

Melton Park Management Company

Winter Newsletter December 2023

Gully sweeping on 19th and 20th December. Please don't park on the roads in daylight hours.

Contact directors at
info@mpmcl.co.uk

In this newsletter we are
updating on:

Changes to the board at the
recent AGM

Work plans for the winter

General information
about Melton Park
Management Company

The AGM on Oct 17th saw the retirement of two of our longest standing Board members. Andy Etherington has acted as Chair for 14 years and Geoff Munns as his deputy for over 10 years. Both will be familiar figures to many people who live here. They have given thousands of hours of voluntary time to act on our behalf and to keep our lovely development in excellent shape.

A resounding vote of thanks is due to them which we are sure will be echoed by many. They are both continuing to be very helpful in ensuring the new board can pick up the reins and continue to serve shareholders well in the future.

As you all know, our Management Board is made up of six directors who employ their time and experience on a voluntary basis. We see our role as ensuring Melton Park is a



well managed environment for everyone to enjoy. There are a number of policies in place that shape how we run the development and we will seek to apply those as efficiently as we can and to ensure our monies are carefully and well spent.

The Board now comprises of six directors, two existing people, Jacqueline Cole, and Clare Burgess and four newcomers, Lin Homer, Simon Isaac, David Kemp and Richard Llewellyn. We have had a number of meetings to share out the workload and

agree how to work together. We will act as a team and do our best to serve the interests of all shareholders. Short biographies are available for the new members in the AGM papers. Please contact us at info@mpmcl.co.uk.

Directors' Roles

Lin Homer will act as chair and will focus on covenant issues including the section 106 planning agreement that sets out the commitments the original developer made to gain planning consent. She will seek to continue to build relationships with our key partners including Hopkins Homes and relevant councils and other bodies.

Jacqueline Cole will continue to manage the significant administration required to run our development, including welcome packs for new shareholders, billing for the annual service charge and robust debt collection and the organisation and minuting of our meetings.

Clare Burgess will continue to act as our financial lead, ensuring we produce budgets and accounts and our annual financial report, have appropriate banking arrangements and can pay our contractors. Clare will be our registered Company Secretary. She will review our banking arrangements as our current bank leaves Woodbridge soon and will consider options for direct debit or online transactions for the service charge.

Richard Llewellyn will lead on woodlands, bringing both his passion and his experience to this important aspect of the

development. He will work alongside Jason, our tree and woodland contractor. We have recently published a 10-year plan for the woodlands which aims to keep it safe and healthy, now and into the future. Richard will ensure a work plan is in place and will liaise with our own group of volunteers led by Bill Haywood as well as paid and charitable woodland experts.

David Kemp has relevant experience in countryside, park and contract management and will be the lead on our parks and roads work, including our street lighting. We have long standing contractors for most of this work with Robert Cuthbert leading on the ground's maintenance. There is an established pattern of annual work including grass cutting, hedging, leaf collection and gulley cleaning. David will ensure that our plans for all this work are effectively delivered.

Simon Isaac has broad experience in communication and technology and with his help we hope to be able to offer a wider range of opportunities for modern communication. We will continue to use the website, email and paper systems while developing new communication channels.

Woodlands Report

Our woodlands are inspected annually in sections on a 3 year cycle. This year focused on Hospital Grove and sadly identified several diseased or dead trees that require work. The main issues are Ash dieback and sooty bark disease which affects Sycamores. Jason, our tree surgeon, has begun work on the latest action plan prioritising trees that are close to roads,

paths and houses. When work is planned close to individual properties we will try to give advance warning. All the recent woodland reports have noted that our woods are severely lacking in standing or fallen deadwood. To improve this and where we can safely do so, we will leave dead standing trunks after dangerous overhanging branches have been removed. We will also create more standing log piles which are critical for the natural regeneration of our woodlands. Please do not interfere with these piles or remove any logs from the woods. Many of the Sycamores are affected by sooty bark spores which are harmful to health. Government advice on this is clear. It should not be handled or burned indoors as the spores once released can cause severe breathing and asthmatic issues. The woodland working party is active on Tuesdays throughout the winter. Recent tasks have been, planting some large native British trees, removing some invasive non-native garden shrubs that had begun to spread and thinning and coppicing. If anyone is interested in joining the work parties please let us know.

