

LIVING AT FAIRWAYS

MAY 2012 NEWSLETTER

WELCOME

The Directors would like to extend a warm welcome to all new residents of the Fairways Estate. We do hope that you will enjoy living here as much as we do. If you need a copy of 'Living at Fairways' please ask the managing agent for one. We spent many hours updating it so we hope that it will answer almost all of the everyday questions you may have.

KEVIN HUNT

It is with much sadness that we report the death on 7 May of Thamespoint resident Kevin Hunt, husband of Patsy. Kevin served for many years on the committee of the Fairways Residents' Association and always showed a keen interest in the upkeep of the Estate. Patsy has asked for privacy at this difficult time. Funeral arrangements will be announced later.

PAUL SODEN

We extend our sympathies to Danuza Soden and her family for the sad passing of Paul after a long illness. Paul had been a Director of FEL for several years, and brought his own robust contribution to all our business: this is much missed, but we are glad that Danuza herself may be willing to serve on the Board in his place. As of today the Board consists of three Thamespoint residents and two from the houses. We are always open to new energy, ideas and wisdom on the Board, and encourage you all to consider joining us, even for a temporary period of a year.

MANAGING AGENTS

And speaking of management, as you now know, and following an intensive interview process, the Board has appointed GCS Property Management, based in Weybridge, to be FEL's new managing agent. After the frustrations of the past couple of years which were felt on both sides, we are looking forward to a fruitful, interactive relationship with GCS. It is a particularly challenging period for the Estate, specially for the flats, because of the number of major projects which need urgent attention. The Board was reassured that the new agents would approach those challenges with enthusiasm and dedication.

As with any relationship, we will take a little time to get to know each other. However Carol Guthrie, whom some of you will remember when Bartholomews was managing the Estate a few years ago, will be our key contact at GCS. Carol comes from a family of North London developers and has spent her working life in the management field, attaining a BSc(Hons) degree in Surveying and Estate Management.

She is a founder member of the Institute of Residential Property Management and worked with Countrywide and later Bartholomews where she first provided services for the Fairways Estate. Currently Business Development Manager for GCS Property Management, she is delighted to have the opportunity once again to manage our Estate.

Carol has a grown-up family, two grandchildren and enjoys walking, riding, visits to the ballet and fine art, dividing her time between Weybridge and Dartington on the beautiful River Dart in Devon.

Please do say hello to Carol if you see her around the Estate.

GAS UPDATE

Residents in the flats will be delighted to learn that the essential remedial gas works, which started in March 2010, are now completed. The works took far longer than anticipated, but we were in the hands of Southern Gas, whose subcontractor Morrisons did not exactly improve their reputation for their lack of reliability and speed of action during those long months. In fact, such was the disruption to Thamespoint residents that Southern Gas compensated the Estate to the tune of £2000. The works, and subsequent making good, cost the Estate absolutely nothing financially even if one or two of us have a few (more) grey hairs to show for it and experienced a serious sense of humour loss at the time.

FIRE RISK

One of the major projects which has to be undertaken this year in the flats is to satisfy the current requirements of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

The flats are now designated 'high-rise' by the Planning Authority and as such are subject to stringent regulation. No work has been done in this area since the flats were built some forty years ago and as you can imagine there is a lot to be updated so that they are considered safe.

Extensive meetings have taken place between the Fire Officer, the technical director of C.S Todd (the company which prepared our Fire Risk Assessment) and members of the Board, and recommendations, which are mandatory, were made. Once a contractor has been appointed, which will happen very soon, work will begin almost immediately and must be largely completed this summer in order to comply with the Fire Officer's deadlines.

The contractor will be in touch with each Thamespoint resident so that arrangements/alterations to individual flats can be undertaken. Some of the work will of necessity result in the need for redecoration which will give us a good opportunity to freshen and enhance the appearance of the lobbies.

HOSEPIPE BAN

It can't have escaped anyone's notice that despite the very soggy weather we have been having a hosepipe ban is in operation now and for the foreseeable future. This affects the Estate in two ways: the gardens will have to be watered using buckets and watering cans, and our swimming pool will have to be topped up in a similar way.

