

FIELDEND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION LTD

DIRECTORS' REPORT

OCTOBER 2020–SEPTEMBER 2021

1. Chair's introduction

In last year's report I reflected on what an unusual year it had been and the importance of a strong community during these difficult times – I find myself doing the same thing this year. Another year of living through a pandemic has highlighted to us all how lucky we are to live on Fieldend. We have welcomed back some of the community events we value so much. The Summer Party, although without the childrens' games, was a lovely afternoon and FRAL was happy to sponsor Luca's dance band to entertain us. Luca's jazz band also provided a rare chance to hear live music. Bonfire night returned, as did Trick-or-Treating. The Directors' Christmas Drinks was unfortunately unable to go ahead, and we had another year without carols. But we seem to have started a new "toast at Christmas" tradition on the 25th and the estate looked wonderfully festive with residents decorating Advent windows and lighting the foliage spectacularly! Thank you to all the residents who helped organise these events and those who took part.

The grounds at Fieldend are well used, we encourage residents to enjoy the space and share it with friends and family. A great example was the charity flapjack and bric-a-brac sale in the summer, and we were thrilled to facilitate the use of the grounds for a Fieldend wedding – a belated congratulations to James and Jess on a wonderful day. Fieldend hosted a film crew in July 2020 – it was a much larger operation than we expected but went off without a hitch and provided some good celebrity-spotting opportunities as well as a little income for FRAL.

The board has continued to perform its duties despite ever-changing restrictions. We have continued to meet at 6 weekly intervals, issued quarterly newsletters, continued the "Fieldend Notices" email alerts, and we have kept the website up to date. We have facilitated 4 house sales and 2 garage lease extensions during this reporting period. 2021 has seen the end of an extended repaint program, advancement of the EV changing project, a lot of activity in the gardens, play area, and preparing for the garage block resurfacing work. The gardens continue to be maintained by Allen and his team, and the windows are regularly cleaned by Mick.

Unfortunately, 2020/21 saw a number of garage break-ins and catalytic convertor thefts. Residents were quick to spot the illegal activity and report it to the police. Well-kept and maintained garage areas and grounds will discourage break-ins and other anti-social behaviour. Ensuring the garages are painted, the gardens tidied, bins are not left out, quickly removing fly-tipping, and tidying rubbish (especially after a fox-frenzy) all helps in this regard. We have also installed some trellis in

the southeast corner perimeter to discourage interlopers from climbing over the wall. We thank residents who regularly help with these odd jobs.

2. Garden's Report

It was lockdown and a gradual return to the new normal. The gardens are more important than ever. A space to enjoy, exercise and to meet up at a social distance. The benches were much used and migrated around the estate.

We all had problems with COVID. Not least the gardeners. Martin left to pursue his own business, Stewart also left, and Allen had personal and family problems. This meant at times Chris bore the brunt of the maintenance. When the need arose, Allen mustered his family and Fieldend was once again transformed. Some changes have been made, we started to rewild areas of the estate. The grass was allowed to grow longer, and paths were mown on the triangle and Burnt Corner. Wildflowers planted and log piles laid, all to encourage our native flora and fauna.

Trees were planted in the new year, sadly not all survived. We are committed to maintain the trees and replace where possible. The annual tree survey took place in March identifying any problems and the need for pruning, all of which must be approved by the council. This proved to be a lengthy process.

Another problem this year was with the oak trees on the border with Newland House. Oak Processionary Moth was found, the nest had to be removed and the trees sprayed. This was successful and to date no recurrence.

When we could we held our tidy days. In the autumn bulbs were planted, litter was picked and problem areas targeted. Keen gardeners took advantage of the excellent mulch in the storage area. Many thanks to all helpers. A special mention to Ray Pinches who waged battle with the foxes, to contain them and preserve the shrubs from their activities.

