



Nether Edge Management Company

## Quarterly Newsletter October 2013

Welcome to the first of our planned quarterly updates on what the Board has been doing.

This is part of the Communications Policy which has been redrafted since the website went live and will shortly be uploaded. The Decision Log will also be posted on the website on a quarterly basis.

As you will see the Board has now adopted the Nether Edge Living logo which will appear on all communications.

A significant amount of time has been spent in the last three months formulating a document on Board Governance. This covers all aspects of Directors' statutory duties and responsibilities, and includes a Code of Conduct. All existing and new directors will be required to adhere to this and formally accept the terms therein.

The contract with our Managing Agents, Omnia, is due to end 31 December 2013 and notice of termination has been given. A performance review has been undertaken by the Board and negotiations on a new contract for 2014 will commence shortly.

A petition was received in respect of changes to the leisure suite/estates office opening times and this has been subject to in depth consideration by the Board. The full response is available on the Residents' Forum on the website – see Changes to Leisure Suite Opening Times - and is also on the Estates Office notice board.

Since the AGM, we are pleased to announce that three shareholders - Carolyn Rawling, David Carlin and Jonathon Seaton - have offered their services and have been appointed as Directors. We now have a very representative Board: male/female, house/apartment owners, landlords, young/old and somewhere in the middle!

A new email address has been set up so that the Board can deal more efficiently with resident queries: [nemcboard@outlook.com](mailto:nemcboard@outlook.com).

The topics for each of these Newsletters will vary from issue to issue in order to reflect the diversity of the Board's work.

### **NEMC WEBSITE**

The website has been up and running now for four months now.

The public side of the site has information and photographs on the development - for example, there are archive photos from when the hospital was demolished and the early stages of the build.

You'll need a login to visit the "Residents' only" section. Here you'll find loads of information and articles such as Recommended Trades People; Events; Residents' Forum and a Marketplace for buying and selling stuff.



Nether Edge Management Company

Just a quick reminder that if you haven't got your personal login for the website then either call in to the Estates Office or email: [netheredge@omniaestates.com](mailto:netheredge@omniaestates.com)

Once you have registered you'll be able to upload your own content and contribute to any discussions.

You'll find the website at [www.netheredgeliving.co.uk](http://www.netheredgeliving.co.uk)

## **FINANCE & INSURANCE**

This Group works closely with our Managing Agents, particularly Omnia's Facilities Manager based in the Estates Office. Simone's responsibilities for the management of the estate as a whole include: assessing work which is required, identifying appropriate contractors, negotiating prices and timescales, long-term planning and cost analysis, monitoring performance of contractors, and her contribution within the Group is invaluable. She is actively involved in budget setting and monitors expenditure against budget very closely.

The Group maintains regular contact with Donna, Omnia's Service Charge Accountant, and her Assistant, Alex, who has taken on responsibility for debt collection and negotiation of utility contracts.

The half year Budget Review was presented to the Board in August and the third quarter Budget Review will be ready for consideration by the Board in November. In between, comprehensive monthly reports are submitted, drawing attention to any issues.

On completion of consideration of the Budget Review, work will commence on the preparation of the 2014 Budget.

Much work has been done as part of a comprehensive Review (which will be published on the website when completed) including assessment of expenditure requirements over the next 10 years, to ensure that contributions to Reserves are set at the correct level.

We work closely with Omnia to ensure arrears of service charge debt do not build up. At the beginning of this quarter, there was only one major, longstanding debt and this has now been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. The position now is that all service charges for this year have either been paid or are being paid by monthly standing order or other payment plans, with the exception of a small number which are in the course of being sold.

For 2013, only one service charge demand was sent out with the Budget, but this created some problems at the half year stage. For 2014, it is intended to offer leaseholders the option to receive service charge demands and associated paperwork by e-mail. This would save time, paper and postage. Copies of Budgets and Statements of Service Charge Income & Expenditure will also be posted on the website.



Nether Edge Management Company

## **GARDEN & GROUNDS**

As part of the comprehensive Facilities Review being undertaken to establish expenditure requirements over the next 10 years, we have begun this autumn to try and establish what work is needed to ensure that the gardens and grounds will continue to enhance the estate, and give pleasure to residents and visitors. Two major strands of work have been identified:

**Tree pruning:** we have over 120 trees on the estate, and they need regular and careful pruning to ensure that they do not outgrow their locations, and that any diseased or damaged wood is removed. This is specialist work requiring a tree surgeon, and hence costly. Since there are Tree Preservation Orders on the majority of the trees on site we need to have relevant permissions before any major work can be done.

**Replanting:** much of the original planting is now past its best and needs replacing. In many areas the original scheme was unimaginative and plants used were unsuitable for the environment. A planned regeneration scheme is being developed, but substantial quantities of good topsoil will be needed, as in many places the underlying builders' rubble is all too apparent. Some areas will be laid to lawn, to give the trees more space. And in some areas the lawns need re-turfing or replacing with gravel where grass is not thriving.

## **PARKING & SECURITY**

This Group was created by amalgamating the working party established in 2012 to look at all aspects of security, including the vehicular gates, and the Group which was set up early this year to develop a parking policy for implementation by Omnia staff based in the Estates Office.

**Parking:** The parking policy was implemented on 10 June 2013 and is proving effective as a result of the hard work of the Omnia staff here on a daily basis. The Group meets regularly to monitor the situation, discuss any issues and agree action to be taken in respect of persistent/recalcitrant offenders. Some additional parking spaces have been created. The Parking Policies and relevant Lease Covenants and Clauses are available on the website for reference.

**Security:** The Group continues to act to maintain an environment which, whilst safer than a public street, will carry what is considered an acceptable level of risk. Some Guidance Notes on Crime Prevention will shortly be posted on the website and flyers on vehicle crime prevention have been distributed.

Reports of local crime which may affect our development are provided on a weekly basis by the local Police, with whom we have established close working relationships.

The CCTV system and Estate lighting are regularly checked to maintain standards.

A Neighbourhood Watch Scheme specifically suited to our Estate is being developed. However, it is essential that all residents accept their responsibility to report any suspicious activities or individuals and to take sensible precautions to ensure that our vehicles and properties become increasingly less attractive to criminals.