
DrewsNews

The Newsletter of Drews Park Village Association - Spring 2007 - Issue 18



Gail Nugent reminisces - and suggests a way forward -

Looking at this lovely picture of Drews Park in the snow this winter it is amazing to think that some of us have already been here for seven years..

When we first arrived we realised that we need to form a group to represent residents and negotiate with the developers and our new landlords and managing agents.

So the Drews Park Village Association was formed and has looked after the every day running of the site since then.

Now we feel its time to re-evaluate and improve the way we represent you So we are asking you to step up and tell us what you would like to happen and let us have your ideas and suggestions.

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DEAR RESIDENTS OF DREWS PARK...

As this is our first Drews News in 2007, I would like, on behalf of the Committee, to wish all our new residents a warm welcome to our "village" community and we hope you will feel that you may wish to participate in some of our activities. This is a very full issue and I would like to thank our Editor, Lisa Penington, for all her hard work in bringing all the various contributions together. If you have recently become a resident I would like to draw your attention to Gail Nugent's article on the front page on how we are always endeavouring to better represent all residents and particularly

welcome anyone new who would like to get involved, so that we can achieve that aim. We are verging on Spring now and it is lovely to see such a show of daffodils and other spring flowers, albeit a bit early, and credit is due to Nora and Gordon Ingleby for their efforts over several years in that direction. This season we will be adding to the planting of shrubs in the Thurnham Court area as part of our continuing efforts to improve the landscaping setting we all enjoy (see page 5).

I would also draw your attention to the important article by John Fitzmaurice relating to the NHBC insurance, particularly in the context of windows (see page 3). Also, as part of the consultation process we would value your views on the communication from the developer in respect of the amenity land to the side of Drews Park (see page 11). Please direct your feedback to Gail Nugent who has arranged a meeting at the Fox and Hounds on Monday April 16th at 7.30pm to debate the subject and to hear your views.

As part of our drive to improve communications with residents we are looking at ways to meet each other in an informal setting. Any ideas for any social events would be very welcome. One suggestion hinges around having an inaugural game of cricket on the old field, with accompanying teas/cakes etc. Any aspiring cricketers out there prepared to play on what would sure to be a bit of a bumpy wicket for starters anyway? We have also discussed combining the AGM in October with a social event, perhaps a game of skittles. Suggestion please?

Finally, with the Spring/Summer coming along a brief reminder of a plea made in the last Drews News for any outdoor parties to be held in the open garden areas such as lower Wyatt or Cooke Court away from other residents windows (unless by agreement with other residents immediately adjacent to your own property). Let us hope we have a good spring and summer season to fully enjoy the ambience of the lovely setting of Drews Park.

Peter Bennis
Chairman DPVA



Cont'd from front page

Can you help? If you have any special skills, you could make an important contribution to our lives here: accounting, I T, writing, security, gardening, surveying - these are all areas where we would love some professional support, on an advisory basis.

We would also like to have a representative from each Court; this would improve communication and co-ordination. If you feel that you can make a contribution in terms of a small amount of your time, we meet about six times a year, and you would be willing to take on a commitment that needs action as well as words then please contact: Peter Benns Tel: 01380 739419 or email him at naturalhealthcare@talktalk.net by the 5th of April 2007 We can only make things happen by working together. Drews Park needs you!

CHECK YOUR WINDOWS!

John Fitzmaurice says....

Owners beware! We have just three years of our 10 year Zurich Insurance policy left! Defects to windows are covered under this policy and one of our windows (and that of a neighbour) developed gaps and leaks, evidenced by damage to the surrounding interior sills.

After many months, Zurich eventually sent a surveyor who produced a report confirming the southerly weather was the cause, pointing out other windows not belonging to our house - were incorrectly set by the developer. "Certain 'bits' were missing which would have been present on the original building and preventing water ingress."

Two separate quotations were obtained for the repairs and after many months delay the repairs have been agreed, although yet to be carried out. The work has been scheduled for April / May; almost two and a half years since we began this process. We can only hope we can get them to move their derrieres to have the work complete by then.

If you suffer from problems of this kind then you need to get cracking now with Zurich. They have only three years left to run with this NHBC policy and it will be detrimental to your case if you have similar problems to let them string things out. You can benefit by our protracted negotiations. So, if you have a need, get cracking now.

Finally, it begs the question' how will the widows be covered in the future when this policy comes to an end and will any other insurer take them on? Something to discuss by letter (see back page for address) or e-mail to johndevises@aol.com



PROPOSED SERVICE CHARGES FOR 2007/8

For the last few years Sarsen has been able keep our Service Charge increases quite low. This year we will be paying VAT on the lawn care and grass cutting and our Gardner/Grounds man's salary is due for an increase. This will add £5,000 to the total. In addition, the budget for 2006/7 has been overspent and rather than send us all a bill for the overage, this amount will be added to our charges. This will add about £36 to our total charges, or £18 per half year invoice, subject to confirmation. With regard to sinking fund, see below.

