



Highams

Residents' Association

Founded in 1955 for the residents of the Highams Estate
AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

Newsletter 14 – December 2014

Chairman's letter

Dear Residents,

Hope you all had a great summer.

As some of you will be aware the Highams Estate was built around 1930 by Sir Courtenay Warner, who insisted on traditional building methods, which is why most of the houses have solid and not cavity walls. He was passionate about the design and quality of the houses and helped form the Highams Residents' Association (HRA) in 1955. The aim of which was to cherish and protect the unique character of The Highams Estate.

The estate was recognised as an "Area of Special Character" by the London Borough of Waltham Forest in 1988. Since that time there have been periods where the Residents' Association has not been very active, and unfortunately one or two unsightly developments have occurred. Although the Council recognises the special character of the estate, it will only protect it with our help and vigilance.

I should add that we are not against the development of existing houses; this is of course inevitable. We do however wish that the proposed developments should be in keeping with the original character of the estate. More information on the history of the estate is available from publications by www.walthamstowhistoricalsociety.org.uk

HRA is run entirely by volunteers, residents of the estate who, like Sir Courtenay Warner, care about the character of the area they live in. We are always looking for new people to join the committee and for volunteers who are willing to help with delivering newsletters, collecting subscriptions once a year, and organising special events.

With my very best wishes to all

Dave Jennings, Chairman HRA

Defunct Covenants in House Deeds

In all our house deeds on this estate there is a rarely mentioned restrictive covenant. This states that you need to obtain the consent of the original builder to any material alterations. So if you have built an extension, this could cause problems when you are later selling the house. If your buyer uses an eagle-eyed solicitor, he/she could query the legality of said extension.

After making enquiries, we are advised that this particular covenant is now null and void and can be ignored. This is because the original builder, the Warner family, sold all its property interests here many years ago. It is always advisable to seek independent advice on such matters.

New Residents

Please contact us if you are a new resident on the estate. Please email us at highamsra@me.com

www.highams.org.uk
email highamsra@me.com

Update on the lake / dam works

The work on the lake and dam is progressing well. The channel for the overflow sluice is being dug, and the reinforcing of the dam is proceeding.

The emphasis at the moment is on the dredging. There are three barges, one tug and a digger on a pontoon dredging the lake down to the original clay base as created by Humphrey Repton. This will mean an average new depth for the lake of seven feet. The barges are emptied into a fleet of up to four trucks, which then take the sludge away to Peterborough where it is being dried and used as landfill.

The water in the lake is being aerated by a machine with two large revolving paddles for the benefit of the fish stocks. The existing machinery being used will not, however, fit round the island at the north end of the lake, and a large amphibious dredger is being brought in for that purpose.

It is anticipated that the dredging project will be finished by Christmas. Judging by the number of ducks, coots etc, the dredging does not seem to have had an adverse effect on the wildlife.

Parking (1)

Prior to the demolition of the bungalow in upper Montalt Road, and its replacement with two large semi-detached houses, there were strong and well-founded protests to the Council from the Montalt Rd Flats residents, about the failure of the plans for the new houses to provide adequate off-street parking. These protests fell on deaf ears for one insurmountable reason; Council policy (and we understand, national policy as well) is to demand just one off-street parking space per residential property. This may well create problems for this estate as further developments get approved. But protesting about it will unfortunately be pointless.

Security: Cast your Optics around you

At 6am one morning back in July, two people were spotted taking photos of all the houses in one of our roads. Just possibly it was innocent, but evidently at that early hour they weren't estate agents, and when they realised they'd been seen, they looked startled. Of the various theories that spring to mind, one is that they were checking out which houses had alarm systems.

Apparently, would-be thieves now "Google" the names of alarm companies displayed on alarm bells on the front of properties, to establish if that alarm is a monitored system or not, houses with non-monitored alarms being less risky to break into - especially if the alarm goes off so regularly through false alarms or poor maintenance, that neighbours no longer take

any notice. Would-be burglars have been known to set the alarm off, remove themselves to a safe distance, and watch. And if no-one appears after 20 minutes (the maximum time an alarm bell is allowed to ring by law) they go back and burgle the house. While all this might be dismissed as alarm company sales-speak, we prefer to take it seriously: you cannot be too careful.

It also underlines the need to look out for our neighbours. With a formal Neighbourhood Watch scheme no longer operating on our estate, in practice we are all Neighbourhood Watch members now. Our eyes and ears cannot be everywhere. But if every resident made a habit of checking the view to the three houses opposite once or twice a day, and especially just before going to bed, the risk of intruders would be significantly reduced.

In recent months during darkness hours, we have twice found car lights inadvertently left on for hours before they were spotted, and a car boot lid that had sprung open hours earlier. Then there are the leaflets left prominently hanging out of letterboxes for long periods, thanks to incompetent distributors, and the bins still standing out in the street at nightfall on collection days. We encourage you all to look out for your neighbours.

Being observant is free! And you don't need to apologise for minding your neighbours' business; they will be more than grateful if you prevent a break-in, and will be delighted to return the compliment. It is particularly important now the dark evenings are back with us

Chairman's News

Dear Residents,

I have attended 3 meetings recently on behalf of the Residents' Association.

