



Queen Elizabeth Park

Residents' Newsletter – Autumn 2023

Dear Fellow Residents,

We have had a summer that has been hotter than normal but offset by plenty of rainfall. As a result we have seen good growth of the plants and our trees have not been too stressed. Thanks are due to our Gardening Committee and to Master Gardens and Dryad for their good work. With the disruption caused by the Pandemic almost behind us we had hoped for a return to a more normal existence. Regrettably the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, Cost of Living pressures and wider issues such as Climate Change mean we are operating in a new and different environment which is more challenging for most if not all of us.

We are grateful to Fran Miles and all those who helped to raise morale with the Coronation Celebrations and the recent Hallowe'en Trail, and there are others who are seeking to sponsor activities such as a Theatre Group. We are keen to encourage Community activities and have engaged with Local Councillors to facilitate this. But there have been several instances where there has been discord. In some cases this has become disruptive and has led to disagreements between neighbours; and Guildford Borough Council has been involved and issued a number of enforcement orders. This is regrettable and underlines the Board's concern that we should all consult and communicate with our neighbours should anyone wish to make changes to their homes.

In my last Letter I pointed out the strict conditions that exist regarding Permitted Development Rights. Recently further clarification was published on Hazelvine's Engage Portal (see back page). The responsibilities of Homeowners, to maintain their homes in good order, is also covered there. On the Portal there are also details of the "standard colours" and other useful guidance.

Communication is vitally important. We have a Facebook presence, and many use "Next Door", but please try speaking to your neighbours face to face if you have any concerns or wish to make changes that they may have an opinion on. Having considerate neighbours is something we can all wish for and we all have our part to play. Thinking of others when parking, for example, is something that can prevent great anger and distress. We all need to be mindful of those who are vulnerable or struggling with their lives and I'd be grateful if everyone could support that principle.

Finally I would like to thank the Board and Committee Members (all Volunteers) who give their time to help ensure that our Services are efficient and provide good value for money. And thanks also to our Agents, Hazelvine, and their contractors for the work that they do.

I close by extending very best wishes from the Board to you all for Christmas and the New Year and for good health and success in 2024.

Yours sincerely

Jim Blake

Chairman, Queen Elizabeth Park Residents Management Company



Gardening & Trees Committee: Chaired by Stephanie Sharpe

As we approach the end of the year, Committee members have recently met the gardening contractor to finalise details for end of season planting including replacements for some of the old and leggy shrubs, mainly Lavender and Hebe, and those damaged by last winter's heavy frosts. We won't be able to replace every tired and leggy specimen this year but plants are being logged as they are noticed by the gardeners and will be tackled in order of priority.

The work removing bamboo infestations has been largely completed and replanting has been, or will be, done where necessary. (See Infrastructure report.) Some repairs are required to the nearby lawns, and will be done before Christmas (we hope).

The gardeners will soon be occupied with leaf clearance and it is important that paths, roads and especially drains are kept clear from leaf litter. The noise from leaf blowing machinery is the source of occasional complaints but please bear with the gardening staff, they are obliged to clear the leaves and they are usually only a few minutes in any one location. Please also look out for the gardeners working in the roads with the leaf blowers, as they wear ear defenders and may not hear vehicles approaching.

We only have two full time staff to cover the whole Estate and they work very hard but simply can't do everything. If a weed pops up between gardening visits, please pull it up if it is niggling. It isn't realistic to expect the gardeners to break their schedule to attend for something minor.

There has been discussion about employing an additional Gardener to make a total of three. Overall, across the year, the cost per household would be relatively small and it is judged that the potential benefits would outweigh the expenditure. This has been raised in the past (2021 AGM) but failed to gain support. Despite the challenging times the Board unanimously supports this initiative and believes it would be beneficial to us all. The Board has asked Gardening to prepare a justification with costs for you to consider.

Generally, the Estate is looking good after another year of challenging weather conditions and the Gardening Committee will continue to keep an eye on things. Residents who want to report a gardening request or problem should continue to contact Hazelvine at gep@hazelvine.com, and copy gardening@qepark.co.uk.

Infrastructure Committee: Chaired by Jon Edwards

Infrastructure deals with the 'hard' structures and other items on the estate.

The project to resurface the paths on the "back green" (between Forster Road and Princess Mary Close) started earlier in the year and should be completed in early November.

Large bamboo infestations have been removed in two locations, and the work near some Forster Road houses also involved reconstruction of the hard landscaping. It now looks much better and has recently been replanted.

The street lights in Hopkin Close have all been converted to LED.

