

Netherne Management Limited



To: All Members, Netherne on the Hill

July 2017

This is Netherne Management Limited's second newsletter for 2017.

We send out all of our communications by email (from NMLupdates@gmail.com), to any member who is on our email distribution list. Emails will only be sent by blind courtesy copy to all recipients. If you would like to be added to our email distribution list, please complete your details by typing the following link in your internet browser: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NMLemails>

We have also just started up a Facebook group, just for NML members, as another communication channel. If you are on Facebook, please join the group - it is called "Netherne - NML Members".

Estate Security and CCTV

During July, NML became aware of a number of burglaries, attempted burglaries and anti social behaviour. We took immediate action to deter and prevent further disturbances by engaging a local private security company to carry out regular patrols from dusk until dawn. These patrols started on 21 July and will continue for a couple of weeks. We will then reassess the situation. There are also some general police patrols being conducted in Netherne in response to the recent vehicle and garage crime that we have seen. NML strongly discourages 'vigilante' patrols so please do not put yourself or others in danger.

The project to install CCTV at the entrance points to the village and vulnerable locations continues. This is a complex project and will be the most expensive project ever undertaken by NML. At both the 2016 and 2017 AGM there has been overwhelming support for CCTV to be fitted in Netherne. We know that the recent spate of crime in the village has led to heightened concern for our safety. The project has been moving forward, but it is not something that can be implemented overnight.

Six companies have shown an interest in providing CCTV in Netherne. Two have been discounted and the other four are in the process of completing site visits/technical surveys with a view to being invited to tender.

Alongside this, the support of Reigate & Banstead Council and Surrey County Council is being sought to use lamp posts as fixings and potentially draw power from. Other solar powered options are also being considered. NML are also in liaison with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to understand the due diligence that needs to take place plus our legal obligations.

Local Police update

NML meet formally with Reigate & Banstead Safer Neighbourhood Team every quarter. It so happened that the last meeting took place just as Netherne was experiencing a spike in crime. It will be no surprise to residents that the first six months of this year has seen an increase in crime in Netherne compared to the same period last year. Almost all of that increase was for 1 week in July (16th-21st) and whilst that has been alarming for us, compared to the rest of Surrey Netherne still enjoys a very low crime rate.

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The police have advised that there is no tangible link between the 'lights out' policy by Surrey County Council and the increase in crime. 11 areas of Surrey have this policy and 2 have seen an increase. However, we are working with the police to reverse this decision should we feel it necessary.

Operation Spearhead is a current burglary initiative being conducted by Surrey Police, aimed at proactively targeting burglars and reducing crime.

If you see something suspicious, call 999. For non-urgent matters, report crime online or phone 101. But we would suggest that seeing one or two people acting suspiciously at 2 o'clock in the morning warrants a 999 call. When calling 999, tell the operator that it is Surrey Police you are after as there has been confusion in the recent past by thinking Netherne is covered by the Metropolitan police. It is not.

Apart from using the online services to report crime, you can also use it to report 'intelligence'. You can also use this email: reigateandbanstead@surrey.pnn.police.uk Alternatively, ring CrimeStoppers on 0800 555 111.

With the recent spate of crimes relating to garages, there may have been forensic opportunities overlooked. The police ask all residents to remain vigilant and, if affected, to check everything carefully. For example, has a tin of paint been moved? Was something inadvertently dropped by the suspects? Were contents of your garage moved/touched in any way? This sort of information can change a crime from having no evidence and effectively not investigated to one where there are valuable leads.

Finances

Our finances remain healthy, with our reserves able to withstand the cost of large, non-regular repair and maintenance work, and the costs of improvements to the Estate, Village Hall and Leisure Centre. This will include significant costs to attend to the damp issues at the Village Hall, discussed further below. As a result of these and other costs (such as the CCTV project), our reserves are expected to fall significantly this year.

