

FOUR OAKS ESTATE NEWSLETTER



Issue Number 23 – September 2021

Ultrafast Full-Fibre Broadband

We reported previously that Openreach has postponed works on its ultrafast full-fibre broadband project for Estate roads on costs grounds. On behalf of the Estate one of the directors, Craig Johnson, registered us with the Community Fibre Programme initiative and has carried out detailed research into how a full-fibre network can be achieved without waiting for Openreach to re-start the project at an unspecified future date. Mr Johnson has formed a working-group of three directors and its research has identified several options. One, to create our own private network and effectively become an ISP, is exciting but not feasible on capital outlay grounds (the very approximate cost of this would be £500,000). Another is to partner with an independent network provider on a non-capital outlay basis where that provider would have exclusive rights over the newly installed full-fibre network. This is an appealing option and is being explored further by the working group. It is important to bear in mind that Openreach's existing network will remain in place whatever happens, so no-one needs to be concerned about having to switch ISP. Full-fibre broadband is rapidly becoming a necessity however and this project fully recognises that.

Traffic Mitigation & Potential Gating Update

Our application for a Certificate of Lawfulness to install gates was refused at Birmingham City Council's planning committee meeting on 2nd September. This was not unexpected and the board is immediately looking at options on how to drive the project forward. These include an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate and potentially an application to court for a specific determination on the status of Estate roads. This last point is important as the council assert that Estate roads are highways and this was the pivotal aspect of its refusal. This assertion is quite 'at odds' with our QC's advice. The importance of this project cannot be understated and residents will be kept advised.

General Residents' Meeting

As we mentioned in our June newsletter a General Residents' Meeting has been arranged to take place at the tennis club at **7.30pm on Thursday 30th September.**

In recent years we have provided a free buffet before general meetings but will not be doing so this time.

The meeting will be **live streamed** so any residents not able to attend physically can watch it 'live'. Details of how to access the live stream will be circulated by email prior to the meeting. Reports will be given relating to the gating project, full-fibre broadband, strategic plan, 2020 & 2021 AGMs and grounds maintenance & improvement matters.

Road Frontage Charge – 1st October 2021

The Road Frontage Charge for 2021/22 has been set by the board at **£20.95 per yard frontage**. This is an increase of £1.00 over last year. Demands will be issued around 1st October and there is a 5% discount for settlement by 31st October. Road frontage charges have provided 99% of the Estate's 2020/21 income and early settlement is appreciated to help cashflow and financial planning.

Tree Survey & Tree Works

The 2021 Tree Survey was carried out in June. Of the 403 trees surveyed, 8 are recommended for felling and replacing and 87 require works such as pruning, crown lifting or deadwood removal. Consent for the works from Birmingham City Council's Tree Officer has been received and tenders are currently being obtained. The works, including the re-plantings, are planned to be carried out later in autumn.

Grounds Maintenance Matters

Edges & Hedges mechanically sweep the Estate monthly and are constantly 'tidying up' damage to verges caused by inconsiderate parking, very often delivery vehicles. Usually as we move into late autumn we start the leaf clearance exercise, but with changing weather conditions this started in August! Several hundred tons will be cleared by December. Footpath and verge improvements have recently been completed in Bracebridge Road.

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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