

FIELDEND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION LTD
DIRECTORS' REPORT
OCTOBER 2016 – SEPTEMBER 2017

1. Chairman's introduction

The start of this financial year saw the completion of the repainting project, with Mark and Frank returning to finish the outstanding snagging, thus ensuring that Fieldend entered the winter months looking smart and refreshed. As noted in the Gardens and Maintenance reports below, we also had a very helpful meeting with Richmond Council's Tree Preservation Officer, and work began to address residents' concerns about low levels of lighting around the estate. Helen Middleton-Price and Roger Joiner revised the *Welcome to Fieldend* document, and additional signage to deter our errant parkers was ordered and put in place.

The board meet at regular, six weekly intervals throughout the year, focussing on the general upkeep and maintenance of the estate, within this year's agreed budgetary constraints and with the greatly appreciated assistance of many of our shareholders. It is clear from the reports of the individual directors following, that this has been another busy year with the grounds and the fabric of the estate needing continuing attention. We held our annual Directors' At Home just before Christmas at No. 38; our thanks go to Helen Middleton-Price for the four newsletters she has produced on our behalf this year and to Sarah Dietz (No. 8) who has continued as Fieldend's Webmaster. We have been very fortunate that all board members have remained in post during this financial year and, in June, were pleased to welcome Robin Oliver (No. 21) as an ex-officio member.

The yellow lines and better signage have certainly helped reduce the number of errant parkers on Fieldend and those parking here now tend to be of a particularly entitled disposition, who consider themselves impervious to both reason and the law. We have been helped by St Mary's Students' Union promoting the 'no parking in Fieldend' message on their social media and as always, our thanks go to residents who continue to ticket offenders. Indeed, the problem we now have is with parking on the double yellow lines at the junction with Waldegrave Park, and Kate Thomas has been in touch with Cllr David Marlow in an effort to get a more proactive approach to enforcement by the Council's parking officers.

We again noted with concern instances of anti-social behaviour from outsiders and two attempted garage break-ins. We again discussed the use of CCTV but again felt that the practical and social implications of this were not commensurate with any potential deterrent value.

We had two approaches from film companies wishing to use Fieldend as locations but, unfortunately, their requirements could not be met. Whilst we look favourably on any such requests, shareholders are reminded that, if approached, they should first consult with the board.

We were also kept busy with issues which, whilst external to Fieldend, could have significant impact on our community. In December, we were approached by Richmond Council's Community Links Officer, to contribute to the consultations for the Strawberry Hill Village Plan and eight residents took part in a focus group at No. 38 in March. We were heartened to learn that several points raised were included in the final proposals. We now await the Council's response to the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Part of the consultation exercise included a questionnaire to all residents on the introduction of further Community Parking Zones within Strawberry Hill. This was a matter of considerable concern to us, especially with St Mary's University plans to increase student numbers and the new Newland House Nursery at 11 Waldegrave Park. Board members, supported by shareholders, responded to the Council and lobbied Council officials at the community liaison events.

Also on our agenda was the proposed expansion of St Mary's University. Barbara attended meetings of the Neighbours of St Mary's (NOSMU) action group and Strawberry Hill Residents' Association and met senior staff at the University. Several plans for the development of the estate were issued, all of which involved building on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), which forms most of the campus. The University's SPD was due to be presented to the Council this Autumn. At the time of writing, we have no further news for shareholders but are watching developments carefully. Whilst wishing to support the University we have obvious concerns about any reduction of MOL and, of course, the impact of an increase in student numbers on local traffic and parking.

Whilst, very fortunately, most members of the board have agreed to continue as Directors for yet another year, both Barbara Atherton and Sarah Chudleigh will be resigning at the AGM. Shareholders will not need reminding of the importance of contributing to the care, maintenance and events which are the cornerstone of life at Fieldend and if anyone would like to consider joining (or re-joining) the board please do speak to any of the Directors in the next week or two.

2. Gardens report

Many thanks to Allen Craig and his team for continuing to maintain the grounds to an excellent standard. Thanks are also due to Roger Joiner, who moved away this year, but left a legacy of beautiful sapling Himalayan birch trees, most of which are flourishing. Finally, thanks to the stalwarts of Fieldend who turn out every Tidy Day, helping to maintain the grounds by tidying, weeding and planting over the months.

This year, following several meetings with representatives from Richmond-upon-Thames Council, it took on the responsibility for maintaining the plane trees around Red Square.