Our debt (amounts due from members who have not paid their service charges) remains under tight control. Most of our debt now rests with just a handful of members. We do find it surprising that some members still choose not to pay their service charges on time, preferring instead pay a higher sum including interest and our legal costs of debt recovery.

Village Hall

Works around the Village Hall to deal with the exterior damp issues are progressing, with our chosen architect consultancy firm Donald Install Associates at the helm. Since our March update which highlighted the multiple issues afflicting the building, a below ground survey was conducted on 23rd May which enabled specialist engineers to produce drainage drawings and a new drainage design. The drainage designs have been reviewed by professionals and have been approved as the most efficient solution to our drainage issues. We had a slight pause whilst we consulted the local council conservation officer for approval to fully proceed with the works. We now have approval, and schedules of the required works and specifications were issued to tenderers/contractors who will provide us with quotes for the work to be carried out. Donald Install are due to provide NML with a tender analysis report by the end of July, containing their recommendations as to which contractor should carry out the work, including costs.

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The hall lights have now been fixed and reconfigured to provide improved lighting options. Previously, we were only able to have all the lights or half the lights on, but the reconfiguration now allows you to switch on/off individual rows of lights.

Prior to the summer break, from 28th June, a new youth group began meeting in the Village Hall every Wednesday. The group has now had its pilot period, and we feel it has been a great success with a good number of children attending weekly. Over the course of the summer break we will be discussing with the organizers their ideas for moving forward with the youth group, with the aim of maintaining the youth group permanently.

Leisure Centre

The Leisure Centre continues to thrive, with a new monthly high for the number of attendees recorded earlier this year. Ongoing improvement works include treating damp issues, fixing leaky showers, new more powerful hairdryers, equipment upgrades and replacing the existing swimming lane rope. The classes remain a popular choice for users, with 2 classes now held in the village hall (on Monday and Thursday). A full schedule of activity is available via the Leisure Centre.

The Leisure Centre BBQ in May was a success, with over 60 attendees. Thank you to local residents who made it work with a few children's games, table tennis, the cooking, tidying up, raffle and after party! Watch this space for a potential second BBQ in September time...

Ciaran Murray has now left Netherne Leisure Centre and has moved to Whitgift (still with Nuffield Health). He has done a great job over the years, investing time in the gym and clients and we are sad to see him leave. However, he remains a local resident and an important member of our community. He was given a small send off in the Pembroke on 21st July and was presented with some vouchers on behalf of NML.

His replacement as leisure centre manager, Jason Beller, has started and NML are looking forward to working with him and the rest of the Nuffield team to continue to provide a valuable service to the community.

Hooley Footpath

Since the last quarterly update, you will no doubt be aware that the footpath lighting project came to fruition in April. We are sure everyone was delighted to see the pathway up from Netherne Drive illuminated, after such a long and tortuous process for all concerned. We were very glad to find an excellent contractor to take on and complete the works.

Unfortunately, not long after the completion of the top section of the path, three of the lighting bollards were vandalised by youths. This was preceded by some paint being thrown over several bollards a few days before. The damage to the three bollards was considerable and we had to turn off the power to the top section to ensure there was no danger to anyone.

We have tasked the contractor who completed the project to identify any ways by which we can further secure the bollards and he is due to present options to the Board in the next few weeks. Once we know what can (or cannot) be done to further reinforce and protect the bollards, we will replace the three damaged ones, as well as hopefully providing additional protection for the other bollards on the top of the footpath.

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The Cricket Pavilion

Since early in the year, we have been working to restore the cricket pavilion so that it can be used as a comfortable and versatile space for the village. With most of the work carried out by local contractors, we have seen the inside and outside completely repainted with new ceiling tiles, flooring and furniture being added to improve the inside facilities.

Additionally, the old, weathered decking area has been removed and the first section of patio tiles has been laid to replace it. A further extension of the patio area along the remainder of the front-side of the building is set to be laid in September.