The good news is that the Lawn contract guarantees that the price will be held for three years without increase.



As discussed at the AGM this year the Sinking Fund needs some revisiting. £100 set in 1998/9 is not worth today what it was then, and there is some concern that the long term repairs and replacements are not adequately catered for. During this year Sarsen will obtain a surveyors report on the projected works that should be budgeted for over a number of years, which will inevitably result in a more

realistic charge. In the meantime, Sarsen proposes to increase the charge by roughly the Retail Price Index with effect from mid 2001, which is the date in your leases when they could have imposed an increase. This is approximately 12/15%. This is the first year that we have seen anything but a small increase. We have to bear in mind that in comparison with other communal properties ours is still a very modest Service Charge.

Book Club News

Here are the books we will be reading in our second year of the book group. You can join by calling Norma on 724950

January 2007	The Righteous Men by Sam Bourne
February	We need to Talk about Kevin by Lionel Shriver
March	Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
April	The Railway Man by Eric Lomax

A programme of renovation of gutters is starting in Thurnham Court shortly. When we have judged the results we hope to continue in other areas, starting with the leakiest ones first!



At the Proms at Bowood 2000

Friends of Eileen and Larry from Wyatt Court, owners since the opening of the development, will be saddened to know that Eileen passed away after a long period of illness on Sunday 11th February. Our condolences go to Larry.

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Planting for 2007

Nora Ingleby, who unfortunately has resigned from her long held Gardens role, made her suggestions for further planting this year.....`

Most of the new planting will be centred on Thurnham Court underplanting beds (nos. 21 to 25) to carry on with the plan to brighten them up with flowering shrubs. They will be shrubs that flower for a long time during the summer months and still have some body and foliage during winter. These will include lavender, hydrangeas and heathers and will complement the broom that blooms early in the spring. Subject to depth of soil, the rather bare wall along Elm Court at the entrance of the site will be planted with hydrangeas as well. There will be a two/three year plan drawn up for the improvement of these areas.



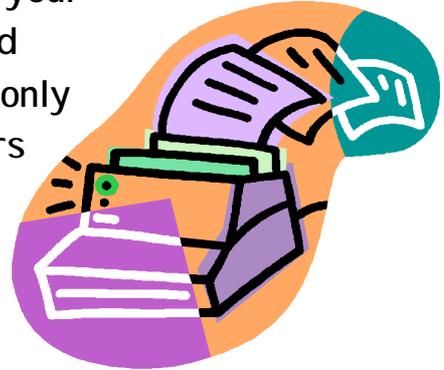
REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS FOR 2005-6

Aster Property Management has asked us to provide this report in the current issue of Drews News

<u>Income:</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>
Service charges receivable	40,152	39,045
Insurance	17,036	17,036
		-
Service Charge refund		
	<u>57,188</u>	<u>56,081</u>
<u>Expenditure:</u>		
Insurance	<u>17,130</u>	<u>17,130</u>
Upkeep of common areas	-	-
Grass Cutting	-	-
Water	93	143
Electricity	<u>1,546</u>	<u>1,756</u>
	<u>1,639</u>	<u>1,899</u>
<u>Maintenance:</u>		
Groundsman	16,376	15,055
Repairs	13,020	12,694
	<u>29,39</u>	<u>27,749</u>
<u>Sundry costs:</u>	-	-
Audit fee	353	367
Management charge	6,600	6,600
	<u>6,953</u>	<u>6,967</u>
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	55,118	53,745
Surplus/(Deficit)for the year	2,070	2,336
Accruals		
Audit Fee	353	367
Total	353	367
<u>Sinking Fund</u>		
Balance as at 31 March 2005		£62,965
Interest		1,251
Expenditure		(6,415)
Contribution		£13,200
Balance as at March 2006		<u>£71,001</u>

Absent Owners please note:

Copies of the Newsletter are delivered to your house, but due to rising printing, paper and postage costs in future a second copy will only be sent to owners who are paid up members of the Association. The charge is only £10 a year which gives a vote at the AGMs, and if you can't get there you can send a proxy vote, plus at least two copies of your Newsletter and alerts when there is information on the web site.



DREWS PARK VILLAGE ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION 2007

Name.....

Court name and number.....

Telephone.....

Email address.....

Please deliver your cheque/cash for £10 to Treasurer Gail Mumford at :

*number 19 Bowes Court, Thomas Wyatt Road, Devizes, Wiltshire
SN10 5FQ*

Specification for Groundsman Duties at Drews Park

Residents have asked us exactly what the duties are of our gardener/grounds man - here they are:

