

Issue 1: June 2013



Dear Resident

Welcome to our first Newsletter for a couple of years. We hope you will find things to interest you. We plan to produce a newsletter every 3 – 4 months to keep you informed of what we're doing on your behalf to make living in Rivermead and the wider community more enjoyable.

If you have any news items you would like us to include, if you have links with a charity you would like to publicise or have any comments about Rivermead then please drop us a line and we'll publish your comments in the next available edition.

You will see that we have kept the layout simple – if you have desktop publishing skills that you can offer then we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Please send all communications to: maria.cooke5@virginmedia.com or drop a note through any of the committee members' doors – you can find our names and numbers in each of the lobbies.

We are grateful to Councillor Gordon Wheeler who funded the development of this Newsletter through the Councillor's Divisional Fund (from Nottinghamshire County Council).



SOCIAL EVENTS:

We've organised some social events to give residents the chance to meet and get to know each other a little better. Quiz Night on 18th March went really well with 19 residents and staff entering the competition (including 3 people new to Rivermead). It was a close call but the AT + T team won with 58 points – well done to them! We hope you enjoyed the chocolate treats.

The next event is: Pub Games on Monday August 19th (£1 entry fee).

The event will be held in The Beeches from 7.30 onwards and there will be prizes for the winners. Look out for the posters in the lobby for more information.

DON'T FORGET: Using your membership card at The Beeches will save you 15% on the food bill for up to 4 people.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING DATE:

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 28th October at the Beeches. Please make a note in your diary to attend – it's your chance to speak to Freshwater Managers directly, to influence what we do on your behalf and to find out about special offers only available to Association Members.

We will post information on the lobby noticeboards a couple of weeks before and you will have the chance to nominate officials for the Association. We look forward to seeing you there.

A MESSAGE FROM FRESHWATER:

Julian Keen, the Area Manager for Rivermead, has sent through the following messages:

Re-wiring works:

We would apologise for the disruption caused by the rewiring works in the common areas. The works have caused more noise and dust than we had anticipated as the plaster finish on some of the walls and ceilings is not as deep as had originally been thought. Our contractor has tried to minimise the dust generated by the chasing in works. We thank you for your cooperation in this respect.

The new Integrated Reception System installed at the same time as the new wiring gives access to Digital TV (Freeview), FM and DAB radio and Sky+/HD. Please contact DAS Technology on 01623 418096 to arrange a connection into the new system. DAS is able to carry out the works without disturbing the fire compartmentation within the communal risers in which the cabling is run. We would not expect another installer to be familiar with the requirements of maintaining such compartmentation.

It remains our intention to decorate the common areas later in the year. We have already received some suggestions from the Residents Association as to the colour scheme for the common areas. We will be consulting with the Residents Association again before the works proceed with a view to agreeing what colour the doors and walls should be painted. We would

request any suggestions as to the desired colour scheme be coordinated via the Residents Association.

We recently changed the locks on the riverbank gates and would remind residents, who have not already done so, to collect the new key from the Caretaker's office.

Service charges:

It is noted that there is considerable confusion regarding the transactions relating to the 2012 service charge and that the recent correspondence from our service charge department has not been particularly helpful in explaining the recent service charge transactions.

March 2012: On account service charge (25th March 2012 to 28th September 2012)

June 2012: Less On account service charge – decrease (25th March 2012 to 28th September 2012)

September 2012: On account service charge (29th September 2012 to 24th March 2013)

April 2013: Less Excess Service charge surplus Incorrect sum credited to account

Service charge – windows:

Service charge correction - Debit applied to account to correct incorrect amount above

During 2012 we collected more service charge from residents than we spent maintaining the building. There is a net credit to be refunded in respect of the main service charge.

You will be aware that no on account charges are collected in respect of the service charge relating to the maintenance of the windows and that a single charge is made at the end of the year in this respect.

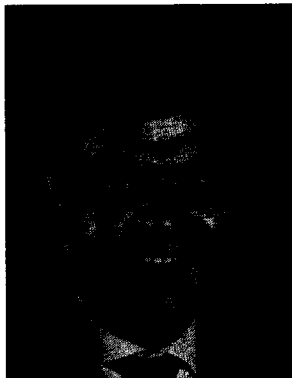
If residents have entered into a payment arrangement in respect of the 2013 service, the service charge surplus for 2012 will have only a small effect their monthly payments. However, residents can contact Mrs Murphy if they wish their monthly payments to be reviewed.



WILFORD LANE CROSSING:

Thanks to all of you who signed our petition to get a crossing over Wilford Lane. You will all know how busy it can be at certain times of the day, especially since the tram works have affected traffic flow even more than normal. We collected 201 signatures and the petition was presented to the County Council on 25th April. We were supported in the process by Councillor

Gordon Wheeler and we want to offer our thanks for that invaluable support (please see his comments below).



