

**Newsletter
Number 5**

February 2011



27 Tilia Way
Bourne
PE10 0QR

Tel: 07899 844 552

e: admin@elseapark.co.uk

Dear Member,

Community Charge 2010/2011

Following my appointment as Chair in January, I was hoping by the time this first newsletter (while I'm at the helm) hit your door mat that I would be able to report good progress all round. Instead, I have spent some considerable time apologising to members of The Trust.

As you will read on subsequent pages, we now have a new team in place in a new office that will be staffed every working day. We have also commenced what seemed like a simple process of transferring onto a new accounting system to enable us to have better access for the staff and directors (and ultimately, through better reporting, for yourselves) to The Trust's financial data. Unfortunately the task was far greater than any of us had envisaged.

Whilst our previous Administrator, Melanie, singlehandedly managed the finances she had no accountancy training, and with her somewhat sudden departure The Trust were unable to recruit the new team in time for a managed handover. In addition, a large amount of mail went missing between the office and Melanie's home address, and this included some cheques. This, together with Melanie's ill health last summer, had left us with a massive gap in our records and debts that had not been followed up.

This resulted in us sending reminders to a number of residents, who, due to gaps in the old processes, had already submitted cheques that had not been received, or had part paid in a previous year, or where their cheques had been incorrectly recorded against another member. This is completely unacceptable, and I would like to take this opportunity to offer:

- A sincere and unreserved apology on behalf of The Trust for the errors we have made.
- A commitment to sort out the problem with your help.
- A pledge to learn from the mistakes of the past and to ensure that robust systems are in place to ensure that there is no reoccurrence.

I completely understand the frustration of residents but would urge your patience and tolerance in sorting out the problems. In particular, I ask you to support both Emma and Rebecca who are working very hard on this. Neither of them is responsible for the problems that have arisen, but when the late payment reminders went out, both were subjected to verbal abuse and even threats of violence.

Some members objected to the tone of the reminder letter, but we must remember that the charge was payable in April 2010, is now nine months overdue, and that residents who had paid urged us at the last AGM to ensure that all debts were recovered.

Please treat the new team with respect; they are working on YOUR behalf to help sort out the problems of the past as The Trust moves forward.

Once again, please accept my apologies for the situation that has arisen; The Board hopes you will work with us to resolve it.

Angela Bailey

Chair

Introducing The New Team.....

Hi

My name is Emma Cunnington and I have recently joined the team as the Community Trust Manager. My main role is to manage and oversee the daily running of The Trust, the office (and the Community Centre when it finally opens), and to be responsible for the direct line management of the Trust staff. One of my prime goals is to ensure everything is dealt with in a timely and efficient manner.

I will also be looking at different community initiatives that can be established on Elsea Park and I look forward to receiving your feedback on the type of things you would like to see on the development.

I have previously worked for Cross Keys Homes in Peterborough as a Neighbourhood Manager, dealing with all aspects of estate management and participating in resident engagement activities. I also worked within the Anti – Social Behaviour team helping to promote safer neighbourhoods and community cohesion.

More recently, I was employed by Minster General Housing Association, part of The Hyde Group, as a Community Engagement Manager. This role involved me working directly with the residents to ensure they had a voice within Minster and were able to meaningfully influence and change the services that were delivered. I also worked on community projects such as youth initiatives, to help deter anti-social behaviour and give opportunities for training, education and employment.

Rebecca Burke joins the team as Community Trust Administrator. Since starting back in November, Rebecca has been dealing with queries from residents, general administration duties, and mastering the Trust's accounts. Rebecca will be the first point of contact for The Trust and will acknowledge all queries within two working days.

For the past five years, Rebecca has been working in practice accountancy and industrial accountancy with a local firm. Rebecca is also working through her AAT to further her knowledge of accountancy.

The new Trust Office has now opened at 27 Tilia Way, one of the two "Coach House" style properties near the roundabout at the junction of Tilia Way and The Pollards. The office will be open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, with the exception of Wednesday mornings, when it will open one hour later at 10am, and on Public Holidays, when it will remain closed all day.

