

FOUR OAKS ESTATE NEWSLETTER



Issue Number 24 – December 2021

Gating Project Update

At the General Residents Meeting held on 30th September the Chairman outlined the history of the gating project and updated residents on the current position, including detailing Birmingham City Council's grounds for refusing the Estate's application for a Certificate of Lawfulness to install gates. All documents relevant to the application have been uploaded to the website for residents to view. In essence the council have stated that they believe Estate roads constitute highways, although our legal advice is that this is not correct and that the council's grounds for refusal are not persuasive. Taking a court action to determine that Estate roads are not highways is likely to cost in excess of £100,000 and an unsuccessful action could lead to an award of the council's costs of a similar amount, leading to a potential total cost of well over £200,000. The view expressed at the meeting was that it would not be prudent to proceed with such an action and that the position to be adopted should be 'to let sleeping dogs lie'. Additional traffic calming measures can however be taken where appropriate, to slow speeds and reduce the number of vehicles that use Estate roads as 'rat runs'. This will be kept under constant review.

Ultrafast Full-Fibre Broadband

We reported in our last newsletter that Craig Johnson is continuing to research ways to bring full-fibre broadband to the Estate following Openreach's decision to postpone its project indefinitely. Fully installing our own private network is not feasible on costs grounds but partnering with an independent provider appears the option most likely to succeed. There are very few providers who will consider such a project for the number of 'customers' that the Estate brings, but negotiations with one potential provider are advancing. The board understands the growing importance of this project and will consider providing funding to see this goal achieved. We will keep residents updated.

General Residents' Meeting & AGM

The General Residents' Meeting held on Thursday 30th September at the tennis club was attended by 34 residents and around 160 watched the YouTube live stream. Reports were given by the Chairman, Ron Forrest, the Chairman of the Grounds Maintenance Committee, Neil Andrews and the Secretary, Stuart Tullah. The Minutes have been published on the website and have been viewed by around 40 residents. The AGM is usually held in April and all residents are invited. This was not possible in 2020 or 2021 due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, but we very much hope that a physical AGM can take place in April 2022. We will let you know nearer the time.

Tree Preservation Orders

As the Estate forms part of the Four Oaks Conservation Area all trees are covered by Tree Protection regulations, irrespective of whether they have specific TPOs. It is a legal requirement therefore that all tree works are only carried out after specific consent has been obtained from the Tree Office at Birmingham City Council.

Drain Clearing & South Staffs Water

The Estate is responsible for keeping the roadway drain gulleys clear and they are mechanically cleared twice yearly. The next exercise will be carried out on 22nd December. The main drains, foul drains and water supply system are the responsibility of South Staffs Water and any matters related to these, including blockages, leaks and supply problems, should be reported to them directly at 0800-389-1011.

Grounds Maintenance Matters

This is a very busy time of year for Edges & Hedges, our grounds maintenance contractors, and they are currently nearing the end of the leaf clearance exercise. Over 300 tonnes of leaves will have been collected! The roads will be swept just prior to Christmas so they are as neat as the winter weather allows. Looking forward to the New Year, footpath and verge improvement works will start in January in Ladywood Road and 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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