



HOUSING NEWS

Lower Oldpark

February 2021. Lower Oldpark Community Association, 9-23 Avoca Street, Belfast BT14 6EN. Tel: 02890351334. Email: loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com

Courts' Project Starting

Work on the long awaited Lower Oldpark Courts' Environmental Improvement Scheme will start on Monday 8th February 2021.

The Department for Communities (DfC) told Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) that the scheme contractor, Lagan Construction, will start work on 8th February 2021. Work will begin in Liffey Court on this date.

Start dates for the other six courts (Bandon Court/ Bann Court/ Foyle Court/ Manor Court/ Shannon Court and 1-11 Shannon Street/ Southport Court) will be available after 15th February 2021 and LOCA will let residents know by way of a note through their door.

Work in the second court will begin a month after work starts in the first. Work in the third court will start a month after work starts on the second court. Work in each court will last three months.

The scheme involves the removal of existing hard surfaces and planted areas in each court and their replacement with new shared pedestrian/ vehicle surfaces.

Also, new pedestrian walkways will

ensure that there is wheelchair access to all homes. There will also be car parking areas, occasional trees and new street lighting.

LOCA has requested that, before work begins in each court, the contractor, Lagan Construction, provide residents with details such as:

- Confirmation of work start and end dates in their court.
- The type of work that will be carried out in each court and the order in which it will be carried out.
- Arrangements for residents getting from and to their homes.
- Car parking arrangements.
- Any health and safety information residents should be provided with.
- Who to contact if residents' have questions or problems.

For further information, contact Carol Curran at the Department for Communities (Building Successful Communities) on 028 9051 5004. During the work, you can also contact the Public Relations Officer for Lagan Construction, Steven Tate, on 078 25983100.

Bathroom/ Kitchen Replacement Scheme Complete

Phase Two of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's (NIHE) Lower Oldpark bathroom/ kitchen replacement scheme was completed on 3rd February 2021.

Work began on the first of 60 Phase Two properties on 12th October 2020 and the final scheme property was handed over on 3rd February 2021.

The bathroom/ kitchen replacement scheme involved the provision of new modern kitchen and bathroom facilities.

There is a yearlong snagging period from the date of the completion of work in each house. During this period, the contractor will fix any problems identified after work was completed.

If you have a problem with the work, you can contact the Lower Oldpark Community Association Housing Project Worker, Gary Hughes, on 028 96928293 or 028 90351334 or the NIHE Patch Manager, Martin McClure, on 028 95982761.

New Petrol Station To Start

Final plans are being prepared for the development of a new petrol station, new Spar retail unit and ten new three-bedroom private homes at the Cliftonpark Avenue/ Crumlin Road/ Landscape Terrace junction.

The developer is Landscape Enterprises Ltd which owns the existing petrol station and Spar at Landscape Terrace.

The sale of the open green space site by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to Landscape Enterprises, which is headed by Gavan Walls, went ahead in early November 2020. Work on the petrol station/ retail unit and the six new private homes in Cliftonpark Avenue (behind the new petrol station) will begin on 12th April 2021. The new houses are expected to be completed in November 2021. The new petrol station/ retail unit is expected to be opened in January 2022.

When these are finished, the developer will demolish the existing petrol station/ retail unit and build four new private homes on the site.

Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) understands that the scheme involves an investment of £3.5 million by Landscape Enterprises Ltd and the creation of 30 permanent new jobs in the petrol station/ retail unit.

Housing Advice Service

Help with housing problems is available from the Lower Oldpark Housing Project Worker, Gary Hughes:

Days: Monday to Friday.

Times: 8.30am – 11.30am and 1.0pm - 3.30pm.

Phone: 028 96928293 or 028 90351334.

Affordable Housing Scheme Nearing Completion

A Lower Oldpark affordable housing scheme is nearing completion, almost five years after planning approval was obtained in May 2016.