Unfortunately, with the ground floor comprising entirely of garages, the office occupies the first floor, making access difficult for anyone with mobility problems.

However, any member who has a difficulty with mobility and wishes to meet with one of the staff can ring the office on 07899 844 552 and we will arrange to come and visit you in your home if you so prefer.

We both look forward to meeting you all and welcome any ideas you may have on what you would like to see on Elsea Park.

Emma

It's that time of year again, and bills for 2011/12 will be posted to all members during March.

The Trust has been looking at ways to make it easier to pay, by continuing the Direct Debit scheme and by the introduction of paying via online banking. All the information will be forwarded to you shortly, but please contact the office if we can offer advice on the payment methods.

Many people see the annual bill as a time to complain about what The Trust isn't doing. One resident recently wrote about the things that The Trust organised when they first moved into Elsea Park; family days on the Meadows, open evenings etc.

I would like to hear your ideas of what The Trust should be doing on a day to day basis. Although the directors do walk around Elsea Park to try and highlight things that need attention by either Peter (our Groundsman) or the developer, they don't always see things through the eyes of you, the members.

Now that we finally have staff on site, you have the long awaited opportunity to share your concerns and voice the issues you have. Please take advantage of this opportunity.

Angela Bailey

Community Centre Sods

Seen here being cut back in November



Part Time Cleaning Vacancy

The Trust is looking for an experienced cleaner for the new office for approximately two hours per week.

For further information or to apply for the position, you are invited to contact Emma on 07899844552 or by email at

admin@elseapark.co.uk

Please be ready to provide details of your experience and the rate of remuneration you would be looking for.

A Polite Reminder.....We've been contacted by numerous members who live in apartment buildings on Elsea Park asking if we can remind their neighbours to:

- ◆ Keep communal bin stores tidy and to take any items that won't fit into the bins to the Bourne Household Waste Recycling Centre.
- ◆ Be considerate when smoking outside so that cigarette smoke does not enter the windows of other occupants, and not to litter the ground with cigarette ends.

New Bobby on the Beat!

PCSO Graeme Parrott has served with Lincolnshire police for a several years and has recently taken over Elsea Park as his new patch. Graham met with Emma to introduce himself and to gain a perspective of some of the issues that concern Elsea Park residents.

Emma mentioned that one recurring theme is speeding within the development, especially as motorists drive on to Tilia Way from the A15.

Graeme was able to offer immediate assistance in the form of the interactive sign which has been placed on the corner of Cross Lane. This device determines the speed of approaching vehicles (logging the speeds for future analysis) and rewards the considerate drivers amongst us with a smile.

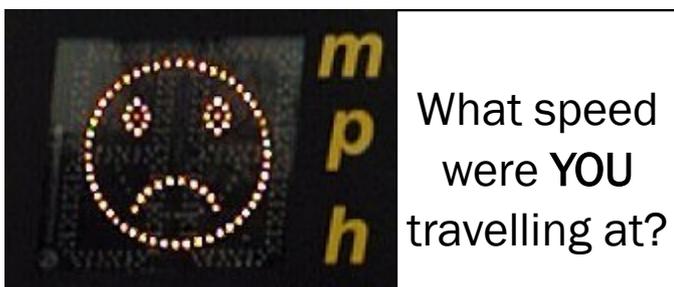


PCSO Graeme Parrott

Raising awareness of speed is the first step The Trust is taking in the campaign for a 20 mph speed zone throughout Elsea Park, and we are grateful for the assistance given by the police. The police have advised that they may, in future, be using a speed gun to take action against motorists who exceed the speed limit, which is currently 30 mph.

If you would like to speak with Graeme regarding any policing matter, he can be contacted on the new Bourne Police number of 03001110300 or by email at:

bourne.npt@lincs.pnn.police.uk



Whats happening on...

Setts Green The ditch running along Setts Green is being reinstated and large accumulations of scrub and silt are being removed. This essential work is required now that building by Taylor Wimpey and Barratt is underway.

