

**FIELDEND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION LTD**

**DIRECTORS' REPORT**

**OCTOBER 2015 – SEPTEMBER 2016**

**1. Chairman's Introduction**

The new financial year saw Roger Joiner stepping in as acting Chairman, Helen Middleton-Price as acting Secretary and Barbara Atherton as a co-opted Board member. Fortunately, Theo Williams, Sarah Chudleigh and Sally Stones continued as Maintenance Director, Treasurer and Gardens Director respectively, and Joy Jermy as a co-opted member. Following the AGM on 24 February 2016, Barbara Atherton took over as Chairman, Helen Middleton-Price was confirmed as Secretary and Kate Thomas joined the Board as Minutes Secretary. The financial year closed with Roger Joiner resigning from the Board, and we, on behalf of all residents, give our sincere thanks to Roger for his tireless work and commitment to Fieldend.

Whilst the Board's priority was, necessarily, the organisation and management of the re-painting, further work was also required to re-enforce our application for yellow lines at the entrance to Fieldend and to provide additional support to control unauthorised parking; more details are given below. Our ongoing commitment to the maintenance of the estate and the upkeep of our trees and grounds continued, within the context of tight financial control, and as can be seen from the Directors' reports following, this has been a particularly busy year. A planning application for an extension to No. 19 was considered and approved, as were requests from two residents concerning the replacement of their concrete garden walls with brick, in keeping with the majority of Fieldend. The Board also discussed additional lighting in the grounds, especially to illuminate house numbers, the provision of a community noticeboard and the planned expansion of St. Mary's University. Helen and Roger worked on updating the 'Welcome to Fieldend' document, first issued in 2006, and the booklet on maintaining the outside of our houses, prepared in 2008. The new versions of these documents will be ready for publication in 2017.

After approval at last year's AGM, the Fieldend e-mail list was put in place, and has proved to be most helpful. Our thanks go to Helen Middleton-Price for her work on this and also for producing the newsletters. Communication between us all is a vital part of maintaining our strong community ethos, and the newsletters and e-mail list are invaluable. Our thanks also go to Sarah Dietz who continued in her role as Webmaster.

The Board received requests to use the perimeter road for access for building works from No. 43 Teddington Park Road and from Primus. Both requests were granted and both, in their own way, proved more intrusive than had been envisaged. We once again thank residents, especially those facing the Newland House building site, for their co-operation. As noted in the Treasurer's report below, we were able to negotiate an increased fee from Primus and now have new, attractive landscaping, completed by Allen Craig, on a previously unloved area of land bordering the Newland House site.

We noted with concern reports from residents about continuing instances of fly-tipping, three break-ins to garages and cars, significant quantities of laughing gas canisters found in Red Square and vandalism to cars and to the perimeter fencing. There is no doubt that Fieldend provides an apparently 'safe haven' for late night opportunists and although the police do patrol they are unfortunately not able to do so as often as we would like. Discussions have again turned to the use of CCTV, although the Board is aware of the strength of feeling against this amongst our residents.

The Board met on eight occasions during the year and published four newsletters. December saw the directors welcoming residents to a pre-Christmas 'At Home' at No 38. This event, together with our AGM, are valuable (and enjoyable) opportunities for shareholders to meet the directors and each other, to discuss topics of mutual interest or concern – and, possibly, for those who have not done so in the past, to even consider joining the Board.

### **The 2016 Re-Paint**

Theo Williams continued work on confirming the re-painting specification and contractual arrangements with the appointed contractor, Mark Tulett, and for the appointment of Janet McDougall (No. 14) as the Project Advisor. The Board also gave approval for Mark Tulett to undertake a woodwork survey for each house. This year's re-paint saw residents undertaking an unprecedented, but necessary amount of woodwork repairs and replacement. A stock of rot resistant Siberian Larch weatherboard was ordered and managed by Theo. In total, nearly 1000 metres were used by residents, with around 30 metres remaining as stock for the intermediate period.

The re-painting started on 18th April and ran until 24th September 2016. The general consensus is that Mark and Frank did a very good job, working efficiently on blocks of three houses at a time, and enabling the contract to be completed on schedule and within budget. Barbara was also able to get back in touch with all our residents, and everyone's co-operation, and forbearance in the face of the schedule changes, was much appreciated. The contract allows for a 6 month retention period which expires in February 2017. Mark Tulett and Janet McDougall have arranged to meet for a survey at the beginning of February 2017 and Mark has a week's allowance to return and remedy any defects identified. When this work has been completed satisfactorily the money held as retention will be paid.

The success of the project would not have been possible without the very considerable amount of work undertaken by our Project Advisor, Janet McDougall. Although the initial plan was for Janet to apply a 'light touch' as the project progressed, she in fact maintained a close eye on each house as it was being painted and also undertook snagging and de-snagging. The Board, on behalf of all residents, wish to record their thanks and admiration to Janet for her hard work and dedication throughout this work.

