



# CMMC

## Newsletter June 2019

It has been a while since our last newsletter and CMMC has been busy in that time, working with residents, Firstport, Cholsey Community Development Trust (CCDT), Homes England, the District Council and others to continue with the improvement and running of our development. We have also been building a website to provide a focal point for residents to find out about Cholsey Meadows.

There continue to be some challenges on the development which we hope we have covered below (some of these have also been posted on our Facebook page, along with pictures). Many of these issues can easily be resolved, without the need to spend additional funds, as they mainly need us all to be good neighbours and ensure we continue to live in a safe, healthy and beautiful environment.

### Website

- The website will launch this month. It will give you access to all the groups we work with, plus information about Cholsey Meadows, CMMC, Firstport, Cleaver, SOHA and Cholsey Parish Council. There will be maps showing bin collection points and visitor parking; information about street lights, dog poo bins, police liaison and all the contact details you need.
- We plan to release Phase 1 with basic information, and we invite residents to use the Contact Us page to tell us what you think of the website and what you would like to see included.
- The website address is [www.cholseymeadows.org](http://www.cholseymeadows.org) so save this in your favourites and we'll announce the launch date soon.

### Waste Management – Top 'Hot Spot'

- Bin collection points continue to create significant problems in some areas, such as Howell Court, Ruttle Close and Woodward. Despite all our entreaties and our posts on Facebook, a handful of residents are clearly choosing to ignore the problems they create.
- Every item that does not fit into the correct bin has to be removed by us. The cost of this additional work will be paid for by every resident in extra service charges.
- Under the Waste (Household Waste) Duty of Care Regulations 2005, householders are required to take reasonable measures to ensure their household waste is disposed of correctly; the Council can take legal action against those who fail to do this, or who flout the Regulations.
- Items of furniture, toys and larger items can be taken away by the council if residents ask for this service.
- Alternatively, the recycling centre at Oakley Wood is only ten minutes away at the top of Crowmarsh Hill.
- Finding a solution to this problem is not straightforward. The best solution is for residents to take responsibility for their waste management, to make sure their bins contain the correct items and ensure that none of their own rubbish is left on floors, or at risk of falling on floors.
- Several residents have suggested we install CCTV in the problem bin collection areas. We have looked into this; however it is very expensive to install the type of system that can constantly record activity. We also need to be conscious of privacy laws.
- We are very grateful to residents who kindly take other people's waste to the recycling centre, but this should not become the norm, so we ask every resident to consider the risk to your own health and safety which careless waste disposal creates.
- Putting black bin bags in green bins means that the bins will not be emptied.



## Poo Bins and Poo Bags

- We have received reports that a lot more dog poo and bags are being left around the development, especially the link road and around the cricket area. There are two dog poo bins, both in Ferry Lane, the first just beyond the houses on the Lane and the other at the bottom of the Lane by the River. Please use these or take your bags home with you – they can be placed in the grey rubbish bins.

## Garden Work

- The two men who work tirelessly here are making sure that everything is looking so much better, and we can all be proud that we live in such a beautiful place. This is partly because of the way our Victorian predecessors planned parks such as ours. 100 acres is a large area to take care of, and we hope that residents acknowledge the great work being done by our gardeners.
- This year we will be planting new trees to replace those felled last season. We had to do this to comply with the trees' preservation orders. We are also managing a major tree survey, looking to plan necessary work over a ten-year period.
- Some shrubs and flowers have died over the last couple of years – either as a result of the extreme heat last summer or because some were poorly planted in the beginning. We want to include a replacement plan in next year's budget. However, always considering your service charge, if anyone who has an allotment is interested in providing plants or shrubs, please get in touch at our email address or via Facebook.
- You may have noticed the livery change on our landscape gardeners' vans – Nurture Landscapes Ltd acquired Gavin Jones recently. We, and our Firstport Property Manager, Hayley Downey, have been working alongside them to ensure a smooth transition, and to review the development so as to identify priority areas for next year's budget. Nurture has provided some new ideas for us to consider, such as bee keeping, and compost bins using garden waste from areas within our development.
- The very sorry looking planters at the Ratcliffe Court/Rotherfield Road entrance are to have some TLC. Two of the planters have been damaged carelessly, so we are following up the information we have to recover the cost of replacing them. Thank you to Thomas Homes for sponsoring the replacement plants as a goodwill gesture for any unplanned inconvenience during their building phase. *We will ask Nurture to check on the watering of these plants; however it would be really helpful (and much appreciated) to have a couple of residents who would also be happy to do this. Please contact Liz Irving on the email below if you can help.*

## Visitor Spaces and Non-Designated Parking

- Several households have more cars than they have allocated spaces on the site; they are therefore permanently using Visitors' spaces (clearly marked with a 'V'). This means that genuine visitors cannot find parking.
- In certain areas of the development residents have worked out a system for parking their cars so as not to inconvenience their neighbours (e.g. telling neighbours when they are away so their spaces are free to use, not permanently parking in a visitor space etc.).
- We have had complaints of a handful of households that have in 4+ cars parked on the development – please arrange to park considerately and please consider off-site parking.
- There has been a notable increase in the number of cars parked outside designated parking areas, particularly on entrance roads, in front of houses or half on the pavement. The main problem areas are:
  - Villa Close (next to the Chapel)
  - The entrance to the development via Ratcliffe Court/Rotherfield Road. This is particularly dangerous as it is the main entrance for emergency vehicles.