To discourage parking on the pavement, planters have been installed outside Alders vet surgery, and more may be necessary. Vehicles driving on to this area were causing danger for pedestrians and were damaging the paving, which is not constructed to bear such heavy weights.

Additional refuse bins have been installed close to QEP Centre.

All salt bins around the estate will be serviced and refilled as usual in November.

Email: gep@Hazelvine.com and infrastructure@qepark.co.uk

Stoughton – before the Army

When I moved to QEP in 2004 I didn't even know I was moving to Stoughton – I thought it was just the north of Guildford. It is interesting however to look at the history of the area. Most of us are probably aware of the Army connections (Stoughton Barracks and the WRAC headquarters where QEP now stands). But what about before the Army?

Actually, two hundred years ago Stoughton did not exist as a separate village or parish, unlike some of the other villages such as Merrow, which became suburbs of Guildford. The map below dates from the early 1800s and shows the parish of Stoke – no mention of Stoughton.



<https://www.archimaps.co.uk/victorian-old-map-ordnance-survey.html>

It seems that the name Stoughton was simply derived from a local family prominent in earlier centuries, the Stoughton or Stocton family. If interested more information is on this page <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol3/pp371-373>.

The railway was built between 1847 and 1868, and now serves as a useful landmark when looking at old maps and photographs.



From: <https://maps.nls.uk/view/101168798>

By Dinah Bisdee

The whole area was noted for its brickworks, as well as agriculture. The subsoil of much of the area is clay – Clay Lane road name being a clue to this! Agriculture provided the names of many of the roads in the area, such as Shepherds Lane, Byrefield Road. Farms and other landmarks are also commemorated in the names of areas like Bellfields or Fairlands.

The first map showing Stoughton as a separate village was drawn in the 1860s- 1870s.

A separate parish of Stoughton was created in the late 19th Century. Possibly as the Army moved in to the area, the population grew substantially and a new church was needed. The Wesleyan Chapel was founded in 1895, and Emmanuel Church, built around 1894, was consecrated in 1904.

If you're interested in finding out more about the area or about your own family history, the Guildford Institute, Ward Street, is an educational charity which often runs classes on such matters.

Hazelvine & AGM

There have been further changes at Hazelvine and those are bedding in. As part of the changes there is a new Residents' Portal, Engage, which all homeowners are encouraged to use and a system (FixFlo) for tracking work that has been reported and put out for completion. You can set up your login/ account at:

<https://engage.hazelvine.com/login>

More details and an update will be given by Hazelvine at the QEPRMC Ltd Annual General Meeting.

SAVE THE DATE

Please would all QEP owners support the **AGM which will be held in the QEP Centre on Wednesday 17 January 2024 starting at 7 pm.** The Papers will be circulated well beforehand and we're planning a 3 Phase Evening:

1. The Formal AGM
2. Updates from the Board and Hazelvine
3. To complete the evening, a social gathering probably with cheese and wine.

We have yet to decide whether it will be only face to face or whether there will be a need to livestream the evening.

Hazelvine contacts: Our present Estate manager is Patricia Carling
patricia.carling@qdime.co.uk *

General requests should be sent to:
qep@hazelvine.com, clearly stating your address. *Qdime = Hazelvine's parent company

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

QEP has, until recently, had a good community spirit. This is being threatened by a recent spate of individuals finding some fault with a neighbour, and reporting them directly to Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and/or Hazelvine (HV), which has led to them being issued with enforcement letters.

The complainants have chosen to remain anonymous, deliberately hiding behind the official bodies, letting officialdom enforce their complaints, whether justified or not. This is at best thoughtless, at worst inconsiderate and malicious.

Appealing directly (and anonymously) to HV or GBC has caused huge distress and bewilderment, resulting in one case of an immediate loss of employment, in another, the threat of eviction from their lodgings within seven days. They have been left stranded, fearful and desperate, with no redress.

As complainants to GBC/HV have chosen to remain anonymous, it is left up to those receiving such enforcement letters to wonder who has complained and why. Such actions contribute nothing to the harmonious running of the estate, leading instead to an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion developing.

The concern is that this type of action could escalate. We would ask people to think before they act. The decent and sensible thing to do, if you have a complaint against a neighbour, is in the first instance to approach them directly to discuss it with them. Often matters can be resolved at this stage. Only then should other bodies such as HV or GBC be brought in.

Communications around the Estate

QEP website: www.qepark.co.uk
(currently being updated)

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/queenelizabethparkguildford>

QEPRMC Board: hello@qepark.co.uk



be a good neighbour