



## **ELSEA PARK COMMUNITY TRUST ANNUAL REPORT 2012 / 2013**

### **Overview**

The year 2012/2013 marked a full year of owning and managing The Centre, the play areas and much of the amenity land across Elsea Park. This has brought new challenges to the Trust. Progress is continuously being made on community services but sometimes progress takes longer than we would hope. In this report we highlight some of the successes as well as areas yet to be addressed.

One thing we would like to see is more involvement of residents whether as Board Directors, members of the Events Group or volunteers at the Youth Club. If you feel that you can contribute to the Elsea Park community please contact the Trust on 01778 423062 or email us at [admin@elseapark.co.uk](mailto:admin@elseapark.co.uk)

### **Articles of Association**

For some months the Board has been working on a new constitution for the Trust with the aim of placing revised Articles of Association before this year's AGM. The Board has agreed the new Articles of Association and in principle has reached agreement with Kier Homes about them relinquishing their legal control over the Trust. However the agreement reached with Kier relies on South Kesteven District Council agreeing to the amendment of the Section 106 Planning Agreement. This is a complex situation likely to involve lengthy discussion and negotiation with the Council. The Board felt that the AGM should not be delayed for the issue to be resolved. Once the issue is resolved, there will be an Extraordinary General Meeting to consider adoption of new Articles of Association.

### **The Centre**

The Centre opened for hire in June 2012. It has been well used and has a growing reputation as a quality venue to hire. As well as weekly activities, details available from the Centre or from our website, individuals, businesses and organisations all make use it. The hire for children's birthday parties are very popular and other events range from business meetings to parties to formal luncheons. Guides, Cubs and Beavers all meet at The Centre. Next year the Blood Donor service is to offer quarterly sessions. The Centre is also your local polling station for elections. Remember if you live on Elsea Park you receive a 25% discount on hire charges.

### **Resident Involvement**

The Residents Events Group promotes community events at The Centre. Successes over the past year have included quiz nights, a London bus trip, the New Year's Eve party and a very popular Christmas Party for children. There is a monthly Film Night for residents. Every Wednesday morning they host a drop-in coffee morning for residents and friends.

The Events Group can make small grants available to help to start-up new activities or clubs at The Centre just send them your ideas and if they think there will be interest they will work with you to make it a success.

### **Business Plan**

The Trust has adopted a 3 year business plan which is monitored at regular intervals. The business plan sets out the Trust's aims and aspirations for the next three years covering all areas of the Trust's responsibilities including The Centre, amenity areas, play and leisure facilities, conservation areas, landscape enhancement as well as governance and communication to residents. It can be found at the website [www.elseapark.co.uk](http://www.elseapark.co.uk).

### **Communication**

The Elsea Park website [www.elseapark.co.uk](http://www.elseapark.co.uk) gives general information about The Trust and The Centre, including a schedule of regular activities and details of social events being organised by the Residents' Events Group.

Minutes of Annual General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings are available on the website. Minutes of the monthly Board meetings can be downloaded around 6 weeks after the meeting and from the October Board meeting

reports will also be available. In addition we communicate through newsletters and flyers as well as information available from The Centre. You can also find us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/Elsea-Park-Community-Trust](http://www.facebook.com/Elsea-Park-Community-Trust))

## **Finance**

The Trust's financial position is healthy. At 31 March 2013 there were reserves of £247,756. These will cover investment needs in the future, such as building and equipment renewal. They will also fund landscape enhancements that are in the planning stages.

At 31 March 2013 outstanding annual fees totalled £35,230. Of this £7,555 related to debts brought forward from previous years. Outstanding fees are pursued through a number of reminder letters and, if necessary, followed up with County Court action. In the past year a number of owners have been summonsed through the courts. Owners cannot sell their property until all arrears are cleared.

## **Youth Club**

The Trust has supported the setting up of a Youth Club at Elsea Park by retaining a Youth Worker on a part time basis. The Youth Club runs on a Wednesday evening for the 11-18 years age group. The Trust has also supported holiday activities for the 8+ age group. The Youth Club is popular and appreciated by the younger members of the Elsea Park community. If you are able to volunteer your help in support please contact The Centre for details

## **Estate Management**

Taking ownership of the Linear Park and The Pollards significantly increased the area of land to be managed by the Trust. Three options for future maintenance were evaluated: to carry-out all of the ground maintenance in-house; to out-source it all; or to retain a mixture of the two. The third option was selected as it brought economies of scale, limited the investment that the Trust would have to make in equipment, addressed seasonal labour demand and management, permitted liaison arrangements between the Trust and the contractors, and freed time for work on conservation areas and other enhancements.

The Trust has commissioned LDA Landscape Design to advise on enhancements to the open space areas. Their work will cover creation of seating areas, additional planting and flowers and other enhancements identified at the 2012 AGM and consultation on the business plan. In summary they have been asked to create 'a sense of place' for Elsea Park. As their work develops there will be consultation with residents.

Competitive tenders were sought and Ground Control appointed on a 3 year contract. They now carry out the grounds maintenance to all landscaped areas in the Trust's ownership.

Five play areas are now in the Trust's ownership. These are inspected weekly and annually they have a full independent safety check. Following planning objections to the siting of the adult fitness equipment this has now been relocated, with planning consent, to the play park.

One area where the Trust has not made the progress that it hoped is the provision of litter bins. After some months SKDC decided that we must apply for planning permission for siting of bins. A planning application for bins, sign posts and notice boards is now being made.

Anti-social behaviour has been a problem. The Trust installed CCTV around The Centre and it is monitored 24/7. Working closely with the local PCSO action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour and take action through the police on vandalism. The Trust treats this issue very seriously.

## **Green Transport**

The Trust has formed a partnership with the Smarter Choices and Accessibility Team at Lincolnshire County Council to consult residents on green transport and promote events like the cycle day.

## **Learning more**

If you want to learn more on these matters or on anything else, please contact the Trust Office

**Angela Bailey**

**The Trust Chairman – Elsea Park Community Trust**