



Heathfield Residents Association (HRA) Newsletter

News From The Committee

HRA hasn't issued a newsletter for some time and we apologise for this. We only have five volunteer directors on the HRA committee and unfortunately, there has not been the opportunity or time to produce a newsletter at regular intervals. If anyone would like to help in any way with future issues please get in touch as we think it is very important to issue these regularly as a way of communicating information about our estate. We do use Facebook as a method of communicating, but of course not everyone uses this medium.

Since the last newsletter was issued there has been a change in the HRA Committee. We had one resignation and are now down to five directors: Tim Spicer (Chair and Finance); Darren Mullett (director); Geoff Creek (director); Tina Creek (director and secretary); Martin Johnston (director). Their contact details are listed at the end of this newsletter. It is very important that the HRA Committee have enough directors to enable us to take forward all the tasks required. Therefore, we are always looking for people to join us, so this is an appeal for any resident should they wish to become a director and contribute to maintaining and improving the estate.

Green Area Survey

Following the last AGM, it was agreed that we would conduct a survey of all residents to gauge what enhancements, if any, should be made to the green areas on the estate. All residents were provided with a copy but disappointingly, only 24 were returned. The results are:

HRA are now moving this forward and over the coming months we will be purchasing 8 low maintenance saplings from the Woodland Trust at a cost of £25. These will be field maple, rowan, silver birch and wild cherry. They will be planted on some of the green areas, with the exact locations to be determined. We will also purchase some seating for Whitehall Gardens, which will be ideal for picnics or watching the airshow.

Provide seating	15	Note: although there were only 24 responders some made multiple choices.
Plant trees (saplings)	14	
Plant small bushes	14	
Erect a monument	6	
Do nothing	6	

Estate Maintenance



The HRA directors have also been busy this year continuing with improvements to the estate. The large, overhanging trees on the green area adjacent to 100 Kingsway have been coppiced; the fence at the rear of Whitehall Gardens (which blew down in the wind) has been repaired and further work is ongoing to upgrade footpaths and

replace loose/rotten bollards. We have also noticed that some cracks are appearing in the roads. Therefore, money will need to be allocated to repair these before they deteriorate further and this is likely to be quite expensive. Earlier this year a major clean of the drains and gullies was undertaken by a professional company. A thank you should go to Paul Beamiss, who agreed to erect a fence on the border of Kingsway and the back field. This has certainly improved the outlook. In June, yellow markers were painted on the kerbstones surrounding Whitehall Gardens to assist with parking. Finally, the old Heathfield sign has been removed and replaced with the new updated version: this will assist visitors and delivery drivers who are unfamiliar with the estate layout.

As a reminder, it is the responsibility of residents to ensure that overhanging branches and hedges (from their gardens) are cut back from estate roads and paths. If these are left untended they can restrict drivers' vision, obstruct pedestrians and may even cause injury.

GDPR – The Boring Bit!

You will all have been aware of the multitude of emails etc. that were sent out informing you of your rights under the new *General Data Protection Regulations*, which came into force on 25th May. This will apply to HRA and we will have to comply. Briefly, this is how it affects you: We only hold data relevant to your share in the company and the conveyancing process when houses are bought/sold, as this is a legal requirement under the Companies Act. We share this information with our accountants RWA, as they require the information to process the HRA fees. You have the right to check personal data if you wish.



Road Safety Measures

SLOW
Children
crossing

Several suggestions have been put forward for improving road safety measures on our estate. These include installing a pedestrian crossing, flashing speed signs and speed bumps. This concern mostly affects the top of Kingsway, where children walk to the bus stop and it is considered a major safety issue. Peter Topping (SCDC) recognised this and he advised that we contact the SCDC Highways engineer to seek advice on the most appropriate options before deciding what to install.

Unfortunately, they were unable to provide that advice as we are a private estate. As a priority HRA will now examine how to take this to project forward and commit to making the roads safer.

HRA Webpage

Work is still ongoing to upgrade the HRA webpage <http://www.hra-duxford.co.uk>. It has been a major undertaking to refresh the webpage in a new format. The site is now more professional, user friendly and with a stronger impact. Also it will be more easily searchable to find out any information about our estate. We hope you will visit the site and refer to it when necessary. If you have any constructive ideas for improvements, please notify Martin Johnston.