As mentioned at the AGM, the cricket scoring shed (which is still used for storage purposes) now looks rather sad and dilapidated compared to the Pavilion. We have now engaged a local contractor to repair the shed, remove the remnants of the scoring board at the front of the shed, and replace with new wood panels, before painting it to match the Pavilion. We anticipate this work will also be completed before the end of September.

The pavilion is already being used to host a weekly chess and table tennis club (Wednesday evenings at 19:30) and several bookings for private hires (birthdays, anniversary parties etc.) have also been taken. If you are interested in hiring the Pavilion for a private event, please contact Laura Ritchie at SHW for further details (Email - lritchie@shw.co.uk).

At the AGM we shared with members that we had been approached by St. Margaret's to set up a community coffee shop in the Pavilion, a couple of days a week. Unfortunately, due to personnel changes at St. Margaret's, they are not able to take this project forward at the current time.

As the idea of a community coffee shop was very popular among residents, we have been talking with several interested residents to see if it would be possible to set up a similar venture ourselves. Whilst still early days, we are pleased to confirm that 4 residents have just agreed to take the lead on such a project and they are currently in the process of setting up what is known as a Community Interest Company (CIC). This CIC will have a not-for-profit business structure, that will underpin the efforts of the group to offer a coffee shop service in the Pavilion. The efforts of everyone involved in this will be completely voluntary, and NML will do all it can to support this group of volunteers as they strive to get this initiative off the ground.

We know that there will be great interest in this project and lots of support to make it a success for our village. More details will follow in the coming weeks as the team firm up their plans. As soon as an opening date is identified, we will be sure to communicate this to everyone.

Netherne Community Bus

The Netherne Community Bus is not funded by the service charge budget and is entirely reliant on fare income from passengers. The Bus Company is a separate company from NML. We include it in our updates as we know many Netherne commuters rely on this valuable service.

The Bus reached it's five-year anniversary in April 2017. It was purchased second hand and has served us well. However, with servicing and maintenance costs continuing to rise for this vehicle we have taken the decision to lease a new bus. The new bus won't be with us until October. In the interim, we have temporarily hired another bus. Feedback on the new (hire) bus has been very positive :-)

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Rubbish bins

Additional rubbish bins for around the Village Square and where the Netherne Bus picks up and drops off passengers, were requested by the Residents Association (NoTHRA) and these are due to be installed in the next couple of weeks. An extra bin will also be sited out the front of the Pavilion, so there really is no reason why people can't place their rubbish in an appropriate bin around the cricket ground area!

For dog walkers, you will have noticed that one of the bins around the cricket ground has fallen apart due to rust. A replacement bin has been purchased and it will be installed in the next couple of weeks.

Broadband

Although this is not an issue under NMLs control, we have been made aware of the challenges many people have faced trying to get BT Infinity (or equivalent) super-fast broadband services. To cut a long story short, the reason for this is that our Broadband cabinet/exchange is at capacity and it's simply been a case that as one user leaves or cancels their service, another resident gets to 'use' the vacant capacity in the cabinet.

An e-petition was raised by a member, which called on BT Open Reach to increase capacity in the village, which garnered over 180 signatures. This, alongside the persistence of many fellow residents, has helped to achieve a result with Open Reach telling us that they plan to add a second cabinet/exchange in December. We have also heard from another member that this may happen sooner than this, so let's all keep fingers and toes crossed that the issue is overcome well before then!

NML Directors and AGM

Being a director of NML is a very responsible, varied and time consuming role. However all Directors volunteer for the role of running the Company and making the village a better place to live, and we are not paid for the work we do.

The Annual General Meeting of Netherne Management Limited took place on Saturday 6 May 2017. Attendees fed back to us that it was another excellent AGM, but we were disappointed that the turnout was quite low. We are considering moving the next AGM to a weekday evening, in order to permit more of our members to attend. We will carry out a survey to understand members' preferences for the AGM date. Please watch out for the survey link, which will be sent out by email and also on our new Facebook group.

With best wishes

The Directors of Netherne Management Limited:

Steven Buczek Alex Rodell Rajen Shah Lee Sheldon Gary Smith