'WHEELER'S WORDS:

At the Rushcliffe Borough Council Planning Committee meetings I opposed the applications from Sainsburys for a Superstore and the relocation of the 5/6 Doctors Surgeries. Unfortunately on both occasions the vote was 8-7 to grant planning permission. These proposed developments will have major traffic impacts on Wilford Lane at a time when tram works are already causing chaos. And this is before Wilford Lane is brought to a grinding halt every few minutes to allow the tram to cross!

New Planning Applications have been submitted for a 100 place Nursery on Bruce Drive and for the conversion of existing accommodation into a residential home. I am also expecting a Planning Application for the old Becket School site. On all of these I shall liaise closely with the local community because your views are important to me. It does frustrate me that planners fail to grasp Wilford Lane is a B road and was never designed to take these levels of traffic.

Following an approach from Rivermead Residents' Association I am working with County Council Officers on proposals for a Pelican crossing close to Rivermead. The increased traffic levels (which will worsen) makes a crossing, in my view, essential. The previous refuge was dangerous and no longer fit-for-purpose. The plans are currently being worked up by Officers and I am liaising with the Association to keep them (and you) informed of progress. There are challenges apart from cost. Wilford Lane is narrow in this section, there are drainage issues and residents across the road may object. But the support I am receiving from Officers clearly indicates we are all working towards the same objectives and outcomes.

Councillor Wheeler was re-elected at the recent local elections and has committed to continuing to support our campaign for road safety improvements.



IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENT:

The Committee is working hard on your behalf to ensure we have a safe, secure and environment in which to live and work. Gill and Marilyn (both from Yale House) carry out regular site audits to ensure the internal common areas and external car parks, garages and gardens are kept as neatly as possible. Our Caretaking team have been really supportive and have worked with us over the past few months to respond to our concerns.

Pete, Geoff and the team did an amazing job to keep the area well gritted and salted during the winter months and have done really well to keep on top of the dust and dirt caused by the electrical works – thanks to all of the team from all of us.

Christine (also from Yale House) has been dogged in her determination to improve the riverbank area for the benefit of all local residents. Through sheer persistence with a variety of statutory bodies (local councillors, The Environment Agency and our local M.P. (Kenneth Clark) she has achieved some really positive results:

- ❖ Nottingham City Council (NCC) were finally persuaded to clear up some of the increasingly wild undergrowth fringing the river walk and they have chopped back some of the areas and treated them to inhibit future growth over the summer. We will continue to monitor the appearance of the river path and press for more regular attention. RBC has also promised to look into having the paths swept on a regular basis.
- ❖ A Public Safety Risk Assessment has been carried out on the truncated barrier at the bottom of the alleyway leading from Wilford Lane to the riverbank pathway. Following regular communications from Christine the Environment Agency carried out the above Assessment and has agreed to extend the barrier – work progresses slowly but we are receiving regular updates. This will make it safer for all the cyclists and walkers who use the path.
- ❖ Work on the The Old Becket School has re-started following the departure of the roosting bats. Christine is continuing to press for quick completion of the job and for maintenance of proper safety measures.

Let us know if you've recently employed a reliable, trustworthy and skilled tradesperson to do any work in your property. We want to create a register of resident-recommended tradespeople who know the site and the particular nature of our buildings. Email Maria or notify any committee member (lists on the lobby notice boards) so we can start that process.



CALLING GREEN-FINGERED RESIDENTS:

Freshwater have promised residents the opportunity to influence future planting schemes so please send any ideas you have to a member of the committee – their flat numbers are on the notice boards.

The Committee have recommended that we have more evergreen plants and shrubs to prevent that 'bare' winter look. The area down the side of Yale also needs some work as it is quite empty but very shady so any additional ideas for plants who won't mind a gloomy environment would be very welcome.

SUPPORTING LOCAL CHARITIES:

Gill Catchpole (our Vice-Chair) started supporting Save the Children over 20 years ago and for about 10 years was an active member of the West Bridgford Committee. About 10 years ago the local group developed an annual coffee morning event which still continues today. The event is held on a Sunday in November each year in Keyworth. The event provides an excellent opportunity to stock up on Christmas cards, small gifts, calendars, jewellery and wrapping paper as well as raising money for an important cause. In addition to the retail opportunities there is the chance to buy home made cake, enter raffles and the tombola and each event raises around £700. A charity shop was opened last year in Gordon Road so there are even more opportunities to support the charity.

The charity works to improve the lives of children at home and abroad through the provision of clean water and educational projects (amongst others).

If you want to know more about Save the Children then look at their website on

www.savethechildren.org.uk

and look out for the posters on the notice boards advertising the November 2013 event.