

# **Netherne Management Limited**

Company Number: 04026814

Registered Office: c/o Stiles Harold Williams, Lees House, Dyke Road, Brighton, BN1 3FE

## **Directors' Report for the year ending 31 December 2024**

We are issuing this Directors' Report in advance of our AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025. We hope it provides an informative and thought provoking read about YOUR village. We also hope that it will encourage members to make time to attend the AGM and take an interest in what is happening in the village.

The Report will be taken as read for the AGM, and we will use most of the AGM to take any questions members may have. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025.

### **The Directors of Netherne Management Limited:**

**Steven Buczek, Chris Ellis, Lucy Goldhawk, Rajen Shah, Lee Sheldon, John Stokoe**

**30 June 2025**

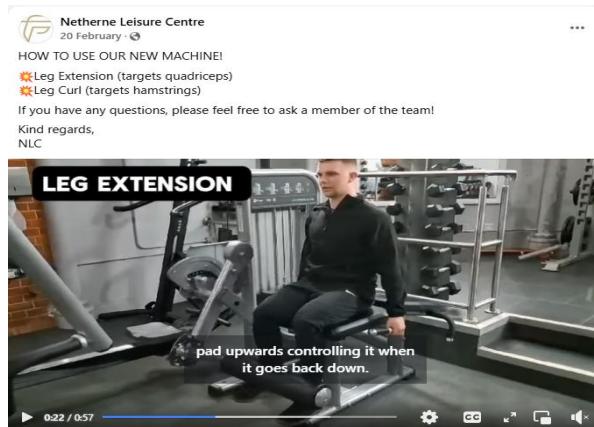
### **Finances**

- Our reserves at the end of 2023 were £653,000, and the draft 2024 accounts show that this figure has grown by nearly £100,000 during 2024. Our reserves are well supported by a number of sources of non service charge income, and in 2024 these were approximately split as: LC memberships (£30k), Exit Fees (£30k), Hall/Pool/Pavilion hire (£22k), Interest (£20k), Estate Rents (£11k), and Telephone Mast (£8k). These non service charge income streams were partially offset by around £25k of reserve expenditure in the year.
- Last year the Board flagged that the reserve subsidy on service charges could not continue indefinitely, and that members should therefore expect an above inflation increase on service charges when the subsidy ended at the end of 2024. The 2025 service charge was therefore 6% higher than the 2024 service charge.
- Estate Rents have been collected at the rate of £25 a year, but were due to increase to £38 a year from 1 April 2025. The Board decided to defer this increase until 1 April 2026.
- NML has been in the fortunate position of having a strong and well managed reserves position. Their existence means that whenever unexpected costs arise (such as new fans for the Leisure Centre) we do not need to ask members for increased / volatile service charges.
- In the absence of any capital expenditure, reserves could be expected to continue to grow at the rate of £100,000 a year. With the end of the reserve subsidy on service charges, various projects and improvements are now underway - such as the restoration of the Cupola at the Village Hall, a new storage facility for Jonno and new equipment for the gym (all discussed further below). Our aim is to maintain our reserves at current levels. This continued programme of investment into the village will ultimately only serve to increase the attractiveness of Netherne as a place to live.

### **Leisure Centre**

- Serving as a key community facility, the leisure centre continues to play an essential role in promoting health, wellbeing and social engagement within the village. The leisure centre has a membership base of approximately 1,900 active members.
- There is a monthly newsletter, which keeps members informed about upcoming classes, schedule changes, and other important updates. We also encourage members to keep an eye on the Leisure Centre Facebook page, where we regularly share announcements, reminders, and additional content to help keep our community engaged and up to date.
- **We remind all users that having an up-to-date photo on our system is a requirement for continued access to the centre. This measure is in place for health and safety reasons, ensuring we can accurately identify all users in case of an emergency. Members without a photo on file may have their membership temporarily suspended until this is resolved.**

- As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining and improving the gym facilities, we recently purchased a new leg extension and curl machine. A demonstration video showcasing how to safely and effectively use the equipment was uploaded to the Netherne Leisure Centre Facebook page, where it received positive responses and we will consider whether more of these videos would be beneficial to gym users.