Unfortunately, some of the shrubs (which have self-seeded) have had to be removed to gain access to the ditch, although it is hoped that the hedge along the Eastern bank should be undamaged.

There is no intention to re-plant the shrubs, and the area will be left to grow wild again.

This area is designated as a wildlife zone and should recover quickly from any disturbance caused by the works. Natural England have been consulted prior to this work commencing.

The Fountain Ponds The ponds are being dredged to remove silt, reeds and general accumulated waste. This is to ensure that the surface water drainage infrastructure functions correctly in the coming years as the number of dwellings on Elsea Park increases.

The ponds have not been cleared since they were first installed, and a considerable amount of material will be extracted. This material will be moved to an area of the Meadow land on the other side of Raymond Mays Way.

The work is taking place outside the bird nesting season and has been approved (and will be fully vetted) by the Environment Agency.

Fen Ditching are undertaking the work on behalf of Kier.

The Pollards An avenue of twenty four trees has recently been planted, and we would politely ask members to keep an eye on them whilst they become established.

Peter will be maintaining them and making good the grass verges now that planting is complete.

Are You Paying £35 Too Much For Your Water?

Well, unless you've moved to Elsea Park very recently, or always read the small print, the answer is probably "yes". Even if you are a new resident, you might still want to read on to see how you might be able to get that £35 back in your own pocket just in case you are being overcharged....

Trust member Bryn Jones has recently informed us that many of us may be paying Anglian Water around £35 a year more than we need to owing to an often overlooked element of water charges. Basically, water companies bill consumers for handling the surface water that normally flows into the drainage and sewerage systems that they maintain.

However, homes in Elsea park have been built with a soak away for the dispersal of surface water that falls on our roofs etc, and the development was designed so that other surface water is managed through our own system of lagoons and holding ponds. This means that households should not need to pay the surface water handling charge.

So how can you check if you've been overpaying? Well, all you have to do is look at your last bill, and check the "Sewerage Services" section. If you see the phrase "Volume used (Foul & Surface)" then you are probably overpaying. If there is no mention of the word "Surface", then you are likely to already be exempt from the charge. If you find you are being billed wrongly, you might want to:

- Apply for a reduction online by filling in the form at www.anglianwater.co.uk/household/your-account/tariffs/reduced-sewerage/index.aspx,
- Pick up the relevant form from the local Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Call Anglian Water's dedicated Surface Water Drainage helpline on 0800 169 3271.

I rang Anglian Water myself to put Bryn's tip to the test. The lady I spoke to was extremely courteous and helpful, and talked me through how to check my bill (as I've described above). It was then up to me to explain why I thought I was eligible for a reduction (which I did by declaring I have a soak away and by describing the drainage system we have on Elsea Park).

It transpired that I was paying too much, but won't be doing so in the future. By acting now, I have managed to get the £35 refunded from **this year's** charges, and you might need to move quickly to do the same. However, Anglian Water say they are not obliged (in accordance with an OFWAT ruling) to refund overpayments from **previous** years.

