



Langley Park
Residents' Association

NEWSLETTER
Dec 2022



Father Christmas Is Coming To Langley Park 6:30pm Thursday 15th Dec

The procession will start at 6:30pm and end up in St Martins Square around 7:45pm with carols playing. It would be lovely to see you all there for a glass of mulled wine and mince pies.

The £20 subscription is due in January.
We will e-mail all residents with details on how to pay.
We hope you will choose to join us in supporting the LPRA.

Our AGM will be held on Tuesday 24th January 2023 7:30pm in the Unicorn School. We would like to see all of you there, please ensure you add this to your diary.



**Thank
You**

COLLECTION

As in previous years we will be making a Christmas collection for the security guards and gardeners.

Please put your donations in an envelope marked with your address and deliver to 6 Walled Garden Close before Monday 19th December.

Survey

Following the survey we sent round in the summer, one of the things residents asked for was more communications, in view of that **Andy Grafham** 6 Walled Garden has now joined the committee to help us with this. This will be discussed at the AGM

For your information the objectives and aims of the LPRAs are as detailed below:-

- Monthly meetings with FirstPort to raise an action list of issues including repairs and maintenance items and have a walk around with the subcontractors if necessary.
- Discuss and agree with FirstPort any major works required and obtain and agree competitive costs and plan any works going forward and checking with annual budgets.
- To discuss with FirstPort the annual service charge budgets for any major work required.
- To view the pre-audited annual service charge accounts for the estate and discuss the schedule of expenditure.
- To organise with FirstPort any re-tendering of sub-contractors.
- To organise quarterly committee meetings to discuss and plan events during the year (Easter/summer/Christmas) with an agenda of financial and other estate issues raised or outstanding.

- To actively promote the annual voluntary £20 membership contribution towards the LPRAs finances for all of the residents.
- To keep an annual schedule of the LPRAs funds and Assets.
- To view any planning and building works around the estate in line with the covenants.
- To listen and respond as appropriate to any resident's issues with FirstPort or around the estate to progress and resolve if possible.
- To progress our desire to have the "Right To Manage" (RTM) the estate in the future via a Newco which is already established.
- To arrange Christmas lights at the main entrance.
- To Progress and resolve the "Faulkner Issue" where the service charges are not being paid.
- To ensure that FirstPort or any future management company are proactive and managing the Langley Park estate efficiently.
- To maintain the Langley Park Website.
- To issue a Quarterly newsletter. To organise the Langley Park residents association's AGM.

Gardeners

As of the 1st of January 2023 there will be a new gardening contractors (MBS), this is the company that they used to pollard the trees in St Martins Square. They are currently going through the "Tupe" process to see which staff will continue working here.

Cala Homes

We now have a map showing the planting in Cala Homes, you can view this drawing here www.langleyparkbeckenham.co.uk/cala/. We have ongoing meetings with them over the coming to ascertain if any further planting is required.

Damage to the Caretakers Lodge.

Following a recent incident where damage was caused to the caretakers lodge, our insurance company is currently assessing the damage and arranging for it to be repaired at no extra cost.

Leaving Firstport

As some folk who have long memories will recall, the LPRAs first petitioned residents back in 2018 regarding the management of Langley Park. This was shortly after our neighbours at Langley Waterside successfully changed their management regime to an arrangement which they as residents have total control over. The overwhelming response from

Please don't park on the pavement, people with prams and wheelchairs are being forced in to the road.



NEWSLETTER December 2022

our residents (north of 80% of you) was that there was a common desire to take control of the management regime from the current estate managers, FirstPort, and tender the management elements so as to ensure a higher quality service and better value for money for residents. I gamely accepted the mantle of getting this done on behalf of the LPRA, without really having a clue what I was walking into.

Suffice to say that I am now rather better educated. The principle issue here is that, upon the sale of the very last new property on Langley Park – way back in 2003, the freeholder (who was the developer, Laing Homes South East Limited) should have entered into a management lease for all of the common parts of the estate, as per the freeholder's responsibilities in the individual transfers of the properties on the estate. Sadly, it has become blindingly apparent as a result of my investigations that this lease was never entered into. Whilst we can conjecture as to why this did not happen all those years ago, I suspect that the most rational answer is that, around that time, Laing Homes were purchased via a hostile takeover by George Wimpey, to become Wimpey Laing. Furthermore, a mere year later, Wimpey themselves were consumed by Taylor Woodrow, to create Taylor Wimpey – who are still a top-five volume housebuilder today.