Communications

We will look to make the website more useful to you, explore opportunities for digital communications where it is wanted and useful and explore the opportunity for our AGM to be more accessible to watch and attend virtually. We will also evaluate if there is interest in more regular updates throughout the year. We will,

of course, maintain hard copies for those who need or want them and for certain documents.

In the New Year, we will be making some improvements to communication channels between shareholders and the directors. This will include dedicated email addresses for issues regarding roads, grounds and woodlands.

We will deliver a postcard to all shareholders containing these details in January/February 2024. As well as these contact details, the card will include other useful email addresses and telephone numbers, which we recommend are kept for future reference.

We will also make improvements to email communications, which will begin with a 'data-cleanse' early in the New Year. The objective is to ensure we have the correct email address for all shareholders whilst improving security & privacy.



Road drainage

Recent heavy rainfalls have overwhelmed some of the surface water drainage systems. Issues on adopted roads such as

that occurring at the junction of St Audrys Park Road with Yarmouth Road are reported to Suffolk County Council Highways Department. However, we also have a recurring flood problem on the bend in Calder Road which is one of the original private roads on the estate and the drains there may date from the Victorian era. Investigations are underway to search for archive records and approach Anglia Water to see if there is any evidence that they should assume responsibility. In the meantime, attempts have been made to rod the drains and this seems to have alleviated the problem to some extent but outlet pipes from the gullies remain mostly blocked, probably because ageing clay pipes have been infiltrated by tree roots. Longer term solutions will need to be investigated. We will keep you updated on progress.

Leaves

This time of year we see steady leaf fall and most mulch down over winter in our woodlands and less managed areas of the parkland. However, we do manage leaf removal to an extent in the landscaped areas within the scope of the contracts we have. Leaves are cleared periodically by our contractor Robert Cuthbert, who keeps the grassed area and paths as clear as possible. We also have a long-term contract with ESC (formerly Norse) who carry out a lorry sweep of all road gutters and suck out debris from the gullies. They will do this work shortly, once most of the leaves have fallen.

The process is repeated (under the contract) at Calder

and Burrows Roads in the New Year, as they have particularly heavy fall. Over time this has usually worked pretty well, but please bear in mind that we cannot remove all the leaves.

Our role as directors

We are all keen to keep you informed, to listen to your views and to be prudent in spending our collective service charge monies wisely and well.

We ask that you communicate with us via info@mpmcl.co.uk. We will endeavour to respond promptly, usually within 48 hours. Please remember that we are volunteers, not experts and treat us courteously whether in person or by email.

On page 7 of the AGM papers, you will find a useful summary of how much we raise and what we spend it on. The vast majority is spent on woodlands, parklands, roads and gullies.

The budget for this year is set at the same level as last year and the service charge remains unchanged at £400 per shareholder.

In the next few months, we will give some thought to Section 106 agreement and enforcement of covenant and contractual obligations.

We will broadly continue the approach of not expressing opinions on personal planning issues as these are not matters on which we should act. We will look to understand and seek enforcement of the broader obligations in the section 106 agreement where we can.

We will look at how to ensure our covenants, which all shareholders sign up to as members of the company, are complied with for the benefit of



all and to ensure compliance with planning and other regulatory obligations.

We will continue to be robust about collecting the rare overdue service charges and other debts which occur and which disadvantage the vast majority of shareholders who pay fully and promptly.

Other business

Hopkins Homes have informed us that a defibrillator has been installed at their offices which medical responders will be

aware of if they attend the site. Also, we hope you enjoy the winter season at Melton Park. The days have rapidly become shorter and the weather has been pretty dismal but our beautiful surroundings are hopefully still keeping your spirits up.

If you want to volunteer to help in the woodlands, raise an issue with us, consider being a director in the future, or just share a great photo, please use info@mpmcl to get in touch.