- In addition, the upright bike has been replaced and we are due to take delivery of a Stairmaster, which will replace the little used Versa Climber. Looking ahead, while all of our equipment is still in very good condition it is aging and we aim to gradually replace individual kit over time to ensure continued investment in the gym's development and user experience. Such investment will be funded from NML's strong reserves position.
- The Air Handling Unit at the Leisure Centre suffered a major failure in February 2025, with all four fans reaching the end of their lifetime. We were concerned that we may have had to temporarily close the pool while we sourced new fans. Fortunately, our concerns were unfounded and the pool remained in operation for the best part of a month while four new fans were sourced and fitted. This was a large and unexpected expense, of around £25,000 - all of which was again met from NML's reserves.
- The changing rooms have recently been repainted, and several minor improvements have been made to ensure we continue to maintain a high standard of cleanliness and comfort for our members. In response to user feedback, the shower facilities have been reviewed and more durable, heavy-duty showers have just been installed, further enhancing the overall experience for our members.
- We are pleased to announce the launch of a new swim school, **Dip and Dive**, which recently began operating on Saturdays following the availability of a slot. We continue to regularly review all swim school programmes to ensure we are providing the highest standard of instruction, and value for money, for the village.
- Various accessories are available to purchase in the gym. These include weightlifting belts, resistance bands and other training aids designed to support members in achieving their fitness goals. Also available are a selection of protein bars and shakes offering convenient post-workout nutrition options for our users.

## Estate

- You may recall that last year we shared plans to turn a recently felled tree trunk into a wood carving. We ran a Facebook poll asking members which animal the sculptor should create, and the overwhelming favourite was an owl. We are pleased to say the project was completed in 2024 — so keep an eye out for *Oliver the Owl*, who can be spotted from the pathway starting at Bowen Way, running behind the properties on Beckett Road and up to the children's playpark.



- We continue to see improvements around the issue of litter at the Village Shop. However, it should be noted that the shop operator is not a tenant of NML and therefore we have no direct powers or influence over how he operates the business; we can only seek to share issues of concern and to provide constructive feedback.
- In September, a new and specialist contractor was involved in cutting several fields (2, 3, 5 and 7) in line with our cutting plan, to help control the goat's rue infestation. While significant progress has been made over recent years in reducing the amount of goat's rue in the village it will remain a constant challenge as it is almost impossible to completely eradicate it. This work will continue into 2025 and beyond.
- We also approved the construction of a new storage facility for the Estate Manager's equipment (which will be capable of housing a bigger mower which we intend to source in 2025) alongside existing assets such as the buggy. Having considered various possible sites for the new storage facility, we concluded that the best location was behind the Pavilion. This initiative is currently going through the planning process and is expected to start construction in late 2025.

### **Boxers Wood**

- The Board reviewed the offer from the current owners of Boxers Wood, which granted NML first refusal to purchase the land before it was to be listed on the open market. Key concerns included the £200,000 asking price and the limited utility of the land, which is deemed to have little practical value. Ownership would also bring ongoing maintenance responsibilities — particularly tree management — leading to increased service charge costs for residents. Furthermore, the land would be an illiquid asset with low resale potential.
- While preventing potential future development was acknowledged as the only possible advantage of ownership, the Board noted that all previous planning applications had been refused. The most recent planning consultation received around 140 objections, including a formal one from the Surrey Hills Planning Advisor — significantly reducing any realistic prospect of development.
- Taking all these factors into account, the Board unanimously decided to decline the offer to purchase Boxers Wood.

### **Pavilion**

- Following our insurance company's inspection, it was confirmed that the Pavilion roof was in poor condition, with signs of possible water ingress. After obtaining three quotes for a full roof repair, Blackhawk Roofing was instructed to carry out the work, which was duly completed in March.
- The Pavilion Café continued into its seventh year of operation. A wonderful group of residents got together in June to sand down and repaint the benches out front, with a reward of drinks and pizzas as a thank you!



- The Pavilion remains a popular venue for groups to meet, including the Netherne Classics Group, which meets up most Mondays for mid-morning coffee. We are pleased that this group has continued to be a success and want to thank Marie Robertson in particular, for her efforts in sustaining this initiative.
- Salford's Cricket Club once again came back to Netherne for a third year, hiring the pitch and Pavilion for weekend and mid-week games throughout the season.

### Village Hall

The Hall provides a regular venue for various groups including Drama classes, Dancing, Badminton, Table Tennis, Pickle Ball and 3 fitness classes. It also serves as Netherne's polling station, and hosts birthday parties and the ever-popular Nothra organised events such as Bingo and Quiz nights.