- There needs to be access, and space to turn, for emergency vehicles at all times. The roads are not wide enough for cars to be parked on both sides of the road – there is simply not enough room, either for an emergency vehicle to pass freely, or for cars to pass each other safely. Please do not be the person who is responsible for an emergency vehicle being delayed or stopped from reaching the person or persons in need. (Fire engines ‘take no prisoners’ if they are on their way to a life-threatening fire, and can do considerable damage to a less sturdy parked vehicle!)
- Please park in a designated parking space or where there is enough room. Short term stays for the purpose of loading or unloading are of course perfectly reasonable.

### Speed Awareness

- Some cars (and vans) are driving much too fast on the development - the speed limit for the development is 10 m.p.h.
- The speed limits were decided with advice from the police, and are there as a warning - to avoid accident. Please be mindful that for most of the time there are children about, and please keep to the speed limit.
- Please take extra care at the ‘crossroads’ of Rotherfield Road, Southby Close and the link road. This is a blind crossing, where we advise drivers to come to a stop before proceeding.
- If you notice any delivery vans or couriers speeding please contact us and we will inform their companies.
- In view of incidents reported to us, we feel that there is a need to add speed bumps on certain roads to remind residents and deliveries that there is a speed limit. This will be achieved quite cheaply and easily. We are also reviewing the use of red lines in areas where parking in undesignated areas is causing a hazard and restricting access for emergency vehicles.

### Pot Holes

- We are aware that major repairs are required to the large pot holes, especially on the central entry road leading to the Fairmile Building. This road is yet to be handed over to us by Linden Homes.
- Repairs to these roads are part of an agreed snagging project to be carried out by Linden Homes before full handover can be completed.
- Firstport and CMMC are liaising closely with Linden Homes to ensure that they fulfil their obligations to provide a road that is of the standard that is expected and free of pot holes.

### Children Playing

- Can we please ask that parents ensure that their children know road safety procedures, and ensure that they are very careful on the roads. Also, please try to clear up any mess that is left behind. We would ask parents and children alike not to disturb the piles of logs that have been left in various areas around the estate – we are trying to help our local eco-system recover from years of neglect!
- There are areas designated for play; please use these for preference.
- It has also been reported that the younger members using the playground are being bullied by groups of older children. This is clearly totally unacceptable and we hope you will agree that everyone on Cholsey Meadows should adopt a Zero Tolerance attitude towards bullying of any kind.

## TV and Satellite

- Oxford Aerials have completed a survey of all the TV connections so they now have a good understanding of which cables are where. They have recommended some remedial work, so that we have a more efficient working system. Once this is completed, we will be able to advise residents (who have waited patiently – thank you!) how to install Sky Q.

## Thomas Homes Work

- Work is progressing on the conversion of the former Farm Buildings at Ratcliffe Court into 10 residential plots, 2 offices, and 2 retail units. The 2 retail units are under offer subject to legal documents being completed as a hair salon, and a café / shop from a local business that also operates The Cartshed in Crowmarsh. The offices are about 500 sq. ft each and are available for let by contacting Thomas Homes on 01635 244 144. The remaining 1 and 2-bed residential plots are available to buy from £235,000 by contacting Thomas Homes on 01635 244 153. Further details are available on [www.thomashomes.co.uk](http://www.thomashomes.co.uk).

## Budget 2019/20

- During our planning for the 2018/19 budget, we were very aware that several residents were concerned about the annual increases, so we took the decision not to increase residents' 2018/19 Service Charge. This meant that we had to remove several items from the budget. We have also been monitoring spend very carefully this year, reviewing supplier contracts to ensure we are receiving the best service and value for money. We work alongside our managing agents, Firstport, and particularly our Property Manager, Hayley Downey, to ensure we receive competitive quotes for all works.
- We will always aim to keep any future increases in service charges reasonable. However, we now need to move this year's 'maintenance' approach to a more proactive, 'development' approach.
- We manage 100 acres (and over 650 trees, many with Preservation orders), 360 plus properties and the infrastructure of roads, lighting etc. so we want to ensure the development is always kept in good order. As residents, we recognise that, as the site ages, we must continue to enhance where we live, which in turn will enhance the value of your property. We also need to build up reserves in the budget, to cover large future projects such as roads' resurfacing, car park matting, bay numbers etc. as well as unknown risks.
- During June and July we are obtaining quotes for maintenance and improvement items; we will be considering all options in our planning for the new Service Charge budget, which starts on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2019.
- We want to hear from all residents as well. What suggestions do you have to enhance the development? We will be posting a survey on the new website identifying what we believe are priority areas and asking for your feedback. The survey will also invite you to identify any further items you would like included. If you prefer to receive a paper copy of the survey, please email us and we will deliver it to your home address. You will be able to drop your completed survey into the CCDT office at the Great Hall for our collection.
- Cholsey Meadows will be fully occupied once the Thomas Homes developments are complete. This means that 2019/20 will be our first complete accounting year so we will be able to benchmark the budget with actual figures in all our future budgeting.

If you have a concern regarding the grounds here at Cholsey Meadows, your first point of contact is Firstport Customer Service [help@firstport.co.uk](mailto:help@firstport.co.uk) or 0333 321 4080 and it will then be passed on to our Property Manager, Hayley Downey to follow up. Hayley attends the monthly CMMC Board meetings, at which she advises us about outstanding items or issues of concern.

*Liz Irving*

Liz Irving  
 Chairman CMMC