- ✓ Maintenance of all garden flowerbeds. Includes seasonal pruning of shrubs, weeding and planting of herbaceous borders.
- ✓ Edging of all garden beds to ensure a neat and tidy appearance.
 - ✓ Developments of existing beds as required and re-seeding of grassed areas as necessary
 - ✓ Refuse and recycling bins to be wheeled out on Tuesdays (or appropriate day) for collection by Council, and repositioned.
 - ✓ Bin stores to be kept tidy and Management to be informed of items for removal by Kennet DC.
- ✓ After treatment by Goddards of paths and roads, brush away dead or dying moss.
- ✓ Ensuring paths, roads and parking areas are clear of leaves and debris and checking/reporting on condition eg. potholes, deterioration of tarmac surface.
- ✓ Ensuring drainage gulleys along roads are free of debris to avoid ponding.
- ✓ Checking on the staking of younger trees, including lower branch removal and tree pruning in consultation with Drews Park Committee and management.
- ✓ Liaison with meter readers for unlocking of meters at bin stores.
- ✓ Notifying management of any vandalism and assisting functioning of Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.
- ✓ Minor handyman work such as erecting of signs, replacing bin store notice boards etc.
- ✓ Ensuring the painting of house numbers on car park areas is renewed when necessary.
- ✓ Checking and reporting any overflowing gutters or blocked down pipes and arranging clearance.



Residents are becoming more used to the bi-weekly collection of refuse and recycling items. We now have the recycling bins and in most cases they have been containing within the bin stores. However, we are still getting people placing cardboard and plastic in the stores despite the notices stating that they have to be taken to Hopton Court recycling centre. Recently a resident of Thurnham Court contacted us and informed us that she had spent an hour cleaning her bin store, where black bags had been placed on the floor when bins were virtually empty. She also mention that unwrapped food and disposable nappies were on the floor. The next thing will be rats – again.



Another change has occurred – some time ago we were told the refuse collectors would remove anything one man could lift, so until last July it was acceptable to put your old printers, computers, TV sets, vacuum cleaners etc in the bin store – no more – they should be taken with your cardboard and plastic bottles to Hopton recycling Centre which has a section for everything you can think of.

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THERE WERE FIREWORKS IN BOWES COURT....

....on New Year's Eve, and more a couple of days later when complaints were made to Sarsen. It seems a resident of Thurnham set off fireworks in the enclosed Bowes Court (not even their own Court) waking children and those who didn't choose to stay up to welcome in the New Year.



Tenants (as opposed to Leaseholders) should be aware that the head lease prohibits noise after 10pm, and those exterior events that could cause a disturbance should have the approval of Sarsen. They would probably be told that while not wanting to spoil a natural desire to celebrate with their friends, a venue far down the cricket pitch would be both safer and more acceptable.

DO WE NEED ANY MORE BICYCLE RACKS?

We need your views

The bike racks installed in Burnham, Thurnham and Speer Courts seem to



have been welcomed as they always seem to be jam packed full. Recently the residents' committee was asked if another one should be provided for Speer Court. We would be grateful for your views because at £350 plus VAT a go there is no point in getting one installed if it's not wanted. We think it is, even if not in Speer.

We understand that one Speer

Court resident has remarked that the present rack looks untidy, but this may be because it is overloaded. Another has suggested that the bin store could be extended to provide a lockable bike-store. This would require a planning application and costs for construction, but is worth consideration. Please make your views known as it's your money and your Court. Either email drewsnews@drewspark.co.uk with your comments or telephone any committee member. You will find the contact numbers on the back page.

HOUSE PAINTING FOR 2007/8

A survey of the 'end of year' state of routine painting in December showed that a number of front doors were in need of painting. Following the completion of this work we hope to start a 'court by court' cyclical maintenance, choosing the Court most in need of this work to start off with. As always please remember that Sarsen can only maintain the woodwork in good condition if residents allow access. Our painter will contact householders to arrange for doors and windows to be open on agreed days.



NOTICE BOARD

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

We are pleased to say that we have a new Co-ordinator for our Neighbourhood watch members. Katie Shepherdson has taken on the task - contact number below. Each Court should have a representative, but we are still looking for someone to look after 1-22& 23 to 41 Thurnham and Chapel.

(May also lead to 10% contents insurance reduction)

COURT	NO	REPRESENTATIVE	PHONE
Bowes	18	Peter Bennis	739419
Burnham	6	Sue Chick	724774
Chapel		<i>Representative required</i>	
Clock Tower		<i>Representative required</i>	
Cooke	9	Katie Shepherdson	729929
Elliot	11	Edward Lockwood	730709
Speer	5	Alan Shaw	730284
Thurnham (1-22)		<i>Representative required</i>	
Thurnham (23-41)		<i>Representative required</i>	
Wyatt	7	Gordon Ingleby	723316

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DREWS PARK AMENITY LAND

House owners will know from the Newsletter and AGM meetings that we have submitted a Town Green application to try and preserve from future development the parkland that was part of the sales brochure for this site.

We have received a suggestion from the landowners that in return for supporting the building of two houses bordering Byron Road, between the KMC site and the left turn into Thomas Wyatt Road, they will pass the balance of the land to Sarsen, or the Association, but this would involve putting the Town Green application into abeyance.

If you feel you would like to make some input into the Association's response to the land owners, please phone the Gail Nugent on 01380 730118 or put a note through the door at 9 Wyatt Court within one Week of receiving your newsletter.

