

CANONS PARK ESTATE

March 2021

Dear Residents / Friends

We have all been locked down for many months due to Covid-19 and I sincerely hope you are well and looking forward to when we are all able to visit our families and friends. This has been a difficult period virtually homebound, and I admire those who have been creative at home to have reduced the boredom. Those with young children have had to work a lot harder over this period to keep the children entertained and to supervise their education electronically. I am sure you are now relieved that children are back at school. The Lake and the Canons Park have had more footfall than ever before.

There are certain achievements we can celebrate though, notably around the vaccines of which our nation has taken a lead, which many of us have started to receive. This will hopefully reduce the fatality numbers and reduce the daily rates of the infection and, as importantly, we patiently look forward to resuming to some sort of normality. We look forward to going on holiday, in the UK or abroad to see families and to gather and socialise, something we took for granted prior to the pandemic.

We circulated a Newsletter in December 2020 asking you to respond to a questionnaire. Many sent the tear off slip and a very large number responded via e-mail - thank you for your responses. This gave the Board the ability to speak to Harrow Council and gauge the support they were willing to afford the Estate. Due to Covid communication seemed to have taken longer than usual. I will take the opportunity to reconfirm certain facts to keep this report in perspective.

Insurance liability and Council position – Risks to the Estate

In July 2020, prior to the Estate's insurance renewal, we were under a great deal of pressure grappling with our hugely increased premium for the Estate because of various potential claims. The premium and excess were finally negotiated at a manageable figure. Subsequent to this, we explored further and signed up with new brokers and new insurers offering better commencing January 2021 (Aviva). Your Committee gave a sigh of relief.

We have met with Harrow Council on two occasions via Zoom over the last couple of months and it is evident that the Council is under financial pressure and its support for issues important to the Estate cannot be guaranteed.

Applications have been made to remove Tree Preservation Orders on a number of trees on Canons Drive, including three of our historic and magnificent Wellingtonia trees. The Council say that the consequences of retaining the TPOs (Tree Preservation Order) places them in a very vulnerable position financially as they will face compensation claims for the likely cost of underpinning each property. Council officers have decided that they do not want to make the decision and they are proposing to refer the decision to the Planning Committee to decide whether or not the TPOs remain in place. If the TPOs are removed, we face having to remove our trees which will be devastating not only for Canons Drive, but for the Estate as a whole. This is very unsatisfactory - we could be in a position where one Councillor could determine the fate of the Estate. This is unacceptable.

We have spoken to most residents along Canons Drive and the overwhelming message has been that you wish for the trees to be retained and protected. You have indicated that you moved to the Estate because of the Trees, the Lake and the Basin which keep the Estate as one of the most prestigious areas in North London.

A direct message to residents of Canons Drive

If you believe you are experiencing subsidence damage, please come and speak to the Committee. We will work with you, your Insurers and the Council whilst seeking to protect the integrity of the Estate.

Not only do we want to not lose the protection provided by the TPOs which is likely to see the felling of the trees if the TPOs are removed, but the financial cost to remove each tree is likely to be between £8,000-£10,000, which is an expense that would be difficult for the Estate to bear.

These trees were planted in the 1860s and approximately 70 years prior to the houses being built on Canons Drive. These impressive trees would have been seen by any new resident at the time of purchase and may well have been a persuasive factor when deciding to purchase the house.

A Google search shows many examples of redwoods in Britain, either individual trees or small groves, but there are few examples of an avenue of trees on each side of a residential road. Canons Drive is unique in the Boroughs of London. We are the custodians of a botanical treasure that our descendants will enjoy for the next 100 generations! Whilst the house owners, tree owners, their insurance companies, loss adjusters and regulatory authorities wrangle, the trees quietly go on absorbing carbon dioxide, slowing down global warming and emitting oxygen, enriching the atmosphere, which is particularly valued during the Covid pandemic.

The Committee act in a voluntary capacity and the difficulties faced by the Committee members with the prospect of the removal of the trees are becoming unsustainable.

Removing these trees would change the landscape of the Estate, it would more than likely reduce the value of homes along Canons Drive.

We request that those of you who have (or through your Insurers or their agents) applied to Harrow Council for TPOs to be lifted please carefully consider the ramifications of the removal of any tree. We suggest that you consult with CPEL immediately. We shall be making appropriate representations to the Council with a view to the trees being retained.

In this regard, your Committee will be campaigning on multiple fronts and will be seeking the support of residents, including:

1. Gather individual letters from resident of the 342 homes on the Estate. Time will be short – we would deal with this delivery and collection process with military precision
2. In addition, produce a petition from Lodge Close
3. Engage with our three Ward Councillors
4. Engage with our Local MP, Bob Blackman
5. Request the support of NLCS
6. Approach local communities within the vicinity
7. Gain professional support from the Arboricultural Society

Please contact the committee if you wish to assist with this campaign – enquiries@canonsparkestate.com

I sincerely thank those residents who are not on the Committee but have given their time and expertise helping the Committee in the last few months. Many of you are experts in various fields and professions - if you feel your expertise could benefit the Estate, I look forward to hearing from you.

