



Heathfield Residents Association (HRA) Newsletter

Welcome to this issue of our first Newsletter for 2022, which we hope you will enjoy reading.

General meeting and achievements 2021

2021 was a busy year for your directors and we hope to be able to tell you about our achievements in person during the coming year when we hold a General Meeting. There are a number of legal and governance issues which we will need to place before shareholders and we will give you plenty of notice of the date and venue so that as many people as possible can attend. Poor attendance at past annual meetings, the cost of hiring a venue and the time spent in preparation for the benefit of the few interested residents who attended was disproportionate and has therefore not been given a high priority. However, several people have asked that we organise one so we will try to make it an event which will attract more support.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee



In June 2022 HM The Queen will be celebrating her platinum jubilee and a four-day weekend has been announced from Thursday 2nd June. We would like to see this celebrated on the estate and we are sure that residents will have ideas to contribute. We should also like to see residents join us in organising the festivities and we would especially like to hear your ideas on entertainment

options for the day, for both children and adults. Please let any committee member know in person if you could help or contact us via the website here <https://hra-duxford.org.uk/contact-us/contact-hra-form/>

County Broadband

County Broadband is now up and running for the benefit of those few people who had signed up to their service. County presented HRA with a

Wayleave Agreement which we felt unable to

accept as presented so we had to negotiate a number of clauses. With the benefit of one director's experience in the Highways Department of another county council, we also drew up a contract for County Broadband and its contractors for their access to our roads, pathways and common land. They accepted our changes to their Agreement and our contract including the payment of a fee for access and penalty clauses for any failure to comply with our contract. When we discussed their detailed work plan with them, they accepted all our points and in every case they found an acceptable way around all the works we advised them would not be permitted because of the potential damage to the estate infrastructure. When they did actually breach our contract on a very minor work, they paid the penalty fee without question.



We had certainly feared the extent of the works which they might have needed but we are delighted to report that the entire operation passed successfully and, most importantly, the benefits being enjoyed by the minority who had signed up to the new service were not achieved at the expense of the majority who did not wish to switch suppliers.

Health and safety measures

We hope you have noticed the new Zebra crossing and the traffic signs as well as the new waste bins. Please note that the roads on the estate are subject to a 15mph speed limit which we have noticed is sometimes ignored. While we cannot control the actions of delivery drivers, we



would really appreciate residents staying within the speed limit for safety reasons. Similarly, we have witnessed youngsters on bikes riding recklessly and without apparent regard for the safety of themselves and others, especially during the evening. Please remind your children of the risks of careless (or daredevil!) cycling especially if they are not wearing helmets or hi-vis clothing. Let's please keep the estate safe for everyone.

HRA have also been upgrading the street lights to new LED lights, which are brighter and longer lasting.

Dog control



Also, on the question of safety, we received reports recently that a resident's dog had escaped from its home and frightened pedestrians. This cannot be tolerated. We have sought police advice and they confirm that such an experience should be reported to the R.S.P.C.A. or if a person is injured, please call the police. Please remember that not all people or other dogs love their animals as much as you do and no dogs should be allowed off the lead unless you can recall them immediately by whistle.

Damage to HRA road

Last summer, on a hot day, a cement delivery truck caused damage to one of our roads. We tracked down the owners of the lorry with the help of the homeowner and their main building contractor. The lorry owner and its insurers denied all liability on the basis that we had no CCTV footage of the incident. CCTV is not a route we wish to go down. HRA had the area inspected by our road contractor who stated that the damage will probably repair itself over time and that any repair would be unsightly than the damage and this certainly seems to be the case for now. However, please note that any vehicle delivering to your address should be carefully monitored, especially when it is hot and our understanding is that any damage to the road caused by a delivery is the responsibility of the homeowner.

Tree removal and path clearance



Before felling



Felling

Many of you will have noticed the removal of a very large tree behind Whitehall Gardens which was a huge undertaking and led to further works to re-lay the pathway and replace the adjoining garden fences which it had seriously damaged over a period of time.

Some of the directors also cleared up a number of overgrown pathways on the estate and we would ask residents to keep these clean and clear and to refrain from using them as rubbish tips.

As well, some of the directors have conducted a health and safety assessment of the communal pavements and we have instituted a plan for essential repairs where necessary.



New path laid



Path, Woburn Place cleared

Annual Service Charge

As you will probably appreciate, the roads and pavements would be a major drain on the Association's finances, especially if major repairs became necessary and perhaps this is a good time to remind everybody that the annual maintenance fee due for each property of £120 per annum has not been increased since 2011!



In the same way that we all fear the effects of inflation on our family incomes, your Board has an obligation to make sure that essential repairs to the estate can be financed and this is suggesting to us that an increase in the annual fee needs to be applied sooner rather than later. As well, while the vast majority of people pay their fees in full and on time, we did have to look very closely at a small number of people who appeared to have overlooked payment for periods in excess of a year. All except one of these people have accepted their responsibilities and have either paid all their arrears or have agreed payment plans to do so. We have issued court proceedings to recover the debt from one individual as a last resort. This is the only fair action otherwise it increases the burden on those who do pay. Going forward, we will be tightening up on any late payments and taking appropriate levels of action against debtors. Of course, if you have a genuine problem with making payment, the Board will be as understanding as possible but in order for us to help, you will have to let us know of the problem.

HRA survey

Last year we felt it would be beneficial to conduct a survey of all our shareholders to obtain their views and opinions. This will be conducted shortly and it will be an opportunity for you to have your say. It is expected this will be done online via the HRA website if you prefer to receive a paper version to fill in, please drop Sue a note at 76 Kingsway and she will make sure you receive this when the survey is online.



HRA Directors:

Tim Spicer – Chairman
Darren Mullett
Geoff Creek
Tina Creek – Secretary
Martin Johnston
Sue Meehan
Colin Meehan

Finally, we wish all our residents a happy and healthy New Year for 2022.

Information is also published on our website WWW.HRA-DUXFORD.ORG.UK.
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