We now look forward to spring and a new beginning

3. Maintenance Report

The Entrance garage block tarmac was recognised to be in very poor condition and resurfacing was required. Initial preparation work was undertaken involving the re-landscaping of the over large walled tree garden which had the potential to block car access to several bays. Red's landscaping was contracted to remove about 50% of the base material and create a smaller oak sleeper type walled bed.

By summer of 2021 the iron fencing surrounding the children's play area was deeply rusted and uneconomic to either repair or repaint. Replacement new, galvanised, powder coated fencing was quoted at over £8000 supplied and installed. This was considered but further investigation revealed the possibility of sourcing second-hand railings and them being installed by the same reliable local contractor. A batch of suitable hooped railings was purchased from a salvage yard in Northern England, delivered, installed and repainted for approximately 50% of the cost of like for like new, with largely similar results.

It was thought unwanted incursions by unknown individuals had been occurring via a section of perimeter brick wall in the South East corner which is easily scalable. Shaun Betteridge and Ray Pinches kindly installed a section of trellis that creates a substantial barrier to casual crossing of the brick wall into or out of Fieldend. No incursions have been noted since its completion.

Various faulty and raised paving slabs have been re-laid to prevent trip hazards. A meeting in September with a council highways representative also resulted in several problematic slabs being rectified.

The garden pathway and entrance road electric lighting has proved almost completely reliable since the upgrade programme of previous years, only a faulty sensor light required the attendance of professional electricians.

As the delicate wooden frame windows of many residents' houses continue their slow decline to oblivion, the board recognises the huge challenge of sourcing affordable replacements. Throughout this period, we have explored cost saving options regarding window suppliers, specifically whether a bulk order of standard sizes could make substantial savings. We can report this remains an ongoing process but with some interesting possibilities in the near future. Watch this space.

EV Preparation

Having received a generally positive response from residents to the proposal of installing shared EV charging points on the estate, work on preparations began with various suppliers providing upgrades to existing garage electrics.

Painting Programme

By September 2020 Mark had fully completed 18 houses before rain prevented any more progress. When Mark returned in April 2021, 35 houses still required painting. Though Mark needed to return to Poland on occasion, with Tim monitoring work quality & Barbara Atherton once again masterminding resident communications, the final phase of painting was completed in good time. Considering the extenuating Covid effects of curtailed travel, requirement for social distance and isolation, plus severe paint shortages, the repaint has still been achieved to a good standard and on budget. The board hopes to engage Mark for the next cycle of painting in 2024.

Special mention and many thanks to Barbara Atherton who did all this time-consuming coordinating between Mark and the residents completely voluntarily.

4. Financial Report (Year ending 30.09.2021)

The 2020 repainting project was finally completed in October 2021. The total cost of the 2020 repainting, including the 'replacement of the garage gutters, garage fascia repairs and cleaning of garage roofs' (at a cost of £15,665) was £119,345 against a provision of £135,000. The £15,000 saving enabled us to fund the resurfacing of the tarmac in garage block 42-48.

We feel that it is prudent to continue to aim for a provision of £140,000 for the next repainting in 2024.

With electricity prices rising, we will look at other suppliers' tariffs, with a view to finding a deal that is to the best advantage for FRAL.

Our accumulated fund (general reserve) has increased from £22,928 to £25,122 as of 30th September 2021.

It is the board's intention to keep maintenance contributions, which were last increased on 1st October 2021, at £140 per month but, to keep them under review in light of the potential increase in the costs of maintaining Fieldend.

In conclusion

The Board is extremely thankful to residents who have aided and supported its work over the past year. Your continued support of Fieldend is essential for the smooth running of the estate and maintaining its very special community feel.

The Board is always keen to improve how it serves the Fieldend community and would welcome any suggestions from residents. Board member details are available on the newsletter and on the Fieldend website.

The Board submits this report and the accompanying Financial Statement to Shareholders for your approval and hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM.

For the Board



Sarah Dietz

Chair, Fieldend Residents Association Ltd

January 2022