

FOUR OAKS ESTATE NEWSLETTER



Issue Number 22 – June 2021

Ultrafast Full-Fibre Broadband

We reported in our March newsletter that Openreach had commenced the process of laying fibre to facilitate ultrafast broadband with speeds potentially up to 900 mb/s. A short stretch of Ladywood Road, including part of The Orchards, now has full-fibre broadband. Unfortunately Openreach has decided to postpone any further works on costs grounds. The majority of cable connections into your homes from the junction boxes on Estate roads are directly buried in the ground and are not in ducting. This means Openreach would need to 'dig' to install ducting or use overhead poles into each home to install fibre and they are currently unable to fund this. The board understands that full-fibre broadband is becoming a necessity and is looking at other ways of achieving it. We have registered the Estate with the Community Fibre Programme initiative and are also investigating the possibility of creating our own private full-fibre network. The approximate costs of laying full-fibre across the Estate has been estimated by Openreach at around £350,000 so clearly this is a very major undertaking. We will continue with our research and will keep residents informed.

Traffic Mitigation & Potential Gating Update

Our April 2019 application to Birmingham City Council for a Certificate of Lawfulness to install gates on Estate roads remains undetermined. As over two years have passed this is very frustrating. The interim gates mentioned in our March newsletter were installed on Wentworth Road on 23rd April. These gates will be closed between 7.30am and 9am on Wednesday 30th June and then intermittently thereafter. Although residents will have full access at all times it will be best to avoid the junction of Wentworth Road and Bracebridge Road during this limited time. A reminder will be emailed to residents nearer the time.

Residents Insurance Scheme – NFU Mutual

For some years we have endorsed a Residents Insurance Scheme which has provided buildings/contents insurance at attractive rates and provided a commission income stream for the Estate. Previously the scheme was operated by a firm of specialist insurance brokers and they are no longer able to operate the scheme for us. Instead we have partnered with NFU Mutual who will launch their scheme at the EGM. NFU Mutual are a highly regarded and long-established British insurer with an excellent reputation for customer service and claims handling.

Grounds Maintenance Matters

Edges & Hedges mechanically sweep the Estate monthly and manually sweep a few 'hard to access' areas. They are currently emptying the litter bins twice weekly and in the last month have re-profiled the footpath where it arcs round from Bracebridge Road to Hartopp Road to eliminate some localised flooding. The trees will be 'feathered' over the coming weeks.

General Residents' Meeting

As we mentioned in our March newsletter the board is fully committed to holding a general residents' meeting as soon as it is safe and possible to do so.

We have provisionally booked the lounge at the tennis club for **7.30pm on Thursday 30th September** to hold this meeting.

Hopefully Covid-19 restrictions will be fully lifted by then allowing the meeting to go ahead safely and we will confirm this nearer the time.

In recent years we have provided a free buffet before the meeting and we hope to do so again, although this depends on restrictions and the general situation at the time.

Tree Survey & Tree Works

The 2021 Tree Survey is being carried out over two days on 15th & 16th June. The report will be uploaded to our website as soon as it is available – around a month later. If you see two people wandering around the Estate examining our trees there is no cause for alarm! They will in fact examine and report on all 362 of our trees and this is quite an undertaking.

All works recommended in the report will be carried out after we have consent from Birmingham City Council's Tree Officer.

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.

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