Following a couple of years of loving care and attention from Eugene, our gardener, and his crew, as well as other green-fingered Estate-dwellers who tend some of the beds, the gardens this Spring were looking lovely. But a dry summer will be challenging: there are numerous new shrubs and other plants which will need a lot of water and Eugene only works on the Estate on Fridays, when watering will be his priority. So a plea: if you see a plant which is in dire need of a drink, please give it some water or point it out to Eugene or Peter the caretaker. We don't want our plants to wither away for lack of attention.

The pool is now open. Keeping the water in the pool at a reasonable level until it closes again on 30 September will be a similar challenge to keeping the gardens watered. As is the case every year, there will be water loss through evaporation so Peter will try to keep it topped up using buckets. Another plea: splashing water over the sides is neither overly 'green' nor socially very friendly, and is actually forbidden in the rules for pool use. Given the current situation we would particularly ask you to please abide by these rules to prevent further water shortages - and a dry pool!

WEBSITE

FEL's new website is now live thanks to Thamespoint resident Ron Stanley and can be found at: www.fairwaysestates.co.uk. On it you will find contact details of the Managing Agent, the 'Living at Fairways' regulations, a gallery of photos, previous newsletters and the like. At this stage the website is not interactive but we hope this may change over the next few months.

PARKING

As we all know, there are only a limited number of spare parking spaces for visitors at Thamespoint. Please have consideration for those who genuinely need to make use of them. Every flat has either an allocated garage or car port. For those who are fortunate enough to have a garage, we would be grateful if you would use it for your car as well as for storage, and not just for storage only.

ALTERATIONS

Whether you are in Thamespoint or one of the houses, please remember to check section 10 of "Living at Fairways" (now available on the website) before undertaking any alterations. Applications for approval to make alterations need to be submitted (section 10.3) to the managing agents as far as possible in advance of starting work.

Whilst you are renovating your flat, please arrange with Peter to use the lift and floor protective coverings which are available to prevent dust and damage in the common parts.

And please be kind to your neighbours and clear up any mess which your contractors might make. This is not something that is undertaken by the common parts' cleaners.

THAMESIDE BUILDING PROJECTS

The new Bungalow which is starting to take shape on the vacant site at 6 Thameside is not part of the Fairways Estate, but of course has high visibility to most of us as we pass by. In case you don't know, the property is being developed by Miles and Tina who live at 13 Thameside and although the initial stages of the work have taken them longer than intended, we understand that they expect it to be complete by October when hopefully we shall see an elegant upgrade of a corner which has been an eyesore for many years.

Number 14 Thameside, the end of terrace which looks over the slipway, is at last ready for a long-overdue major renovation thanks to Richard and Cecile who currently live at 8 Thameside. The plans have been approved not only by Richmond Council but by us as FEL directors. There will be inevitable visual and sound disruption especially for the external works, but we understand that the project is expected to also be complete by October when the renovation will provide a major uplift to this pivotal area of the Estate.

JUBILEE CELEBRATION DAY

Since it only happens once a century, the suggestion from one or two residents of holding a Jubilee party is fully supported by the Board. Since we normally try to hold a combination Tennis Tournament and BBQ during July – last year's fell victim to the weather – we thought this year that the event could be 'upgraded' to a full Jubilee celebration. We hope this will prove popular, and that all of you would put it in your diary and make every effort to come along, invite family and a friend or two, and add energy to the occasion.

Sunday 29th July or Sunday 5th August would both be possibilities currently. With a Tennis Tournament for all levels of age and ability, swimming in the pool and a full BBQ and picnic on the lawns by the river, our Estate is fully equipped for a terrific and memorable day: in fact there can hardly be any other community in west London which is better equipped for such a day!

So, we invite offers from anyone, either individually or in a group, to champion and lead this idea and make it a terrific success. The Board will support it, but we will not 'organise' it! So it's up to you to make it happen or not. Anyone willing to contribute time and trouble to the occasion should please not later than 30 June.

Have a happy summer.

Amanda Anderson (39 Thamespoint), Kathy Gal (11 Fairways),
Martin Lewin (35 Thamespoint), Andrew Redpath (7 Thameside),
Lizzie Shalliker (61 Thamespoint)