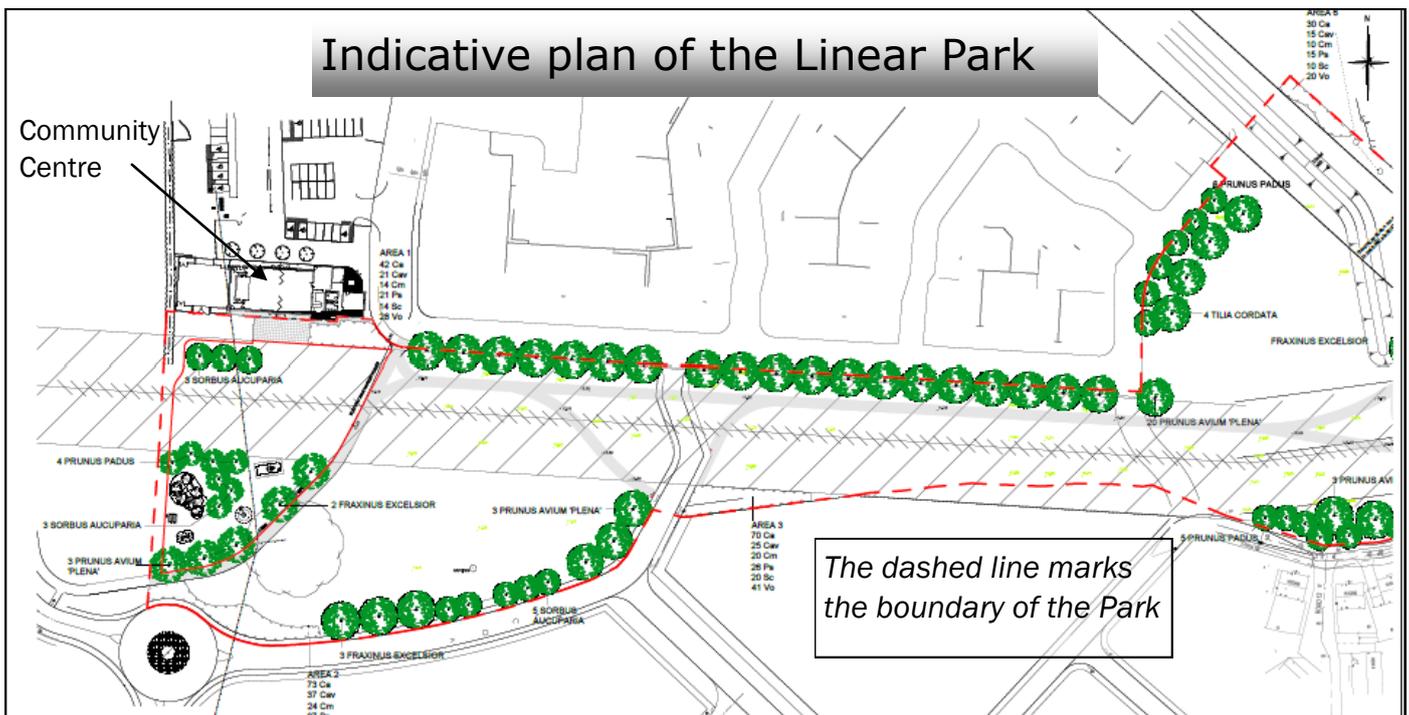
On the plus side, Anglian Water say they apply the reduction automatically to new accounts set up for residents who move into new-build houses, as builders now tend to install multiple soak aways as matter of routine.

To rub salt into the wound, this opportunity to save money has existed for a long time. It is covered in detail in leaflets sent out with the all bills, and is entirely the householders responsibility to sort out. So, I guess it's time that I started reading the small print before throwing such bump into the recycling bin without so much as a second glance. But then again, I bet I'm not the only one who's been guilty of doing that!

The Linear Park is Coming.....

The Linear park, which will run from Wherry Spinney (close to the new community centre) all the way to the A15, is now approved in planning terms and work will commence in the Spring to lay the park out.

The park will include large grassy areas, a cycleway link (which will eventually connect with the new primary school link to the town) and a formal play area. The Trust will hold consultation meetings with members to determine the equipment which should be installed in the play area to ensure it caters for the right age groups, and meets the needs of members' children.



Police Community Support Officers:

PCSO Graeme Parrott

Telephone: 07939 312871

PCSO Sandra Brommell

Telephone: 07939 887863

Bourne Police Station

Telephone: 0300 111 0300

National Crime Stoppers

Telephone: 0800 555 111

Useful Numbers

Housing Associations:

Accent Nene:

Telephone: 01733 295400

Wherry:

Telephone: 01603 703500

Builders

Customer Care Helplines:

Kier:

Telephone: 01767 642570

Bovis:

Telephone: 01675 437137

George Wimpey:

(Bryant/Taylor Woodrow)

Telephone: 0116 281 6431

The Minutes of the last AGM (and much more) are available on your website at www.elseapark.co.uk