



# Annual Report 2022

## Houndwood Community Group

Email: [getintouch@houndwoodcommunity.org](mailto:getintouch@houndwoodcommunity.org)

Website: <https://houndwoodcommunity.org/>

## Background

The Houndwood community Group continues to work towards their aim of 'Making Houndwood a better, safer place to live in and caring for our environment and neighbours, encouraging a spirit of community amongst the residents of the 398 diverse housing units on our Icon/Houndwood Estate.

## Finance

We have uploaded our latest set of accounts to the website. The committee are very grateful to Street Parish Council for their contribution to our running costs. We also hugely appreciate the support from Mendip District Council in the form of two grants that were awarded to us in 2022 (but spent in 2023).

Thanks too to LiveWest who paid for Bridgewater Bridgewater Community Sports Trust (from Bridgewater Football Club) to provide sports sessions and Somerset Wildlife Trust and Zing Somerset provided support in terms of supplies and personnel. Donations from residents are also much appreciated.

## Estate Management

As most residents are aware, Premier Estates are currently managing the common areas on the estate that are not designated road or paths. Their contractors Avery Landscapes manage much of the common areas; however some areas and trees are not included in their contract for regular maintenance of the green spaces.

The environment of our Icon/Houndwood Estate makes for a nice place to live, surrounded by waterways and mature trees. However, it is expensive to look after. This means that the amount residents pay in charges to Premier Estates is not sufficient to ensure that the estate is maintained to the standard and extent some may want. How this is to be resolved is unclear.

Road repair is still an outstanding issue on both halves of the estate. The two developers, Crest Nicholson and Barratt Homes will have to repair them before Somerset Council adopts them. There still doesn't seem much progress on this.

## **Communication with residents.**

We published two newsletters in 2022, one in April and one November.

We continue to use the three noticeboards, updating them on a regular basis.

Facebook is very active and the main port of call for many residents.

Our website has a lot of useful and interesting information for residents.

## **Events**

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, we had our AGM via Zoom. Les Cloutman from Somerset Wildlife Trust attended as guest speaker. He was very impressed with the diverse nature of wildlife and plants on the estate.

On 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022 we had the Summer Fete on the Green but unfortunately we had to end early due to the heavy rains.

In August we had four play sessions on the green with Bridgwater Community Sports Trust (from Bridgwater Football Club) and sponsored by Live West and supported by Zing Somerset and Somerset Wildlife Trust. Some activities focused on helping children on the estate understand more about the food growing in the hedges and planters.

For Halloween (31<sup>st</sup> October) we had a competition to encourage houses and roads, to be decorated. Congratulations to the winners. It is always great to see all the children dressed up and trick or treating on the estate each year.

We also ran a Christmas decoration competition where prizes were given for best road, best house and best window/balcony. It was great to see so many residents joining in.

We also held several Ecology events, more about that next.

## **Ecology Group**

Following the awarding of the grant from Mendip District Council last year we had some money to spend. We used this to buy numerous pieces of equipment. This included new bird, bat and hedgehog boxes. We also bought bat detectors, pond dipping kits, an endoscope to look inside bird boxes, and bird box cleaning supplies.

We also held several events as listed below. It is great to know that we have badgers, foxes, bats, frogs, lizards, many types of birds and numerous species of insects and spiders also resident on the estate.

In February we carried out a bird box audit and clean. We discovered we should do this once a year, ideally in the autumn. So that is what we will do in future.

On 29<sup>th</sup> May 2022 a group of residents walked around the estate looking at the large variety of wild plants growing on the estate. This was led by Val Graham from Somerset Botany Group. It was astounding to see the level of biodiversity and I think Val was impressed too.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> October, we had two Bat Walks using our new bat detectors to find and identify the bats that love living on the estate too. There are a lot of bats!

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October we had another bird box audit and clean. There are many varieties of birds nesting on our estate.

## **Gardening Group**

The gardening group also received monies to spend from the Mendip Community Grant. This started with a new community greenhouse (with glass this time!) - apologies to the neighbours for the previous one and thanks for returning the plastic panels every time there was a high wind.

Monies were also spent on soil conditioning and various trolleys, plants and water containers to make life easier for the gardening team as they continue to work on the planters and other areas across the estate.

## **Litter Picks**

Monthly litter picks are carried out if it is not raining. We have been doing this for 10 years on the estate. In addition, many residents pick up litter when they see it. If you would like to join us, just look out for posts on noticeboards and Facebook, we have all you need to do this safely and it is quite addictive once you start.

## Conclusion

At this time of year when the days are long and the sun is shining, and now that covid is behind us we can have gatherings on the green again and spend time with our neighbours. We love living on the estate, it is a fabulous place to be, the community can only get back what it puts in. We will continue to work on improving the estate where we can and we encourage you to join in too. If you want to share your ideas or get involved in the committee or any activity, please let us know [getintouch@houndwoodcommunity.org](mailto:getintouch@houndwoodcommunity.org).