 2009. The motion was carried with 3 abstentions

5. Election of Committee members

The revised constitution recommends that a representative from each Court shall make up the committee. However as NH pointed out it there was a disappointing response to the circulated letter requesting nominations.

As a result there were no representatives standing for Burnham, Chapel, Thurnham, Speer or Cooke Courts.

Nominations received by 10th July 2008:

Peter Bennis, Christine Fitzmaurice, and Adrian Wood.

Remaining in office: Norma Humphreys and Gail Nugent

The above were duly elected with two abstentions

The appointment of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer will take place at the first meeting of the new committee.

6. Annual Subscription – In order to maintain a membership of at least 51% it is proposed to not charge a subscription while the DPVA is in funds. Once accepted Sarsen HA may provide £150 p.a. to the DPVA for out of pocket expenses, postage etc. Sarsen HA has kindly agreed to pay the cost of renting the room for the AGM. Motion carried with two abstentions.

7. Town Green – report on the Town Green enquiry was given by Adrian Wood and resulting expenditure explained.

Proposal by A. Wood seconded by P. Benns that the Association fund the sum of £760 previously donated by eight residents for the expert assistance given by Mr. C. Maile of Planning Sanity at the enquiry. The motion was carried with 2 against and 1 abstention.

8. General Discussion led by Peter Benns - Future painting programme at Drews Park was discussed at length, several of those present supporting Darren Short who has previously carried out painting work throughout the site. Members to be consulted on the future programme.

Implementation of the lease Adrian Wood pointed out some of the anomalies of the “off the shelf lease” and the necessity to negotiate with Sarsen HA so that the standards are preserved but are not detrimental to the value of our properties. Negotiations will continue based on member’s views.

9. Any other business

Buildings Insurance 2008-2009 - the insurance brokers have stated that the increase in the buildings insurance this year is due to - “an increase in the estimated value of the site and because insurance rates generally have increased to take account of the costs incurred in claims made following the recent floods”.

Window Cleaning – Sarsen HA have only received 13 replies so unlikely to continue with provision of Window Cleaning services.

Correspondence – it was suggested and agreed that all future correspondence with committee members should be carried out in a civil, courteous way so that any disagreement can be resolved in a non-confrontational manner.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.20hrs.

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Members and residents at Drews Park are invited to submit articles, letters and items of general information (or amusement) for inclusion in the newsletter. Please email to drewsnews@hotmail.co.uk or send to 6 Wyatt Court, Thomas Wyatt Road, Devizes SN105FF. Contributions may be amended in order to fit into the Issue, but the writer will be consulted before publication.

Conker Tournament Hots Up!



It was a beautiful day last November when a group of determined residents and their friends got together to fight to the death - with their conkers! They had been collected from our local chestnut trees and strung by competition Leader, John Fitzmaurice, who led the Teams.

Young and old battled it out, reinforced by sausage rolls and other

The Winners!

refreshments. It took a while for the old timers to remember the skills we all used to know and wild swings went wild of the mark many a time. But eventually skills were regained and bits of conker started to fly.

Even without the now almost obligatory Health and Safety goggles worn by some less adventurous competitors our intrepid group battled away until there were no conkers left.

The winner was a resident from Burnham Court and he and his young co-competitor well deserved the box of mint chocs . There were also prizes for the youngest members who went off clutching a box of chocolate teddy-bears. Great fun was had by all!



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THE FUTURE OF DREWS PARK WOODS



With the forthcoming transfer of responsibilities from Kennet District Council to Wiltshire County Council there is some uncertainty about the future of Drews Pond Woods which is such a lovely area right on our doorstep. There had been rumours that the management would pass to the Roundway Parish Council but no news has been forthcoming. On the plus side, the woods are protected so their continued existence seems not to be in doubt, but when transfer of responsibilities comes in April 2009 we hope that there will be still be funds available so that the woods manager, Stuart Hislop and his band of voluntary workers will be able to continue their good work.

ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS?

In past years residents have enjoyed a Christmas meal in a variety of differing venues. If anyone has any suggestions for this coming December, whether a meal out or any other activity, do get in touch with any committee member as booking have to be made early.

RESTAURANT CORNER

We would like to build up a list of local places to eat - starting with BAMBOU at the end of Southbroom Road on the large roundabout in the centre of Devizes. There is an excellent set menu £14.95 (and £8.95 for children under 10) of Vietnamese/ Chinese food. Members visited recently and very much enjoyed their dinner. Bambou opens at 6pm evenings. Please share with us and submit your restaurants of choice in the local area to drewsnews@drewspark.co.uk



NOTICE BOARD

We are happy to say that Adrian Wood is now our Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator. Each Court should have a representative, We are still looking for someone to look after 1-22 Thurnham, 23-41 Thurnham, Cooke, Speer and Chapel. It's not particularly onerous; just look out for new residents and put a Welcome Pack through their door. Phone any committee member to sign on!

(May also lead to 10% contents insurance reduction)

COURT	Area Co-ordinator - Vacant		PHONE
	NO	REPRESENTATIVE	
Bowes	18	Peter Benns	739419
Burnham	6	Sue Chick	724774
Chapel		<i>Representative required</i>	
Clock Tower	12	Adrian Wood	738424
Cooke		<i>Representative required</i>	
Elliot	11	Edward Lockwood	730709
Speer		<i>Representative required</i>	
Thurnham (1-22)		<i>Representative required</i>	
Thurnham (23-41)		<i>Representative required</i>	
Wyatt	7	Gordon Ingleby	723316

TOWN GREEN APPLICATION

Our application was heard on 13th June at Trowbridge Town Hall and has been referred to a non-statutory Public Inquiry which will commence on 19th May at the Corn Exchange, Devizes. Contact us for details of times etc.

MORE WASHING SEEN OUT RECENTLY!

Perhaps tenants or new owners do not know that it is absolutely against the lease terms to put washing outside your front doors. We also see more bicycles outside – if your court does not have a bike rack, please contact anyone in the Association or Sarsen. There is a new one in Bowes, by the way.

NEW SARSEN CONTACTS

SEE PAGE 4

THEATRE NEWS by Mary Stevens



The productions I shall be booking are listed below and as usual I will be pleased to know which shows you are interested in as soon as possible.

The next production is "Deliver us from Evil", a thriller by J.D. Robins and directed by Tess Richards.

The new rector of a country parish is settling in to his new parish, but his wife senses evil. Then the unthinkable happens and it becomes apparent that all is not what it seems! This is on Thursday as usual, the 25th September 2008 at 7.30pm. Tickets are £8.00.

Further productions arranged are, Thursday 30th. October 2008, "The Importance of being Ernest" directed by Rosemary Shaw. (Note: This has now been cancelled). More news later on replacement. We also have advance notice that the Christmas production will be A Christmas Carol by Christopher Schario, adapted, of course, from Dickens wonderful tale.

I will put further notifications of productions this autumn on the web site as and when they become available. I look forward to hearing from you, Mary, 6 Speer Court; or e-mail; marystevens@talktalk.net Tel: 739599

Members – Contact numbers

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(Rotating post August to December)		
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Gail Nugent	Secretary	9 Wyatt Court
730118 gail@drewspark.co.uk		
Adrian Wood	Treasurer	12 Clock Tower
738424 adrian@drewspark.co.uk		
Peter Benns	Member	18, Bowes Court
739419 peter@drewspark.co.uk		
Christine Fitzmaurice	Member	14 Wyatt Court
726448 john@drewspark.co.uk		

Note – Gail Mumford resigned in January – many thanks to her for her help over the last few years

Co-opted Member

Lisa Penington	Drews News, Communications & Membership Secretary
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