Estate claim

As you will recall, we reported in several Newsletters that the Estate has been involved in a legal case with the residents of a property on the Estate.

I am pleased to report that the dispute regarding the tree damage allegedly caused by CPEL owned trees and for which the Estate was insured has now been resolved and the matter is now at an end.

Flooding

We have all had to endure the flooding at the top of Canon Drive for months over the rainy season. The Committee has worked closely with Harrow Council and NLCS to deal with the deadlock. It was discovered the 100 yards stretch of road is unadopted, leaving this area with no organisational control.

We learnt that NLCS some years ago applied and tarmacked the road and this evidently led to the School having taken on and accepted a maintenance programme. After NLCS were made to feel obligated to maintaining the area, they decided to invest in a new drainage system which will deal with heavy rainfall and should prevent further flooding. We thank NLCS for taking on this expensive project and giving easy access for wheelchairs and buggies to the Park.

Building Works Along Canons Drive

As mentioned previously builders have been instructed to comply with the various rules and regulations if they are working on the Estate especially along Canons Drive. A builder has been fined and enforcement served for flouting the rules and ignoring instructions. The Council will take action as they have done if they believe builders are not creating the atmosphere convivial to harmony whilst working on the Estate. We ask you to instruct your builders to work neatly and give consideration to your neighbours.

Verges along Canons Drive

We appreciate builders making a mess during a construction job and we insist the area is reinstated before they leave.

We note a number of householders have been driving across the Estate verges and the Council verges and this completely spoils the frontage and neat line along Canons Drive. I would ask each and every one of you to please instruct your gardeners to build the verges where there is soil damage, rake and flatten and lay grass seed, so that we can return to the position we had last year with a neat green verge.

Works around the Lake / Basin Maintenance

We have had our bailiffs working round the Lake and the Basin areas. We deal with fallen branches and maintain sections that require tree works and control the shrubbery. We recently laid sleepers at strategic points around the Lake. We planted wild flowers and hopefully in the Spring we should appreciate the Lake with colour.

We have noticed certain sections around the Lake have been cleared by residents or their gardeners. **THIS IS NOT PERMITTED.** If we can prove this has happened we will take the appropriate action. Your gardeners are not permitted on the Lake side. They have no permission to be there and certainly not to remove or reduce trees or foliage.

We ask you to immediately stop this action. Only designated staff under the CPEL umbrella have permission to work on the Lake side.

Planning applications around the Estate

We have recently seen some unusual planning applications on the Estate. We would all like to extend our homes and if within reason the applications you submit are acceptable by the Council, you automatically have a green light to proceed. Recently an application was made to build a house on a back garden and this was rightly refused.

Orchard Close parking issues

For residents living in Orchard Close parking has been a nightmare over the last few years. The area between the edge of the pavement and the Island is too narrow, creating practical issues for dustcarts to manoeuvre round the tight circle. Residents are now officially applying for pavement parking, the only way round this unsustainable problem. The situation became very challenging last year. We wish them every success in their endeavours.

Street Signs

You might have noticed that the street signs around the Estate over the many years were faded and unclear, dirty and in poor condition. This has been a long dialogue with Harrow Council and eventually they have agreed to replace them. I am pleased to say that most of the signs have been changed - this should improve the ability to identify the streets and it looks aesthetically pleasing.



Committee

The CPEL committee comprises:

Edwin Solomon
Julian Kostick
Tony Bennett
Madan Ahluwalia
John Sheer
Anuta Rosenfelder
Kathryn Finlay
Preena Shah
Darren Simons (stepping down at the 2021 AGM)

Estate photo courtesy of Darren Simons



Darren has been on the Committee for approx 8 years and has contributed to the committee notably minuting the meetings, supporting the Treasurer with a parallel membership list, as well as overseeing CanonsTalk and the website, which he has agreed to continue doing. We thank you Darren for your contribution over the years and we wish you only success in your new role as Chair of Governors of a local school.

We would also like to thank Michael Stephens who retired from the Board earlier this year. Michael has been a huge support to the committee over many years and we wish Michael and Myra who stepped down previously a very happy retirement.

We also thank residents who have volunteered and have been assisting the Committee – thank you very much.

Edwin Solomon

Chair, Canons Park Estate Ltd.

Estate photos courtesy of Rita Sood



Trees on Canons Drive

By Ezra Davies – Tree advisor to Friends of Canons Park

The trees in the avenue on Canons Drive represents one of the finest examples in Britain of redwood avenues, if not in the world. It is an iconic feature of Edgware and a popular attraction for local residents.

