



Minutes of Open Meeting

May 8th 2013, 7.00 pm at The Vale Community Centre, 17a Hadlow Close

Present: Committee: Grant Scott (Chairman), Alan Cooke (Secretary/Treasurer), Bill Duff, Betty Field, Nick Wood; Residents: Patricia Bartley, Shirley Blount, Rosemary Johnson, Ewa Knebloch-Kozłowska, David Perkins, Jennifer Taylor, Manda Whittaker, Geoff Willcock; Others: Cllr Gill Mitchell, Cllr Warren Morgan, Becky Purnell (BHCC Resident Involvement Manager), Amy Allison (Trust for Developing Communities), Steve Andrews plus two colleagues (ESFRS – Roedean), PCSO Carol Manton

1. Apologies: Roger Carter, Cllr Chaun Wilson, Cllr Stephanie Powell, Peter Mustow (Resident Involvement Officer)
2. Minutes of Meeting March 13th 2013. These were agreed.
3. Matters Arising:
 - a) Community Payback are expected on Saturday May 18th
 - b) Shirley Blount's leaking roof has been dealt with, although internal re-decoration is still awaited. Thanks to Cllr Morgan for re-instating the case.
 - c) Housing Department attendance at CVCA meetings. Becky Purnell agreed that we could approach Nick Aldwinckle to attend if Peter Mustow is unavailable, although he reports to Robert Keelan (Neighbourhoods Housing Manager); and specialists from housing department can come to cover a specified topic if known in advance.
 - d) Betty said that, despite offers of visits, there is still no expectation of the new (housing) streetlamp on Tilgate Close being connected to the Highways electricity supply. Cllr Morgan offered to try and resolve the deadlock.
4. Correspondence: None.
5. Finance: Alan gave a brief update – a full report will be given at the AGM on July 10th – but all the finances are in a healthy state.
6. Fire Safety – Red Watch, Roedean: Steve Andrews, and his two colleagues Nick and Tony from Red Watch answered a range of questions from the floor. The meeting had been called as a result of a complaint from a flat-owner that he was unaware of a fire in the flat below, and believed that he should have been alerted immediately by a fire alarm.

Steve explained that – following the Government-imposed 'Regulatory Reform Order' of October 2006 – all owners of multiple occupancy buildings were responsible for arranging risk assessments. The City Council had undertaken such assessments on all blocks of flats on the Estate, but neither they nor freeholders had any similar responsibility for single-occupancy houses. East Sussex Fire and

Rescue Services (ESFRS) had specialists who were on hand to give advice to the City Council if requested. Steve believed that the risk assessments for the flats were the responsibility of Dermot Barry in the Council, but would confirm that with the CVCA Secretary. Concerning the non-provision of fire alarms to alert other residents, Steve explained that the Council will have made this decision based on their assessment of the risks for each property – there are no laid-down guidelines which the Council must follow.

One main concern of ESFRS relates to access to the affected property by fire crews with hoses and quick exits for those possibly trapped, and to this end they were pleased with the Council's zero-tolerance approach to items being left in common passageways, particularly combustible items. Another concern is that those people in adjacent properties should remain in their flats during a fire, protected by fire-resistant doors, either giving 30 or 60 minutes protection. This will always be long enough for fire crews to attend and evacuate any in subsequent danger.

There were several comments concerning the Council's insistence that tenants and leaseholders in certain flats should have the fire door within their property, instead of their main door to the communal areas. Steve visited one of these flats to understand the problem, and advocated such flat-owners to contact the Council and ask for a copy of the relevant risk assessment, to which all are entitled.

He also advised everyone to regularly check their smoke detectors, which should last ten years; and advised people with worries about fires in Craven Wood to always err on the side of caution and call the Fire Brigade.

Steve was thanked for his most helpful advice.

7. Updates on current projects

a) The Kitchen. Amy explained that the office was expected to move from the Vale Community Centre to the adjacent 'Little Vale' the following day. The Estates Development Budget team were due to re-organise the toilet in the Vale CC, when the door can be re-located and work begun on the kitchen. EDB has also agreed to pay for the necessary re-wiring and re-plumbing of the kitchen, which we intend to construct and equip during the summer holidays.

b) The Diamond Jubilee Book. The second set of proofs from the publishers was now due on May 15th, which leaves little time for them to be printed and distributed by June 2nd, but everything will be done to achieve that aim. In any event, the Jubilee Party on June 2nd is well in hand, and people are invited to attend in 1950's outfits.

c) The Web-site. This is due to be up and running by May 17th, even if some of the pages still need to be completed. The layout is very attractive, and the site is easy to navigate. It will be accessible via www.cravenvale.org.uk.

d) The Friends of Craven Wood have their second work session on Saturday May 11th at 10 am – meet at the Causeway end. A new bench was constructed at the first session. It was suggested that CVCA approach Amex to see if we can use a group to help clear heavy fly-tipping on the northern end of the Wood.

e) QPCV Newsletter. The Spring edition has been completed, and will be distributed within the next ten days. Please offer to help distribute them!

8. Any Other Business – Community Association:

a) David Perkins asked about cars parking or using the grass verges, particularly in Queensway. Cllr Mitchell said this is a perennial problem, and that the Council has no money available to tackle it.

- b) Manda asked whether the money set aside by EDB for weed-resistant membranes and shingle could be given to CVCA for us to purchase and organise. Alan would raise this with Gordon Stanford.
- c) David asked about grass-cutting on the bank above 133-167 Craven Road. This had been left for several years following rocks and other debris being deposited when the communal bins were installed. It would seem that the grass-cutting team were now able to cut there without damaging their equipment. It was suggested that this could be a good place to plant more wild flowers.
- d) There were several complaints about the grass-cutting team using weed-killers on the estate – again – after having been asked not to last year. The Secretary will invite Eleanor Gardner and a member of the Cityparks team to attend the next Committee meeting on June 12th to discuss a range of grass-cutting issues.
- e) Grant advised that anyone interested in attending a training course on how to look after our fruit trees should contact him. At the moment he did not intend to label the new plants, but labels have been provided for use at an appropriate time.
- f) Cllr Mitchell advised that the council's refuse team had been on strike since earlier that day.
- g) The problem of dog excrement was raised again – photographic evidence could be used if residents wished to proceed against known offenders.
- h) Traffic was still travelling the wrong way down Craven road, but no obvious solution is available.

9. Any Other Business – Tenants Association

- a) Manda raised the problem of security for the bin store serving 109-167 Craven Road. Could the doors be strengthened, or the locks changed, and a wall put down the middle to reduce its size? Many people were unwilling to use their storage spaces because of concern over security. This whole topic could be considered as an estate-wide problem to be helped by next year's EDB applications.
- b) Pat raised the problem of security doors to blocks being continually left open. PCSO Carol would continue to patrol and advise residents of this anti-social problem.
- c) The comment was made that the estate inspection reports from Nick are often not acted upon by the Council. As a result they have to be repeated in the next visit report.

10. Any Other Business – Local Action Team: Carol noted there were no specific problems to report, although they had been in the right place to apprehend potential car thieves in College Terrace. Nothing else was raised.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm

The next meetings will be held at 7 pm on:

Wednesday **June 12th** (Committee Meeting)

Wednesday **July 10th** (Annual General Meeting)