New Residents



Several new residents have moved onto the estate in the past year and HRA welcome them (and conversely, we have said goodbye to some long-standing ones!). We hope they settle in and enjoy living here. There is now a greater community spirit with many events planned by our local charity Heathfield Area Recreation Trust (HeART). Foremost was the Heathfest which was held on 30th June and was a tremendous success with over 300 plus people attending. HeART (www.heartfamilies.org) will continue to advertise all future events.

Selling Your House - Payment of HRA Fees



Most residents are aware that when buying or selling a house on the estate there is a requirement to become a shareholder in HRA and pay fees for the upkeep of the estate (currently £120 pa). This fee is very reasonable considering that some management companies charge up to £1000 per annum for a lesser service. On completion of a house sale a Deed of Covenant and Share Certificate is issued to the new owners by HRA. Solicitors involved in this process should be aware of this practice, but if any owner in this position is unaware and requires advice they should contact Martin Johnston (martin.johnston@hra-duxford.co.uk) who deals with conveyances on behalf of HRA.

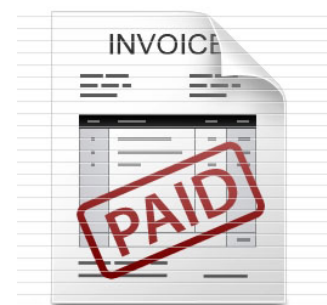
Sellers should also be aware that solicitors will contact HRA to enquire about the status of the of HRA fees (service charge) in respect of an owner selling a house. If the fees are not up to date the sale could be delayed.

It is HRA's intention to get all house owners on the estate registered as shareholders in the company. There are various reasons why some are not registered, most commonly that the solicitors involved in the conveyance failed to manage the process appropriately. This has resulted in an inequitable situation with the majority of house owners paying their HRA fees while a few pay nothing. We all benefit from using the roads and infrastructure so it is only right that everyone should pay for this service. HRA will be writing to those people concerned to resolve this anomaly.

What We Spend Our Money On

HRA income is generated in two ways: first, from the fees paid by shareholders, which is currently £120 per year. Second, we also charge a conveyancing fee whenever a house is sold, as there is a requirement to provide certain legal documents to the solicitors. As we are a private estate we are responsible for the maintenance and servicing of it. Our main expenditure is:

- Insurance
- Maintenance of drains



- Street lighting (repair and usage)
- Grass cutting
- Road repairs
- General maintenance (paths, green areas, fencing, tree coppicing etc.)
- Signage
- Administration (accountant's fees, printing costs etc.)

Heathfield House – Latest Update



Picture courtesy of Savilles Estate Agents

Since it became empty in 2015 there has been speculation, rumour and conjecture about what may happen to the unoccupied Icen building (now called Heathfield House). The marketing of the site by Savilles continues, largely unsuccessfully, and whilst there have been a number of viewings recently they have not found a buyer. The owners want a long term solution for the building as the holding costs are huge.

Savilles were recently made aware that the site landscaping was overgrown and this has been rectified. They also acknowledged the concerns previously mentioned regarding the closure of the side access road. Their response to this is that temporary concrete barriers were erected at the insistence of the insurance provider as a preventative measure to prevent unauthorised access to the site. This is despite the 'legal argument' submitted by Martin Johnston to the contrary.

Both Savills and the owner wish to have a good working relationship with the HRA (and all others affected by the site) and are very willing to listen to thoughts and concerns with regards to the future of the property. Any such discussion will involve all interested parties.

So, as of the date of this publication there has been no progress or update as to how the site will be developed. There is still potential for it to be industrial, residential, retail or leisure use.

Contacts

Tim Spicer (Chair and Finance)
 Darren Mullett (director)
 Geoff Creek (director)
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tim.spicer@hra-duxford.co.uk
darren.mullett@hra-duxford.co.uk
geoff.creek@hra-duxford.co.uk
creektina3@gmail.com
martin.johnston@hra-duxford.co.uk

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