



Beechwood Community Hall

Newsletter - December 2008

Welcome to the Beechwood Hall Newsletter

It's time to "deck the halls with boughs of holly" but unfortunately not in our Hall.

Christmas approaches but Persimmon has not completed the remaining work in a way which would enable Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and the management committee to take it over.

A meeting took place in October for the residents of the hall to meet with representatives from MBC to discuss the Hall. They showed that MBC have been working behind the scenes on our behalf. Our local councillor, Julia Batt and the team have been doing all they can behind the scenes to get Persimmon to fulfill their requirements as laid out under the Section 106 agreements signed when they started the development. If no progress is made in the near future MBC may take matters into their own hands, complete the works and take legal action against Persimmon.

As you are probably aware some changes have been made around the hall. The "Somme" has now started to be fenced in which will at least stop people "off roading" during the winter months.

On a positive note the hall is still attracting a lot of interest from local people wishing to use it and we are sure when it is finally made available it will be an asset to the community.

The management committee has obtained funding from MBC and are in the process of setting up a charitable trust to manage the hall.

Linda Sinclair, the local Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator has very kindly provided an update for this issue and we intend to have this as a continuing part of the newsletter.

In the meantime keep watching the press and the web site and let's hope that we can have an opening ceremony early in 2009.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Kind Regards

Nic Jefferys

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Produced by : Linda Sinclair

Recent Meeting between local residents and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC)

Firstly, can I apologise that no 'formal' Minutes were presented following this meeting.

Since the meeting I have also struggled to get the full picture of exactly where we are now with Persimmons, so I will do my best with the information provided to me at this moment in time.

Community Hall – Unfortunately Persimmons have still not finished the Hall, therefore it still has not been handed over to MBC and again therefore has not been handed over to the Management Committee. I am informed we may now be looking at the earliest opening date as being March/April time.

Bollards and Planters (outside Community Hall entrance) – Once again, Persimmon have not delivered on their commitment. MBC continue to push on our behalf.

Fencing and 'the Somme' – You will notice that Persimmon have commenced the fencing but have now disappeared off-site. MBC continue to chase on our behalf. Grassing of the Somme is due with the next planting season when seed will/should be sown.

Play area – Persimmon have still not produced drawings/plans to MBC for their consideration and approval.

There are obviously a number of other issues outstanding. However, with Persimmon still dragging their heels, MBC are obviously reaching the end of their tether. It seems inevitable, therefore, and as discussed at the recent meeting, MBC may have no other choice than to instigate legal proceedings if the promised work is not materially completed by Christmas.

Here is something very interesting from one of our residents, Lucy Miles:

Oakwood Development Residents Association

Are you happy with the local environment where you live? Would you like to have your say about issues like litter, street lighting and safety? Would you like to get to know your neighbours and build a sense of community?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then one way to do this would be to form a Resident's Association, as according to Pledgebank.com it can 'provide a useful tool to help solve problems in your local area, get funding to improve local facilities and housing, and foster a sense of community'.

You may or may not be aware of some of the local issues currently facing this development. Some of the concerns include an increase in litter since the retail outlets opened, poor provision of street lighting and traffic calming, and the delayed completion of the community centre and play area. Many residents are already actively involved in negotiations with Maidstone Borough Council and Persimmons (the Developers of the Oakwood Development) but a united front would aid this process and bring an end to the continuing stalemate.

All residents will automatically be honorary members of the Association but active members would be most welcome. A Residents Association requires a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and agreement of a written constitution. If any of these positions appeals to you please let me know at lucy_miles_25@yahoo.com and we will arrange a meeting to vote and formally establish the Association. I would also like to hear from you if you have any spare time or suggestions of relevant issues and activities etc. I look forward to hearing from you. Lucy Miles

Retail Outlet Area

Immediate residents of the area continue to complain of anti-social behaviour, especially during the weekend. The car park area in particular appears to attract a number of undesirables. If anyone does experience disturbances, do please contact the local Police who will investigate. The information you need once again is:

01622 690690 (Ask for an incident number)

Also, don't forget if your concern is not urgent, you can leave a message for the local PCSO to call you back, please ring **01622 604391**. Your PCSO is Neil Denney.

Parking also continues to be a major problem around there as you will be aware. However, Hyde Housing, because of their tenants parking problems in particular, will be introducing via another company they use in other areas, a clamping system! So watch this space... (pardon the pun!)

Additional Grey Wheelie Bin

You should have received notification from MBC about the 'additional' grey wheelie bin for recycling rubbish that was circulated at the end of October. I know some of you have been concerned about where this extra bin will be kept.

If you object, they will reassess your property and possibly alter the arrangement, e.g. in some cases they will exchange the current green bin for a grey bin and any recycling will go into the black 'paper box'.

Further information on the recycling scheme will be sent out in the New Year, including details of which items are recyclable through the new scheme and important dates for you to remember. Some of this information is available now on the following website:

http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk/environment/waste_and_recycling/new_collection_service.aspx

However, if you prefer to make a telephone call or e-mail directly, there is a very helpful young lady you can contact: Jodie Sargent, Customer Service Officer, Environmental Services, 01622 602500 or e-mail JodieSargent@Maidstone.gov.uk

Parking on the Development

Can I just mention about parking 'considerately' on the development. One of the biggest complaints I have had this year is about parking. There are just not enough spaces on the development for the number of dwellings and sometimes it appears not much thought or consideration is given to other residents when vehicles are parked.

In particular, we are seeing too many commercial vehicles parking inconsiderately on the Estate. Complaints have ranged from high-sided vehicles blocking out residents daylight by parking in front of their living room windows; up to 3 large commercial vehicles all trying to park in a very small close; commercial vehicles parking on slip road to Sage Court from Marigold Way forcing other vehicles to have to squeeze through. So please let's all try and park a bit more considerately.

Hyde Housing Residents

Carole Chapman, Housing Officer (Maidstone) at Hyde Housing has been in touch with me regarding the parking difficulties in the retail area, in particular. (As mentioned earlier, tenants in the apartments above the shops are experiencing problems with parking their cars).

Apparently, Hyde Housing are awaiting confirmation of parking bays as some of these differ from what appear on the Deeds. This is currently in the hands of their solicitors and once resolved, they will take steps to implement parking measures.

If any tenants wish to contact Carole regarding any issues (except repairs which should be reported to 0800 389 3598), she will be pleased to help. Tel: 01622 356473.

Few 'Thank You's':

For all your help and support this year. In particular: Bill Moss, Juliet Stringer, Julia Batt, David Batey, Linda Subert, Nic Jefferys. Tracy O'Toole from Omnicroft (new management company) for getting problems rectified so quickly! Thank you also to everyone else who has contributed to the newsletter; taken the time and trouble to report incidents; voice concerns; help with information gathering and basically displaying the community spirit that makes me proud to head up Neighbourhood Watch on the development.

If anyone would like to be added to the e-mail list for more regular updates, please just let me know: lindasinclair@beechwoodnw.co.uk or if you have any concerns in relation to the development that require investigation, please do not hesitate to contact me.