

FOUR OAKS ESTATE NEWSLETTER



Issue Number 20 – December 2020

Traffic Mitigation & Potential Gating Update

We continue to be frustrated by Birmingham City Council (BCC) for a decision on our application for a Certificate of Lawfulness to install gates. BCC states that a decision cannot be made until they have definitively decided whether or not, in its view, Estate roads are 'highways'. BCC has been 'trawling' various archives, including those of Sutton Coldfield Town Council, and has produced documents going back as far as 1932! Our legal advice says that nothing produced contradicts our counsel's opinion that our roads are not highways. BCC has conceded that if they ultimately conclude that our roads are not highways then installing gates may be 'permitted development'. The board has concluded that it would be unwise to commence the planned project's first phase without obtaining the certificate, however the delay, even allowing for Covid-19, is becoming intolerable. The board therefore continues to monitor the situation closely and will consider all options including planning and legal appeals and other pre-emptive actions.

Security Patrols

Over the last few months there has been 'talk' on the WhatsApp group about the idea of security patrols being put in place. This idea has been considered by the board with costings being obtained and advice being taken. Only a properly accredited firm could be used and if two guards were on duty from, say, 6pm to 6am (overnight in other words), the annual cost would be over £200,000, which would almost double the frontage charge. In addition advice from the local Police suggests that security patrols in 'open places' (where the public are entitled to walk, as opposed to an industrial estate for example) can be counter-productive and actually attract 'unwanted' attention and visitors.

Grounds Maintenance

Edges & Hedges have been busy with the annual leaf clearance exercise and it will be completed in the next week. Following this we will be carrying out the bi-annual drains clearance exercise. This is essential to ensure that the drain gulleys do not become clogged and fulfil their purpose of taking away storm water. Early in the New Year further works under the **Footpath & Verge Improvement Plan** will be carried out in Hartopp Road and Bracebridge Road. This is an ongoing plan and areas improved are on a prioritisation basis. The Grounds Maintenance Committee walks the entire Estate twice annually to ensure these priorities are regularly reviewed.

Tree Works

The Estate is part of the Four Oaks Conservation Area. Therefore it is unlawful to carry out any tree works without consent from Birmingham City Council's Tree Officer. Any unauthorised works are in breach of Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and can be subject to prosecution. Fines for unlawful felling can potentially be up to £20,000 per tree. **All trees in a Conservation Area are protected**, whether or not they are subject to a specific tree preservation order (TPO).

Community charitable scheme

Over the WhatsApp group a resident has suggested setting up some form of residents' charitable group to raise funds for local causes and to build community spirit and a sense of neighbourliness. Whilst the Estate will not itself take on the responsibility of organising such a project, it wholeheartedly supports this excellent initiative. Two directors, Craig Johnson and Claire Davage, will liaise with volunteer residents to provide support in any way possible to help this initiative move forward and to lend the Estate's name to a properly organised effort.

Works to Estate Land

It is very important to remember that **no works to Estate land can be carried out without prior consent**. Works carried out without consent may need to be removed, leading to considerable wasted time and expense.

Estate land includes:

*** Footpaths & Verges * Driveway crossings * Roadways**

If you wish to carry out any work to Estate land please contact us.

Circulation Information

This newsletter will be sent in a format that allows easy reading on a mobile device/ tablet. A PDF version will be uploaded to the website and is available by email.

Four Oaks Estate Ltd

Registered in England: Company Number 00224411

Secretary: Stuart Tullah (01543 – 481376)

Email: stuart.tullah@gmail.com

Website: www.fouroaksestate.com