

# FOUR OAKS ESTATE RESIDENTS GUIDE BOOK



*The image above is an image of Four Oaks Hall which was demolished in 1898.  
Reproduced from 'Lost Heritage – Demolished Country Houses of England'.*

# **Four Oaks Estate – Residents Guide Book**

**Page 2:** Index of Contents and Introduction & Foreword

**Page 3:** Legal Position of Four Oaks Estate Land

**Page 4:** Planning Guidelines & Code for Contractors

**Page 5:** Care of the Environment

**Page 6:** Estate Management

**Page 7:** Governance and Board of Directors

## **Introduction & Foreword**

This publication is designed to inform residents of some of their legal responsibilities as Estate residents and to set out a Code of Practice. Elements of this code are not necessarily legally binding, but it is intended as a 'Good Neighbour' guide and it is hoped that everyone will adhere to it.

In 2016 the board of Four Oaks Estate Ltd established a strategic review process to look at all aspects of how the Estate operates and to set a 'Vision' and a 'Mission' which would allow goals to be set and steps to be taken to enhance the Estate for its residents and to preserve its long term future. A key outcome of the review process identified the need for better communication between the Estate's board and its residents and this Guide Book, together with other forms of communication, is an important step in that ongoing process .

The 'Vision' & 'Mission' that have been adopted are:

### **VISION**

“To be the Premier Residential Estate in the Midlands”

### **MISSION**

“To Improve and Maintain the Estate to Achieve the Vision”

## **Legal Position of Four Oaks Estate Property**

1: Four Oaks Estate Ltd (company number 00224411: the “Company”) owns the roads that make up Four Oaks Estate (Bracebridge Road, Hartopp Road, Wentworth Road, Ladywood Road, Luttrell Road – and the cul-de-sacs that lead off them) and its land includes all land outside of a resident's boundary, such as: footpaths, pavements, verges and driveway crossings (the driveway from the boundary of the residence to the roadway). The roadways themselves, together with trees, lighting columns and signs are owned by the Company.

2: Residents are not permitted to carry out any works, nor make any alterations, to the Company's land (as detailed above) without prior consent. Only the Company can grant consent for works to its land. Where consent is granted the works must be carried out to an agreed specification.

3: The administration and maintenance of Four Oaks Estate is financed by a “Road Frontage Charge” based on the length of each residence's frontage to the roadway. The charge is set annually and a demand is sent by the Company's managing agents to each resident on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

4: The Estate roads are private and only residents have a right of passage over them. The Company has the right to prevent all vehicle parking on its land.

5: It is not permitted for residents to operate a business from the Estate where any form of nuisance or inconvenience may be caused to other residents.

6: The Company currently permits a group of residents to run an overnight security patrol service on its roads. The Company however does not finance nor administer the service, nor does it endorse it.

7: Residents should be aware that the Estate is situated in the Four Oaks Conservation Area which means that all trees are protected by Tree Protection Orders and/or Sections 211 & 212 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This means that consent from Birmingham City Council's Tree Officer is required prior to any tree works being carried out, particularly fellings, and works without consent constitute a prosecutable offence. Fines for unlawful fellings can potentially be up to £20,000 per tree.

## **Planning Guidelines**

Although the Company has no formal jurisdiction in relation to planning applications, it is a consultee of Birmingham City Council planning department and works closely with it. Four Oaks Estate is within a Conservation Area and the Company strongly supports the protection of this important status. The Four Oaks Estate Development Guidelines, published by Birmingham City Council, are available on the website. It is an important principle that any new house should stand on a plot of sufficient size to be in keeping with the Conservation Area and in all cases on a 'plot' of no less than a third of an acre.

Flats and apartments are not permitted. As there is little undeveloped land fronting Estate roads it is highly unlikely that 'backland' development (development of rear garden land) will be permitted and it will be opposed by the Estate and the planning authority. This will help to safeguard the nature of the Conservation Area, prevent 'massing' and 'over intensive' development and ensure that house prices are not adversely affected.

## **Code for Contractors**

### **Working Hours:**

Permitted hours of work for contractors employed by residents are restricted to 8am - 6pm on weekdays and 8am - 1pm on Saturdays. No works are permitted on Sundays nor Bank Holidays. Works carried on outside these hours can cause a serious nuisance to neighbours.

### **Conditions:**

Residents should make their contractors aware of the following:

- \* They are working on a private estate and should keep noise to a minimum
- \* Parking space for their vehicles should be made available within the house's grounds to prevent potential damage to footpaths and verges.

### **Damage to Estate Land:**

The Company will seek re-imbursement from residents for damage caused to its land by unauthorised parking or other building project related causes, such as deliveries of materials. On large building projects the Company will require a deposit against damage to its land and this will only be re-paid when any damage has been rectified.

### **Signage:**

Contractors are not permitted to erect advertising signs on any Estate land, including trees. Estate Agents' boards are permitted but they must be placed in the house's grounds and not on Estate land, such as verges and trees.

## Care of the Environment

The Estate management team wants to encourage residents to act in a manner that does not cause nuisance or inconvenience to other residents and the majority of houses on the Estate have covenants in place to prevent this. We are fortunate to live in one of the most desirable estates in the Midlands and to maintain this situation and to look after our own immediate environment we must all try to be mindful of the needs of others. Some examples include:

**Dog Fouling & Dog Barking:** All dog owners are asked to ensure that there is no dog fouling on Estate land (especially verges and footpaths). Dog waste bins are located at several points on the Estate. In addition dog owners should be aware that their dogs may bark persistently when they are left alone or left outside and should take measures to prevent this from disturbing neighbours.