To cut a very long story short, the only way that Langley Park can emulate our neighbours in Waterside is to get Taylor Wimpey, as Laing's successors in Title, to enter into this management lease. FirstPort would also have to be a signatory to this lease. Then, a few months later, the management lease could be transferred to a new company of the residents choosing.

As some of you know, I have been trying to achieving this – sometimes patiently, sometimes not so patiently – for the last five years. It has been extremely difficult, as FirstPort are – some might say predictably – very reluctant to bite the hand that feeds them. The leverage here can only come from Taylor Wimpey and, until now, trying to get them interested in a development from twenty years ago that they inherited and didn't even build has been in the box marked Very Hard Work.

In the last couple of months though, things have changed slightly. Firstly, personnel changes within

Taylor Wimpey have resulted in our receiving a more sympathetic reception. Secondly, Taylor Wimpey's own relationship with FirstPort has deteriorated considerably as a result of poor performance on other, newer developments. Thirdly, Taylor Wimpey have sensed that I am not going to go away, so my pestering has begun to succeed at the micro-level. I am indebted though to the recently promoted Chair of Taylor Wimpey southeast region, who has really engaged with us. A form of lease has been sent to FirstPort for consideration, and Taylor Wimpey's legal team are now turning the crew on FirstPort to enter into the lease.

There is still some way to go, and most of the complex and expensive detailed legal work is ahead of us. On the subject of expenditure, I should make it clear that, in order to defray costs, I actually 'parked' our lawyers prior to the pandemic, and have been dealing with Taylor Wimpey myself. Fortunately, my 35-plus years in residential development has helped me out!

As I said earlier, there is now grindingly slow, but steady progress, and I hope to be able to report a more significant breakthrough in the New Year. In the meantime, I am very happy to chat with residents about this, as it is very complex, so feel free to approach as I wander around the estate from time to time. I will also take questions at the AGM in the New Year, at which I hope to be able to report significant progress."

Martin Bellinger

The Residents Association would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and looking forward to seeing all in the New Year.



Christmas Lights

I feel it is incumbent on me as chair of the LPRA to make a statement about the Christmas lights.

Many of you will know that I have been putting up the Christmas lights for the past 10 years and until last year the feedback from the residents to both myself, other committee members and security has been amazing.

Since my weekends are really busy I was able to do this from 7:30am - 10am over the period of a month. After requests from residents more and more lights were added and last year we put lights further down Bucknall Way and at the front of St Martins Square.

In 2020 people started to complain about the blue lights (which have been up since 2011), so we did not purchase any more blue lights but added white lights.

Last year a committee member said they would ask one of the other Christmas light installers to give us a quote, but when nothing was heard by the 1st Nov so we had no choice but to put up the lights.

Another committee member asked Firstport to employ a Health and Safety Office to get the blue lights turned off.

As I mentioned at the AGM I'm no longer prepared to put up these lights and this year the committee asked 4 contractors to give us quotes which ranged from £15,000 to £2,500.

Our treasurer contacted the committee explaining the situation asking if anyone was prepared to take on this project, but the only response we got was "***That there should be no lights and we give money to charity***".

Knowing how much the majority of residents and children

enjoy the lights a few of the committee offered to put up some white lights.

Residents should be aware that this is not like putting lights up outside your house. There are only a limited number of plugs and we've had to use connectable lights so that 5000 lights can be plugged into one plug. The lights need a considerable amount of maintenance and we've had to replace lights brought down by lorries, eaten by animals and fuses blown. Also some people seem to want to unplug the lights and we've had to fit padlocks to stop this.

We are looking for someone to manage this project going forward. The contractors we contacted all told us, it would take one person 3 full days to unpack and fit the lights and a further 2 days to take them down and pack them away, also some knowledge of electrics is required.

If you would like to get involved with this project going forward please email langleyparkbeckenham@gmail.com



On Saturday 10th December Karl, Andy and Alison will be putting up a Christmas tree and lights around St Martins Square. If you can help that would be great, please email the committee. langleyparkbeckenham@gmail.com

AGM Update

Due a double booking of the Unicorn School, the AGM will now be on Thursday 26th January 2023 7:30pm