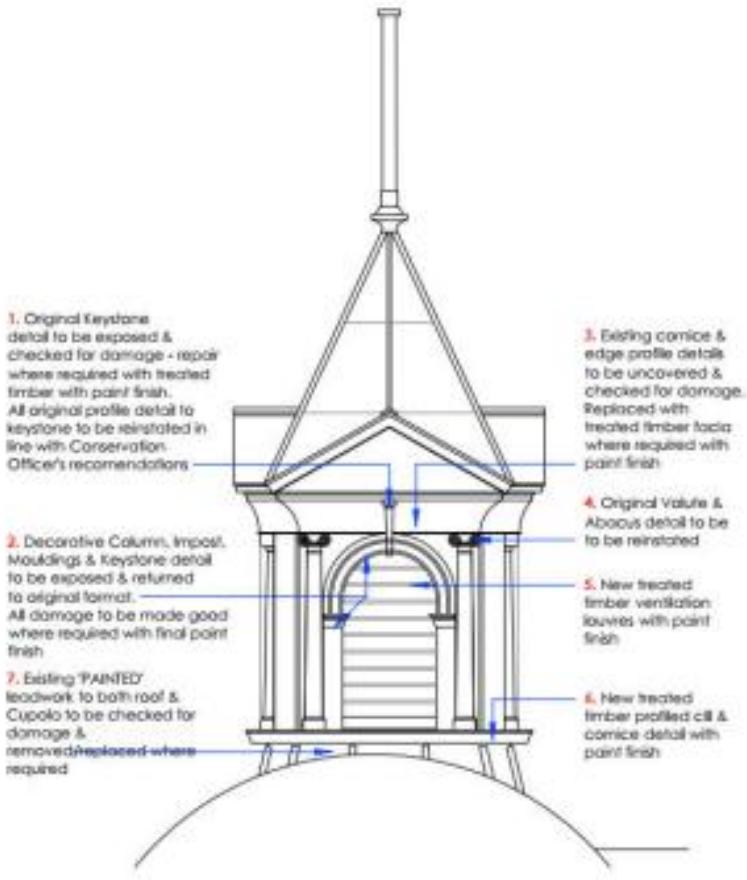
In response to various requests for an automated booking system, we have been developing a platform called "Hallmaster", which is an online booking system. This will cover both the Village Hall and the Cricket Pavilion, and is currently under trial with a few residents. It is then due for general release in the next month.

### **Cupola Restoration Works**

We flagged in last year's Directors Report that the Hall Cupola works had been on hold for some time, but accepted that the Cupola could not just be left to deteriorate further.

We therefore commissioned some initial scoping works by a surveyor, with a view to bringing the existing Village Hall Cupola Ventilation Turret back to its original format, including restoration of original features, following unauthorised works carried out without Local Authority or Conservation Officer approval. The diagram below highlights the key repairs and changes required.

Following approval of our plans by the Conservation Officer, a tender exercise is underway for the proposed works with four specially selected firms. Three of these firms have advised that they are very interested and have visited the site to price up. We have received one price thus-far and have agreed to extend the tender deadline to the end of June to allow the other two firms to submit their tenders.



### Planned Village Branding & Website Enhancement:

The Board is currently in the process of reviewing Netherne's branding and our current online presence. This marks the first collective evaluation of how our community is visually and digitally represented. Currently, a mixture of styles and colours is used across signage and the website, which presents an inconsistent image of our village.

With several new housing developments emerging nearby, each showcasing cohesive, professionally designed branding, it is important that Netherne is also positioned as a premium and desirable location.

We will share progress on this activity as we refine our requirements and once a vendor has been selected.

### Thanks

We would like to end this report by thanking various people whose work and efforts help to make Netherne the great place that it is! Firstly to former director Lee Ronan, who left the village during 2024. We are glad to welcome Lucy Goldhawk onto the Board who takes over director responsibilities for the Leisure Centre.

Also thanks to our Estate Manager Jonno, ably assisted by Graham Stobart, for keeping the grounds and all our facilities as smart as ever.

Also thanks to Tom Skilton and all the staff at Total Fit, for all of their great work throughout the year at the Leisure Centre.

And final thanks to Rosalind Dunning-Earp and all of the team at Netherne on the Hill Residents Association (NOTHRA) for everything that they do for the village.