Our tree surgeons – Out There Trees – updated the Fieldend tree survey and, as a result, several diseased or dead trees were felled. Unfortunately, we have lost several original silver birches this year, as they were at the end of their natural lives. There was also a programme of major pruning around the estate, especially on the Triangle and East Square. Liquidambers were planted on the triangle. There is a plan to re-plant all the trees and shrubs that have died this year, and this has been incorporated into the future financial planning.

The large recycling bins have been well used, and we have reminded residents regularly that these are for garden waste only, and that they should be used considerately, cutting up large branches to maximise space.

3. Maintenance report

2016 re-paint – completion

In early 2017, Mark Tullet completed the painting of 47 houses, three garage blocks and various fences, with a snagging 'pass', which he undertook in March under Janet McDougall's supervision. Overall, the reaction to Marks workmanship and client relations was positive and we very much hope that Mark can tender his services again in 2020.

Paving and repairs

In addition to his ongoing gardening duties, Allen undertook a targeted programme of paving repair on those sections not covered by the Council, renovating various cracked and uneven walkways. The Council also repaired and levelled several problem areas on its sections. Endlessly moving and expanding tree roots mean that there are always more that need attention, but in general the pavements are looking better than they have for some time.

On occasions when the Council workers have used black tarmac to patch paving where trees roots were disturbing slabs, the board asked the Council to look again at how it was repairing paving in these areas. We encouraged the use of a fine gravel finish that allows drainage & movement and is aesthetically pleasing. Fortunately, the Council agreed and has removed some tarmac patches, adding more gravel around tree roots where appropriate.

As usual, the southern perimeter fence partially collapsed during one of the windier nights last winter. Four sections came down when their rotten concrete posts gave way. These were quickly repaired, and the fence is now in good shape.

Lighting

Last winter we started to consider replacing many of the unreliable, ageing pathway lighting fixtures with the aim of easing maintenance and unifying the design style across the East and West Squares. The proposed replacement light was previewed at last year's AGM and it was well received.

In June, George and Mark Hammond started work on decommissioning the ineffective lights and installing new ones. Initially a few problems arose when poor previous workmanship was uncovered below ground; George and Mark had to spend several days digging out and rewiring corroded underground cables and junctions. This incurred some extra cost, but it was contained within the projected contingency. New wall lights were also installed in the East Square alley. In all 18 new

lights have been installed in both East and West Square as well as a pair of external 13-amp sockets at each fuse box.

As understood when choosing them, these lighting units are more fragile than their heavy-duty predecessors; consequently, three have needed replacement this year, but it has been cheap to do so. And only one of these was paid for by FRAL. A small stock of spare lights is kept on hand for such events.

Once again, the board thanks Ian McCann for his help in keeping the lights in good working order, a valuable contribution to the general effort to maintain and, indeed, slowly improve our charming little patch of London.

Garage Doors

Whilst previous advice to garage owners was to repair rather than replace their garage doors, we recognise that this is not always possible, and we now have a range of different garage door styles in the two long garage blocks. We have attempted this year to find a door style which closely resembles the original. This has proved impossible and, therefore, we ask that residents select the Garador Horizon style, which two residents have already had installed. This is available in both manual and electronic versions and comes in grey, which although probably not the correct shade will make re-painting easier. Please also notify the board so that we can maintain our records.

4. Financial Report

At the start of our financial year, 1 October 2016, the accumulated fund stood at £9,009. Further to this, the provision for the 2020 repainting opened at £5,000. The board's budget for the 2020 repaint is £130,000 and it will accumulate £32,500 annually towards this.

During the year, additional revenue was generated from Primus, the building contractor for Newland House School, as payment for access through FRAL land. The income from Primus fell across two financial years.

Following the past few years' very careful and restrictive spending all round, this year the board agreed expenditure in some areas requiring some additional focus; specifically: tree works, estate lighting, fence repairs and the levelling of several paved areas. Careful management of these projects by Theo, Sally and Barbara ensured that, despite some unexpected costs, all the overspend was covered by the accumulated fund.

At the end of the year, 30 September 2017, the provision for the next re-paint stood at £37,500, and the accumulated fund at £5,178.

To ensure that FRAL maintains a strong financial position and can fulfil its future commitments, the board believes it will be necessary to increase the maintenance contributions to £130 a month from 1 October 2018. It will however, keep this under review.

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

In conclusion

As I am stepping down from the board at the AGM I would like to take this opportunity to thank shareholders for their help and support, both to me personally and to the board as a whole. I am especially grateful to all the members of the board for their continued hard work and commitment throughout this year, which has been hugely appreciated. Their collective efforts have ensured that we have been able to carry out our duties to Fieldend and we commend this report and the accompanying financial statements to shareholders.

For the board



Barbara Atherton
Chairman, Fieldend Residents' Association Ltd
January 2018