### **Parking**

Following discussions with the Council, and strong support from residents, yellow lines were implemented on the entry road in February 2016 and their effect continues to be very positive. The Board maintained its links with Newland House and St Mary's University; both institutions are now actively spreading the 'no parking in Fieldend' message. Nonetheless, we still have some individuals parking in Red Square and around the perimeter road. The wording of the FRAL windscreen notice has been strengthened and residents reminded that their cars and those of their guests and contractors should display a Fieldend parking permit. Thanks are due to our windscreen monitors!

The Board has had further, as yet unresolved, discussions on the pros and cons of additional signage for the parking bays and perimeter road. In these, we have been mindful of the suggestion, made at last year's AGM, that any new notices should be in the Fieldend signature grey and gold. Thanks to Roger and Matthew Joiner for preparing mock-ups that helped these discussions.

## **2. Gardens Report**

The gardens continue to flourish thanks to the continued care from Allen Craig and his team.

Following an application to fell the elm trees behind no 44, the Council's Tree Preservation Officer's (TPO) inspection revealed that the trees had been vandalised. FRAL received a warning that any further transgressions would be dealt with severely, the maximum fine for wilful damage being £20,000.

Concern over the size and maintenance of the large plane trees led to a meeting with the TPO with a view to establishing ownership. We await the results of this meeting.

Out There Trees (OTT) conducted a new survey of the trees in Fieldend, updating the tree map as part of that process. OTT recommended a scheme of work which, mindful of the expense, is now divided into 1) urgent, 2) work to be carried out over the next two years and 3) general maintenance. The 'urgent' work has already been carried out.

The various wildflower areas around the estate have flourished. In addition, Fieldend received a number of sapling trees which, thanks to Roger Joiner, have now all been planted.

We have had several successful tidy days which not only help to keep our maintenance costs down but also enable us to catch up with our neighbours; many thanks to the stalwarts who turn out come rain or shine. We have swept, pruned, weeded and generally tidied the estate. A big thank you to everyone who cares for and helps with the gardens.

## **3. Maintenance Report**

During the 2015-2016 period, Fieldend's Maintenance Director prioritised helping to organise the re-paint and its associated repairs. While this essential work was in progress only the minimum running repairs were undertaken.

Having said that, some useful progress has been made. A programme of paving repair and replacement was undertaken by Allen Craig. Around 25 slabs in various locations around the paths were identified as either needing re-laying or replacing altogether. Paving slabs are constantly on the move in Fieldend, mainly thanks to the trees, but now there should be far fewer opportunities to trip over or catch sight of an offending slab. During this project the children's play area also had a new path laid to its entrance, and at the same time, part of the cast iron perimeter railings was re-made to accommodate the expanding tree trunk. The result is altogether smarter and more functional.

Late last winter a high wind brought down a 20-metre section of the southern perimeter fence. It is very old fencing and has been shored up temporarily while a full scheme of repairs is planned, to be undertaken in the near future. This is a fairly major undertaking, as many posts need replacing and some mature planting will be affected.

As well as painting almost every house on Fieldend, Mark Tullet and Frank found time to refurbish the garage gutters with a thorough clean, re-lining with fresh bitumen and re-fixing where necessary.

Lastly, Fieldend's pathway lights have continued to burn bright, and now that they almost all have LED bulbs, they hardly ever go wrong. Thanks to Ian McCann for keeping an eye on all this. Meanwhile, it is recognised that there are several severely under-lit areas on the pathways and a plan is being formulated to address this in 2017.

#### **4. Financial Report**

At the start of our financial year, 1 October 2015, the accumulated fund for the re-painting stood at £42,500. Despite very careful financial management, and after much discussion and consultation with shareholders, with an anticipated requirement of £100,000 to complete the project it was necessary to increase the maintenance charge to £156 per month for the year to meet this obligation.

During the year, additional revenue was generated from Black Mirror, a TV production company and we received the initial payment from Primus, the building contractor for Newland House School, for access. The majority of the Primus income falls into our next financial year.

The painting project was successfully completed for a little under the anticipated cost; the final cost was £94,840 and we have carried forward the remaining £5,000 to the provision for our next re-paint in 2020. There were no emergency issues requiring additional funds and the accounts show we made an operating surplus in 2015/16 of £6,887 which we can add to the small accumulated surplus of £2,122 from 2014/15. At 30 September 2016, therefore, the accumulated fund stood at £9,009.

The Board is currently budgeting £130,000 for the 2020 re-painting project, and plans to accumulate £32,500 annually. Allowing for the expenditure on trees and repairs to the ageing estate, we have been able to reduce the maintenance contributions to £125 per month from 1 October 2016. We will, however, need to keep this under review.

We are very grateful to Colin Hatton-Smith for his assistance in preparation of the accounts and for his ongoing support throughout the year.

#### **In Conclusion**

Our thanks go to all shareholders who have contributed to the running of Fieldend and supported the work of the Board this year, thus ensuring that Fieldend continues to be an attractive, friendly and supportive community in which to live. On a personal note, I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their hard work and good humour in what has been a demanding year, and for enabling us to meet our responsibilities to shareholders. We submit this report and the accompanying Financial Statement to shareholders for approval and hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM.

For the Board,



Barbara Atherton,

Chairman

Fieldend Residents' Association Ltd

December 2016