1st meeting - was the Hatch Lane Ward panel meeting on 14th Oct 2014.

News from this meeting:-

I learnt that we now have one sergeant, 2 PC's and 2 PCSO's for the area. Also the sergeant has 5 PC's under his command when they are on shift and not needed for duties in central London. They are based at Chingford Police Station at the top of Kings Head Hill.

The e-mails that we used to receive from the police regarding crime in the area are no longer available due to cuts in funding. Instead I was directed towards a website called www.ukcrimestats.com. I also came across a website called www.findahood.com which is very new.

I was asked to pass on, if you see any activity in the area that you regard as suspicious, e.g. drug dealing, then please report it to the police by dialling 101.

2nd Meeting - was a presentation by David Ellis from the LBWF Greenspace team.

Mr. Ellis outlined very ambitious plans to regenerate the Lake, the Park and Mallinson Wood including the Arboretum, with Heritage Lottery and other funding. (I should mention that The Corporation of London is dredging the lake whilst reinforcing the dam - see elsewhere in this newsletter.)

There is to be a public consultation in about a month. We will keep those of you with e-mail addresses informed, please tell your neighbours as this will make a big difference to the estate if it goes ahead!

3rd Meeting - Hatch Lane Ward, Hale End and Highams Park Ward Joint Community Ward Forum

1st item was a presentation by Dr. Paulette Lawrence on Mental Health Care Provisions.

They have received additional funding and are keen to promote and make more people aware of the help that is available for anyone suffering from stress, anxiety or depression. For more details

visit the Council website at www.walthamforest.gov.uk, and search IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies)

2nd item: we can request the Crime Prevention Bus to come to the estate or a particular road at any time. They welcome requests. To contact the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, visit www.content.met.police.uk and search Waltham Forest Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

3rd item: the Highams Park Planning Group gave a short presentation of their aim to create a long term Neighbourhood Plan for the Highams Park Area (which includes our estate and the park), in order to make Highams Park a better place to live.

Their aim is a Plan by the people, for the people, and to that end they want to get as many members as possible. You can join via their website, it is free to join, there is no requirement for you to do anything. The advantage of joining is that you can send them your ideas and be kept up to date with what is going on.

www.highamparkplan.org

Parking (2)

Don't forget that the council has recently fined motorists for parking their cars with wheels on the kerb on this estate. Not only that, but cars have then been clamped and towed away - a cost of £265 to recover from Edmonton. Please alert your visitors.

Residents' Tea Party

On 20 July we held a tea party at the Rugby Club. More than 50 residents joined local councillors and committee members and brought along a wide variety of sandwiches and cakes. As usual Henry's local knowledge quiz proved that many of us are not very knowledgeable about our local heritage! Next year we are hoping to hold a more ambitious party in the park to commemorate the 60 years since the Residents' Association was founded. If you would like to help with the planning and running of this celebration please do not hesitate to contact the Chairman at highamsra@me.com

Woodford and Wanstead Western Corridor

Redbridge council is consulting its residents on future planning on the Woodford High Road. One of the options it is proposing is called Option Three: Western corridor – Woodford Broadway/Woodford, South Woodford and Wanstead. This option would identify a north-south corridor including Woodford High Road, Woodford Broadway to South Woodford District Centre, and through to Wanstead, which (the Redbridge web page says) already has excellent transport connections and town centres. This option proposes that more housing could be provided by increasing building heights and densities, and building more homes in town centres which would lead to more flats and fewer family homes as a result; conservation areas locally could be put at risk. If this proposal goes ahead there could be a significant impact on the residents of this estate. For more information please see -

http://www2.redbridge.gov.uk/cms/planning_and_the_environment/planning_policy_regeneration/local_development_framework/idoc.ashx?docid=Of188486-acae-4276-91ce-6d35ffb1e648&version=-1

Highams Park Christmas Fayre

21 December 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Taking place at various locations around Highams Park, come along to the Christmas Fayre. Enjoy entertainment, take the opportunity to buy unusual last minute gifts and artisan food from your independent local shops, farmers market and local artists and crafters market.

Stop for a coffee in a local cafe and celebrate the start of Christmas with our Community Festive Songs and Carols at 4pm-5pm.

Search for 'Highams Park Christmas Fayre' on Facebook for future announcements as more is added.



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

General warnings; now the dark evenings are here, leave lights on to make your home looked lived in. Make sure you do not leave Christmas shopping goods on display in your car or house. Overall, the Highams Estate is relatively crime free, although if you have been a victim of crime it may not feel that way to you! There are some very simple precautions we can take to prevent burglaries:

1. If you have a burglar alarm, then set it.
2. Close and lock all doors and accessible windows when you are out or at night time.
3. If you have UPVC doors lock them at night as otherwise these can provide easy access for burglars. (Turning the handle upwards does not prevent access it needs to be locked with a key).
4. If you are going away please leave lights on a timer, cancel milk/newspapers and ask a neighbour to keep an eye on the house.
5. When recycling make sure personal details are not left on papers in the green bins.

Other criminal activity to be aware of: In other parts of London there have been attempts to get peoples' bank details by someone pretending to be from the police/bank ringing up. Never give your bank details to anyone unless you are certain of their credentials.