

Melton Park Road and infrastructure proposals August 2024

At the AGM we are planning to propose an increase of £50 in this year's service charge to allow us to commence regular and cyclical works on our roads, streetlights and drains. This would be followed by an additional £50 increase in the following year, lifting our service charge to £500 pa. A formal proposal will be put to the AGM but we held an open event on Saturday 27th July and plan another on **Friday 30th August at St Audry's Golf Club at 10.00**. Hopefully, you may be able to attend.

At the first event a number of relevant questions were asked which are repeated below for your information.

FAQs

1. Why are you asking for an increase for roads?

Most of our roads and streetlights are coming up to 25 years old. This is about the expected life of tarmac and other infrastructure. So far, we have carried out only limited maintenance on our road & infrastructure since the development was finished and we now need to start a programme of planned, regular maintenance, especially to renew road surfaces as necessary over the coming years. This is a costly business and cannot be funded from our reserves (which must be kept to cover urgent and unforeseen expenses) so we need to raise additional funding. If we neglect or postpone this duty now, we will be obliged to request larger sums in future when works become more urgent and more costly.

2. Why not just wait until repairs are urgent and essential?

As with all the responsibilities of MPMC, we seek to carry out our duties in a timely and cost-effective manner. This gives all of us immediate benefits while resident here of living in a well maintained and high-quality environment. It also has an impact on the saleability and value of our properties. Buyers would likely be deterred (and sale prices lower) if we were to manage our affairs by allowing major deterioration that led to a crisis and then required shareholders to raise large sums at short notice.

3. I live on a council maintained road so why should I have to contribute?

We all benefit from the two council maintained roads on the development but many roads remain private as they cannot be passed to the council. Most (but not all) private roads are owned by us as shareholders of the Melton Park Management Company (MPMC), alongside ownership of our woodlands, parklands and play areas. When we bought our properties, we were all required to become shareholders in MPMC which obliged us to share an equal part of the costs of maintaining our assets.

Not all the roads were passed to the Council or MPMC and some were included in the conveyances of our properties as a shared right to use and obligation to maintain with our close neighbours. So, in addition to our shareholder obligations many of us also have a shared responsibility to maintain the road immediately outside our properties and/or shared garaging areas. If you are unsure of your position, we have some land registry maps showing which roads fall into each category.

4. Why is the increase so much?

After two years the increase will raise £20,000 per year, increasing our overall annual resources to about £100,000. We currently spend around £28,000 pa on woodlands and about £28,000 pa on our parklands. This increase would allow us to spend a similar amount, probably £30,000 pa on

roads, drains and streetlights. We also have to pay for insurances, gully emptying and leaf sweeping and some professional fees for bookkeeping and auditing of our accounts. Some years the weather means we have spent more, some less. In those years we might (as last year) take from our reserves or add to our reserves but it is common sense to collect a sum around our annual spend each year.

5. How will you decide what to do when?

We will follow the same basic procedures we have followed for many years in relation to woodlands and parklands.

We will:

- Seek to maintain our development to the original design and standards that were used when it was developed.
- Where circumstances have significantly changed consider alternative approaches that maintain the appearance and quality of Melton Park.
- Be led by need and commonsense ensuring that all road and path areas are maintained in a cyclical rotation with urgent or small repairs being added to any programmed work.
- Seek to appoint a local high quality contractor who can carry out works on a planned basis and be held to account if any problems with workmanship occur.

Plan work in logical contracts every 2 to 4 years to obtain good value for money and minimise disruption to residents.

6. What is the cost of each type of surface? And do they all last as long?

There are a number of different surfaces on the development and costs and lifespans are different. The main ones are:

• Tarmac

This accounts for most of MPMC roads. It costs between £25 psm for resurfacing (with granite chips) to £55 psm for new tarmac. A tarmac road has around a 25-year lifespan with this being extended for around 15years by good quality surface dressing.

• Gravel topped tarmac

This is used in limited areas on some roads in the development and costs are as surface dressing above. However, the gravel chippings bind less effectively than granite chippings and the lifespan is thus much more variable depending on level of traffic. Once worn the underlying tarmac shows through over time. Which may look unsightly but usually remains serviceable.

• Loose Gravel

This is used to top dress some of the paths adjoining parkland which MPMC maintain.

This costs about £10 psm. The life span depends on wear and tear, and it is susceptible to weed growth but and it can be fairly easily topped up at low cost.

Coloured tarmac

A further type of surface we have not previously used is coloured tarmac. This is more expensive than regular tarmac (about £65 psm) but like black tarmac it has a reliable, maintenance-free 25+year lifespan. It uses natural coloured aggregate to achieve the desired durable finish and appearance (which can match that of gravel). This might be a worthwhile alternative to Gravel topped tarmac or regular tarmac and we may explore this further, initially with a small trial area.

7. Which roads will you do first?

We have not made that decision yet but will take the wear of the roads as a key indicator. It is likely that means some of the tarmac roads which were first laid will be first tackled. Once we start, we will continue maintenance on a regular cycle dealing with all roads in turn. This work will probably span 15 years or more and once finished we will start again!

8. How do I find out more?

- Attend our next open event on 30th August at 10.00 at St Audry's Golf Club
- Call into the AGM event at St Audry's Sports and Social Club on October 22nd from 4.30 before the formal meeting starts at 5.30.
- Send an email to chair@mpmcl.co.uk

9. Can I pay my Service Charge by instalments? It is hard to find the lump sum so soon after Christmas.

As a group of voluntary directors, we will struggle to move to voluntary instalments as collection takes quite a lot of time and effort already and repeating that multiple times each year would be challenging. We could entirely outsource the billing and collection, but this would add a further increase to bills. We would be happy to discuss this with anyone who feels they have a good idea that is easy and cost effective to implement.

The Board.