The five 3-bedroom homes at the junction of Oldpark Road and Cliftonpark Avenue are for sale for owner-occupation under the Fairshare equity sharing scheme.

The Fairshare scheme is similar to Co-ownership. You buy a share in the house and pay rent on the rest. Over time, you can buy additional shares. With Fairshare, however, you have to put down a deposit.

Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) will welcome completion of this small and long awaited housing

development.

It is hoped that building work by the contractor will be completed by mid-March 2021.

The cost of the new homes has been kept at a more affordable level through the provision of Housing Development Grant by the Department for Communities.

Development of the new housing by Apex Housing has been much delayed. The main reason is that it took approximately three years for Housing Development Grant to be developed and approved by the Department for Communities and the Department of Finance. This is despite the fact that no legislation was required.

Lower Oldpark Social Housing Scheme At Risk

Approval of the planning application for the development of 12 social homes in Lower Oldpark neighbourhood is at risk following consultation with NI Water.

The proposed housing development would be built on the open green space that runs along Manor Street, down Alloa Street and into the former Annalee Court behind 152 to 162 Manor Street.

Clanmil Housing submitted the planning application for eight houses and two bungalows in October 2020 following a community consultation process in August and September.

BCC Planning carried out a neighbour consultation process at the end of October 2020 and has been consulting with a number of organisations e.g. Roads Service and NI Water.

NI Water has raised concerns about the connections that Clanmil Housing is proposing to make to the existing surface water and foul water sewers in the area.

Lower Oldpark Community Association is working with Clanmil Housing to try and ensure that the issues are sorted out. If this doesn't happen, the new housing development will not take place.

It would also be unlikely that there would be any new housing development on the site or on the open green space at the peace wall in the near future. This would be a major blow to ongoing efforts to regenerate the Lower Oldpark neighbourhood.

LOCA Requests Lower Oldpark Alley Gates

Towards the end of 2020, there was a period of heightened anti-social behaviour, crime and civil disturbance in the Lower Oldpark neighbourhood.

In response to this, Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) identified a number of locations in the estate where the provision of alley

gates might help reduce these activities and help residents to feel more secure.

LOCA passed this information to the Housing Executive (NIHE) and awaits a response. At some of the locations, gate provision would be NIHE responsibility while at others it may be Belfast City Council responsibility.

Bonfire Site Development

Lower Oldpark Community Association (LOCA) is inviting residents' views on the future of the site bounded by the Oldpark Road peace wall, Mountview Street, Manor Drive and Manor Street. This area of open space is sometimes known as the Bonfire Site.

In the October 2020 issue of this newsletter, LOCA told residents that it had been in discussions with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) about the development of three-bedroom owner-occupier housing, including affordable housing, on the site. LOCA also invited feedback.

Before any development can take place, the NIHE has to complete an economic appraisal and get internal approval for this. An economic appraisal involves looking at possible future site uses and deciding on the best. Given the difficulty of getting NIHE support for a social housing scheme and the need for new housing to regenerate Lower Oldpark, LOCA proposed putting the site on the open market for sale and development with family, owner-occupier homes. There is the potential for bungalows on the site but this would have to be agreed with the appointed developer.

It is likely that between 25 and 30 new homes could be built on the site. This would be an important part of the regeneration of the Lower Oldpark neighbourhood. These new houses would replace the 37 houses in Mountview Court, Beechpark Street and Beechnut Place demolished by the Housing Executive about 15 years ago.

You can provide feedback in the following ways:

- Email: loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com.
- Facebook: @loweroldparkhousing.
- Write your comments on a piece of paper and leave it down to the Centre in Avoca Street. If there is nobody there, put it in the letter box.

LOCA Housing Advice Service

If you need help with a housing problem, contact the Lower Oldpark Community Association Housing Project Worker by:

- Phone 07713990976.
- Email loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com
- Facebook (private message) @loweroldparkhousing