It is not only notable for its Wellingtonias (known to be the most massive trees in the world), but also its one Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*, known to be the tallest tree in the world) and several *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* (only recently discovered and endangered the wild IUCN 3.1), one of which is the finest specimen that I have ever seen in the UK; and a *Cryptomeria japonica*, which represents the Japanese version of this fascinating group. This is a rarely rivalled perhaps unrivalled collection of trees from the subfamily *Sequoioideae* outside Kew gardens, which evolved in the Jurassic, when dinosaurs ruled our planet.



There are also some of the finest *Cedrus deodar* examples in the whole of Britain in this remarkable avenue, no doubt collected when the British colonials retired to the hill-stations during the stifling summers of India; plus a fine *Auracaria arcana*, collected from rare edible nuts, all the way from Patagonia. The collection represents a unique historical collection of trees that connects a humble suburb of Edgware to an extraordinary period of world history and the individuals who shaped it. Edgware is an extraordinary history book that serves to illustrate a formative and controversial period of history.

During the Great Storm of 1987, Wellingtons were famous for being the lone survivors of great swathes of destruction, owing to their deep tap-roots and their characteristic buttressed trunks. Redwoods are known to live more than 2000 years; our precious trees are only at the first stage of their existence, despite being more than 150 years old. Those trees will far outlive the houses that exist on the site and will be a source of ever-increasing wonder as each year visits; as each century visits; as each millennium visits Edgware.

Redwoods were found across Europe in ancient times and our stand of redwoods in our Edgware hark back to a memory that ancient generations of Edgware's inhabitants would have found familiar, from Jurassic times 200 million years ago until the Ice Ages.

It is evident that what makes this the most exclusive part of Edgware, if not Middlesex, is precisely because it contains one of the finest collection of trees. Removing just one of those trees would break the connection which our predecessors brought us. We need those trees to tell the story of history and to provide understanding, healing and wisdom so that the world tomorrow will be one of harmony, reconciliation and co-operation those trees provide us with a sense of belonging, self examination and future hope. We are the custodians, in no position to even consider the future of these trees. They will be our eternal, when we are the transitory; they will be our gift, as humble participants, of the great story of natural history that is our precious verdant islands, on the fringes of the great continents of Eurasia.

Just as surely as each ring in the mighty redwood trunk bears witness to each year of unbroken chain, our role is to protect, conserve and humble ourselves to the eternity that is time just as our very DNA that courses through our veins honours and give thanks to our ancestors that thought, felt and experienced and brought us to existence in our fleeting time.

Canons Park Estate Ltd 2021 AGM – SAVE THE DATE

The CPEL AGM WILL BE HELD ON 22nd APRIL 2021 AT 8.00 PM VIA ZOOM

We were hoping at some stage last year to hold the AGM even until the Autumn. This became extremely difficult for various reasons and the committee decided under these exceptional circumstances we would catch up in 2021. We circulated a newsletter in December 2020 whilst dealing with several contentious and challenging issues during the year. Further details regarding the AGM may be found in the attached documents. Only paid up Members will be allowed to join the Meeting.

Useful contact information

HARROW COUNCIL

You can contact Harrow Council via the internet (www.harrow.gov.uk), or via Harrow's general switchboard (020 8863 5611). Here are some direct numbers for the most commonly used departments:

| | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Bins/Environment: | 020 8424 1754 | |
| Street lighting: | 020 8424 1887 | |
| Planning: | 020 8424 1441 | Email: planning.applications@harrow.gov.uk |
| Conservation enquiries: | 020 8424 1467/8 | Email: conservation@harrow.gov.uk |
| Tree enquiries: | 020 8424 1471 | |
| Environmental hazards: | 020 8863 5611 (EMERGENCY USE ONLY) | |
| Street hazards: | 020 8863 5611 (EMERGENCY USE ONLY) | |

To report anti-social behaviour: Harrow Council ASB Team – 020 8736 6307 or 07927 548479

Email: asb@harrow.gov.uk Web: <https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/asb/asb-b/report-antisocial-behaviour/>

LOCAL HOSPITALS

Nearest Hospital: Edgware General. No accident and emergency unit. Tel: 020 8952 2381

Non-emergency medical, including coronavirus (COVID-19): Tel: 111

Blood Donation Centre: Edgware General Hospital: Tel: 0300 123 23 23

Nearest Accident and Emergency Units: Northwick Park Hospital: 020 8864 3232,
Watford General Hospital: 01923 244366
Barnet General Hospital: 020 8216 4100

OTHER USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Friends of Canons Park: www.canonsparkfriends.org Email: canonspark@outlook.com

Estate photos courtesy of Darren Simons