**Noisy Machinery:** When using noisy machinery residents should comply with the time restrictions imposed on contractors (8am - 6pm on weekdays and 8am - 1pm on Saturdays). Noise must be kept to a minimum at all times and this applies particularly to small petrol engined and electrically powered machines, such as leaf blowers, hedge cutters, chainsaws and the like.

**Bonfires:** Although bonfires are not illegal, they can cause a serious nuisance. If it is essential to light a bonfire it should be done infrequently and at a time that will cause the least inconvenience to neighbours.

**Late Parties:** If you intend to hold an outdoor function please have regard to the inconvenience and sometimes distress caused to neighbours. Try to give them prior warning and please restrict noise after midnight. Please also ensure that visitors leave the Estate quietly.

**Parking of Large Vehicles:** Residents are required not to park large vehicles (such as lorries and caravans) on their property within sight of Estate roads.

**Refuse Collection:** Residents are asked to place their wheelie bins and garden waste bags neatly on the roadside on the evening prior to collection and to retrieve them as soon after the collection as possible.

**Hedges & Trees:** Many residents have hedges and trees that front an Estate road. Please make sure these are regularly trimmed to ensure that they do not overhang the footpath or block light output from the lighting columns.

## **Estate Management**

The Company retains Tullah Property Management Ltd as its managing agent and Stuart Tullah as its Secretary ([stuart.tullah@gmail.com](mailto:stuart.tullah@gmail.com): 01543-481376). Its duties include grounds maintenance management, maintaining the Estate Register and website, production of newsletters, liaison with residents, provision of a planning information service, arranging board meetings and managing the Company's financial affairs, insurances and company records.

**Grounds Maintenance:** Maintaining Estate land is the Company's biggest expense (there are 7.2 miles of footpaths, pavements and verges to maintain) and the current grounds maintenance contractors are Edges & Hedges. To achieve 'best value' the contract is awarded and competitively tendered on a three-yearly basis. Grounds maintenance includes mowing the grass verges, leaf clearance, removal of 'green debris', tree feathering, litter collection, waste and dog bin emptying, mechanical road sweeping, general maintenance of verges and footpaths and clearance of drain gullies. The Estate's 'tree stock' is surveyed biennially to ensure its health and long-term amenity value.

**Gritting of Roads:** Estate roads are gritted with rock salt when bad winter weather strikes and there is a risk of icy roads.

**Garden Waste Collection:** Edges & Hedges provide a private garden waste collection service as an alternative to the council's wheelie bin service. Red bags can be purchased from Edges & Hedges and any number can be left out no earlier than Sunday evening on the roadside for Monday morning collection.

**House Sales:** It is essential when a house is sold that the buyers enter into a Deed of Covenant with the Company. Residents, or their solicitors, should contact the Secretary when a sale is agreed. The Secretary can provide a pre-sale information pack to assist in the sale process and to enable residents to collect an apportionment of the Road Frontage Charge from their buyers.

**Newsletter, Website & WhatsApp Groups:** A quarterly newsletter and frequent circular emails are circulated to keep residents informed of what is going on around the Estate. The Estate's website ([www.fouroaksestate.com](http://www.fouroaksestate.com)) is restricted to residents only and all user account requests are checked prior to approval. The website is a useful source of information and documents. There are two WhatsApp groups for Estate residents. One is for general community 'chat' and the other is for security-related matters.

# **FOUR OAKS ESTATE LTD**

## **Governance & Board of Directors**

The governance of the Estate is in the hands of the Board of Directors which is made up of residents who volunteer to represent every resident in the day-to-day and strategic running of the Estate.

### **Board of Directors**

**Michael McCollum – Chairman** (Luttrell Road)

**Neil Andrews** (Wentworth Road)

**Vivek Chadha** (Hartopp Road)

**Penny Dewsbery** (Ladywood Road)

**Farrell Dolan** (Heather Court Gardens)

**Nick Humphrey** (Cliveden Coppice)

**Craig Johnson** (Ladywood Road)

**Sean Morrough** (Hartopp Road)

**Paresh Sonsale** (Hartopp Road)

**Company Secretary** – Stuart Tullah

The board meets quarterly under the Chairmanship of Michael McCollum. There is an AGM in April each year, to which all residents are invited, and at which the Company's audited accounts are presented.

The Company operates on a 'not for profit' basis and the directors receive no form of remuneration.

There is a Grounds Maintenance Committee, chaired by Neil Andrews, which meets monthly to review all grounds maintenance matters.

There is a Nominations Sub-Committee which reviews applications for directorship and meets on an 'as required' basis.

## The Four Oaks Estate in numbers.....

*There are around 3.7 miles of road and around 7.2 miles of footpaths & verges*

*There are around 13,000 yards of 'frontage'*

*There are 23 roads*

*There are 332 houses (plus a tennis club and a squash club)*

*There are 37 different postcodes*

*There are 65 lighting columns*

*There are 32 speed bumps*

*There are 402 trees on Estate land*

*There are 174 road drainage gulleys*

*The Estate covers an area of approximately 210 acres.....*

*.....that is approximately 1,016,400 square yards*



*An engraving of Four Oaks Hall – drawn by J.P. Neale & engraved by T.H. Shepherd  
(image of engraving kindly provided by Mr W.T. Colman)*

*This Guide Book will be regularly updated and the latest version will be available at all times on the Estate's website: [www.fouroaksestate.com](http://www.fouroaksestate.com)*