

QUEENSWOOD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Issue 7, August 2006

Television Integrated Reception System

It is some months since we circulated details of a suggested solution to the problems with the current aerial systems – and, perhaps more importantly, the move to all-digital television when the existing analogue terrestrial transmissions are switched off.

Unfortunately, nearly 40% of lessees rejected the suggested solution. We do not feel under these circumstances that we can justify spending our reserves – contributed by you, the lessees – on a system that is not wanted by so many of you.

We haven't given up on it, as one way or another we shall have to do something soon. In the meantime, the proposed contractors have advised us that they no longer have time to install a system for us this year, as they are extremely busy now that the switch to digital TV is gathering pace – and that the price of the system they proposed for us has risen by 35%, due to increased demand.

Sorry If You've Missed Us

We know it has been a long time since the last newsletter. That doesn't mean that we haven't been busy – in fact it's quite the opposite. It takes quite a bit of time and effort (and “editorial discussions” at the *Golden Fleece*) to put a newsletter together.

What with working on the TV reception proposals and the rules consultation project – and the serious ill-health of a board member – it has been difficult to find the time to prepare this issue. We hope that we can bring you more frequent issues in the future.

Gardener's World

You might have noticed that earlier this year we began a major effort to improve the state of the lawns. We had noticed that in some places, weeds and clover had overwhelmed the grass.

The lawns were comprehensively aerated and scarified, resulting in a much better grass coverage.

Unfortunately the combined effects of the drought, the hose-pipe ban and the recent very hot weather have been a bit of a set-back. Work will continue as the weather and water supplies permit – we are confident that once there is a reasonable amount of rain, the lawns will look much better.

Stop Press – Local Muggings

We've heard that there have been a number of late-night local muggings, including at least one in Alders Close.

It's possible that the muggers are waiting near the entrance to Queenswood Gardens, watching for potential victims getting off buses. It's thought they could be on foot or waiting in a car.

Please be alert when you are getting off a bus – and if you see anything suspicious, don't hesitate to call 999.

Car Parking

It can't have escaped your notice that car-parking at Queenswood Gardens is becoming increasingly difficult. It was one of the issues that generated the most comments in your responses to the recent rules & regulations consultation project (see overleaf for more details of the results of that exercise).

Pressure on space caused by an increase in car ownership is made worse by a number of issues – commercial vehicles parking in contravention of the lease, residents parking more than one private vehicle, non-residents using Queenswood Gardens as a convenient car park on their way to work, owners of untaxed cars using parking spaces as long-term storage, and cars simply being abandoned.

We follow up abandoned cars with both the London Borough of Redbridge and the Metropolitan Police, and have been successful in getting a number of them removed over the past few months, but that alone will not solve the problem.

We have, with some regret, come to the conclusion that the only way forward is through a comprehensive parking permit scheme that is managed by an external, professional, parking-control company. We are in discussion with potential third parties about this.

When the scheme is implemented, we will compile and maintain a register of vehicles and their owners (our registration under the Data Protection Act already allows us to do this).

Permits will only be issued for private vehicles; not more than one permit will be issued per flat. Permits will not be issued for untaxed vehicles. Commercial vehicles will still be able to park in the commercial parking bay. Temporary permits will be available for visitors.

We should be able to tell you more about the planned scheme within the next couple of months, once we have finalised details with our chosen parking-control company.

"We're a small community - let's be proud of it"

Consultation on Additional Rules for Queenswood Gardens – The Results

Many thanks to all those lessees and residents who took the time to respond to the consultation paper circulated earlier this year – you gave us plenty of ideas for consideration.

Overall, your comments fell into three groups. Firstly, some of you expressed concern that the existing covenants and terms of the lease are not enforced rigorously enough. Secondly, there were suggestions that a number of those same covenants and terms should be relaxed or cancelled. And thirdly, you asked us to consider making a small number of additional rules to make living at Queenswood Gardens more enjoyable.

When it comes to enforcing the existing covenants and terms, action is in fact taken on a regular basis, although this is seldom publicised. For example, we don't transfer shares in Queenswood Management Association Ltd from an old lessee to a new one if there is a known breach of the lease, until the breach is rectified. If breaches are not rectified, we do work together with Queenswood Gardens Ltd to seek forfeiture of the lease.

As for making changes to the lease, whilst in theory this is possible, in reality it is impractical as it would be expensive and unlikely to find sufficient support in view of the number of lessees asking us to be even more vigilant in enforcing the existing rules.

So that leaves us with the third group – your proposals for new rules & regulations. The board reviewed all of them, taking into account as far as possible the wider interests of all lessees and residents. As a result, we have agreed on the following rules:

1. Playing ball games of any form is prohibited throughout Queenswood Gardens. (Note that the lease already prohibits playing ANY games on the grassed areas)
2. Residents and lessees are welcome to contribute to keeping the gardens neat and tidy, within the overall plans for them. However, to ensure that such activity is co-ordinated, anybody who wishes to do any work in the gardens must obtain agreement in advance from Hull and Company or the garden co-ordinator (currently John McElarney).
3. Internal construction work and use of power tools in flats is not permitted outside the hours of 9.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.
4. Hallways and stairs must be cleaned & tidied up as necessary on a daily basis by residents or their builders, etc., carrying out any internal construction work.
5. Parking in restricted areas, marked by yellow hatched lines, is prohibited at all times.
6. Lighting fires, barbecues, fireworks, etc., is not permitted except with prior written permission.
7. Lessees who sub-let must:
 - (a) include the lease covenants and the above rules in the sub-lease;
 - (b) provide a copy of the sub-lease to Queenswood Management Association Ltd and Hull & Company;
 - (c) provide the sub-tenants' names and contact details, and their own contact details (residential address & phone number), to Queenswood Management Association Ltd and Hull & Company.

We Value Your Comments

If you have any constructive ideas or comments about this newsletter, or what's going on at Queenswood Gardens generally, please don't hesitate to let one of us know.

All we ask is that you put your thoughts on paper; it will make it easier for your ideas to be distributed to board members for consideration at our meetings, and it will also ensure that we don't forget your comments – we're only human!

Vandalism

We've written before about vandalism at Queenswood Gardens. This continues to be a problem. If you are a victim, please make sure that you let both the Metropolitan Police and Hull & Company know.

On the same subject, one of the directors has recently been the victim of a targeted, ongoing, campaign of vandalism. We know that our decisions will not always be popular with everybody, but we do what we think is right for Queenswood Gardens as a whole. Vandalism is never an acceptable way to express an opinion.

If you know the identity of any of the vandals concerned, please let us know – any information will be treated with confidence.

Waste Recycling

A number of residents have asked if it is possible for Queenswood Gardens to participate in local waste recycling schemes.

Unfortunately, this doesn't look to be feasible at the present time, as Redbridge can't handle waste for recycling through the current waste collection service.

The alternative would be to site communal recycling bins somewhere in Queenswood Gardens. They would have to be sited in one of the parking areas, and would take up four of five bays, putting added pressure on parking. They would also turn Queenswood Gardens into the neighbourhood recycling centre – we don't believe that lessees & residents would welcome the traffic and further parking problems this would inevitably bring.