

Membership:

For less than £2 a week the CPEA keeps streets on the Estate clear of litter on a weekly basis and looks after all the beautiful features that first attract Residents to move in here in the first place. So why is it that 35% of Residents are happy to let their neighbours pay for the benefits that they enjoy for free? Some Residents are also happy to let me waste time chasing them each year because they can't or won't change their standing orders from £45 or £75 to the current membership of £100, in which case they are not members, just donors! Membership fees contributed by Residents in recent years are shortly to be used to finance the cost of the Basin refurbishment project, and I thank them for their continued support. However in our next issue we will be publishing a list of contributing Residents. If you're a member, and your neighbour is not on the list, why not ask them how much longer they intend to let you contribute on their behalf?

Security:

For a further £3 a week, we could be providing a security patrol four times a week, but once again it has been left up to the few to provide for the many. We have so far raised nearly £36,500 from around 110 Residents to cover the cost of the patrols which have been running since October 2011. However, due to lack of support from other Residents, we have had to suspend the security patrols for a few weeks to allow us time to raise further funds. The scheme is not perfect – seven days a week would have been better – but it does seem to help, as evidenced by the incident logs and the general perception that suggest the plague of anti-social behaviour we have been experiencing in the last few years has reduced as consequence. Despite that, there are still isolated incidents – for instance the recently reported knife incident in Canons Drive on 1st January. Our most common feedback is "I am fed up paying for those residents who don't contribute" and, since Residents who have contributed whenever asked will have paid between £450 and £500 so far, this is an understandable reaction. Therefore, unless substantial amounts are received over the next week or so, the patrols will have to stop permanently and I will be obliged to step back from this project - which is taking up so much time and effort on your behalf by myself and the other members of the security committee.

Culvert Survey:

As referred to by Myra in her report, this is yet another example of Residents being prepared to let their neighbours pay for work that directly affects their own homes. The culvert in question runs between the Seven Acre Lake and the Basin. By law, if it runs under your property then you are responsible for any damage in the (albeit) unlikely event that it collapses or gets blocked - and you need to advise your insurance company, otherwise you may not be covered. As we don't know the precise position of the culvert we need to spend between £600 and £1,000 to find out where it is and if it is at risk of blockage. Potentially up to 25 homes are affected and we have asked for contributions of £50 – so far we have received only twelve contributions. Some residents have said that they will only pay if they know they are affected but we cannot know that until we carry out the survey!!! If your home does prove to be affected and you haven't paid (and we know that at least some residents in Lake View and Powell Close are in that position) then we will charge £100 for a copy of the report after the event. All residents who have contributed will receive a copy of the report at no further cost. Either way, we now need to proceed. We will confirm the precise date nearer the time as the survey company may need access to back gardens. If we have resumed the security patrols by then, we will arrange for the guard to be on duty whilst the back gardens are unprotected.

Restructuring:

The CPEA is currently structured as an unincorporated association. The Seven Acre Lake, Basin and other lands are owned by Surplus Lands (Canons) Limited and Surplus Lands is effectively owned by the members of the CPEA. The CPEA Committee therefore do not currently have the protection of limited liability, which we feel is unfair. They do have the protection of Directors' & Officers' insurance cover but under certain – hopefully remote – circumstances, they could still be personally liable. It is therefore proposed to set up a company Limited by Guarantee to take over the responsibilities of the CPEA. There are a number of tax and other issues that need to be resolved and we will not be able to proceed unless we are satisfied that there is no significant potential tax exposure AND that the related costs are manageable. The current budget for 2013 anticipates total costs of around £2,500 for solicitors' and accountants' fees. The aim will be to keep the Memorandum and Articles of Association (effectively the rules of the new company) as close as possible to the existing CPEA rules. I appreciate that this is a complex proposal so I hope that the presentation I will give at the AGM will be helpful. This will be followed by an open meeting of Residents in a few months' time and subsequently by a vote of members at an EGM.

Non-members will NOT be able to vote on this decision.

WE URGENTLY NEED NEW PEOPLE TO JOIN THE CPEA COMMITTEE, ESPECIALLY IF YOU CAN OFFER A PARTICULAR SKILL SUCH AS LAW, SURVEYING, MARKETING OR PR. PLEASE CONTACT MYRA IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP US TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE ESTATE AND PRESERVE ITS HERITAGE.

*Robert Graham
Vice Chairman*