

Houndwood Community Group

Newsletter

Autumn 2020



Houndwood Community Litter Pickers

An increasing band of volunteers have been carrying out litter picking around the estate on a monthly basis with the aid of equipment supplied by McDonald's. Unfortunately the COVID lockdown interrupted this group activity.

In August we were all set to resume our monthly litter picking efforts (socially distanced, of course) however, rain soon put paid to that idea. If is not raining, please do join us on the following dates:

- 19th September
- 17th October
- 14th November
- 12th December

9:30 onwards - Meet at rear gate of 20 Couture Grove



Houndwood in lockdown!



From the Thursday evening tumult of applause for our NHS to generous front yard donations, the Houndwood estate has seen some amazing community heroes over the last few months. Heroes that include none other than Rob and Becky Mitchell, who kept us all

away from the ledge of cabin fever with their weekly estate virtual quiz. Rob said "This was always the aim - to bring families and households together for a couple of hours and break the monotony of lockdown". Rob added "We were genuinely humbled by the messages we got from teams telling us "it was the highlight of their week" or that "their families were

locked in debates over which awful 90s band sang 'Doctor Jones'".

"We're planning to host Halloween and Christmas special quizzes (bonus points for best dressed!) - we'll post the details on Facebook closer to the time!"



Thank you to everyone!

Gardening group



As summer floral colours start to shift into autumnal reds, we have a lot to thank our volunteer gardeners for. They have worked tirelessly around the estate. Planters have been springing to life, along with some severe haircuts (no, not COVID

ones!), newly planted bulbs (using funds generously donated by Cox's Charity) and native spring flowers on the approach from Cranhill and at the end of Serenity Rise.

A positive working relationship has been established with Martin Avery, site contractor, who has taken over the maintenance of the whole estate. His spirit and enthusiasm in the face of endless horticultural challenges has been

admirable. While Avery Landscape wage war on the biggest and broadest plant life, the volunteer gardening group are vital to the upkeep of the more detailed areas of gardening.

Balancing sustainability and biodiversity has been paramount - if you would like to help, please get in touch.

"When asked why they do what they do, our volunteer gardeners response was simple - "enjoyment!"



"I think we were all really looking forward to a sunnier Summer Fete this year," said Committee Chair, Peter Goater. "But COVID means we could not go ahead, and sadly our Halloween event is also looking less likely."

"We will be holding our AGM later in the year, probably on Zoom, so we hope many residents will attend. We want to hear what matters to you and hope you will get involved."

Houndwood Committee ~ we're here for you!

The Houndwood committee - many of you may know that we're here, beavering away in the background, but *what do we actually do?*

The committee is made up of a dedicated team of volunteer residents who meet every month. Our purpose is to address any community issues facing the estate and improve the daily living for all residents. Umbrellaed under this are a wide range of responsibilities, from keeping an eye on the transition of the estate from the developers to Premier Estates, to maintaining the communal areas, and answering residents' questions. We have worked with local charities and the neighbourhood Police team to address anti-social behaviour and protect vulnerable people. We also administer the Facebook page and website. Aside from the day-to-day duties, the committee is also committed to providing fun opportunities for people to come together, organising the summer fete every June and the increasingly popular Creepy Cavern on Halloween.

We are a group of Houndwood residents, for Houndwood residents. If there are any issues you'd like help with or if you're interested in supporting your local community by becoming a member, then please do get in touch.

Premier estates update

~ *introducing our very own estates manager, Ed Llewellyn*

Ed has been looking after Houndwood now for just under a year and has really taken to our community, visiting every month. No two days are the same for Ed; his role includes dealing with resident queries, to setting service charge estimates, reviewing year end accounts, carrying out site visits and managing major projects, across the 21 developments in his portfolio. He also has to attend regular training to remain up to date with laws and legislation within the sector.

Ed brings excellent experience to the job too, including an RHS Diploma in Horticulture and a Master's degree as well as property management qualifications. "When I am not at work I love to spend time with my two beautiful daughters, I also play semi-professional rugby every week.

"My next big project on the development now that we have worked at getting the grounds management in good order, is to tackle the waterways and nature ponds. I am hoping we can have them looking great for spring 2021."

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WANT TO SEE IN
THE NEXT
NEWSLETTER

committee@houndwoodcommunity.org

Wassail - is derived from the middle English wæs hæil, which means to be in good health.



Houndwood Orchard Wassail

A wassail is a traditional ceremony that involves singing and drinking to the health of apple trees.

This year Houndwood held its first wassail in the community orchard on the 13th February. It was my first wassail too, so I was unsure what to expect!

In a stout pair of boots (much needed due to the wet start to the year), and armed with a saucepan and wooden spoon (as requested), I arrived at the orchard. One of the apple trees had been beautifully

decorated with a host of ribbons in a myriad of colours.

The purpose of a wassail is to awaken the apple trees and to scare away the evil spirits, to ensure a good harvest. We soon made a cacophony as we beat our pots and pans (it may not have been just the evil spirits that we drove away!).

Les Davies, a professional countryman, orchard specialist, and seasoned wassailer, led the ceremony. Len taught us the wassail song, luckily

there were some excellent singing voices to drown out my off key notes.

The ceremony concluded with cider soaked toast being placed on the boughs of the tree by the Wassail Queens, Lola & Maya, as a gift to the tree spirits.

We concluded the evening with cider (apple juice for the younger participants) and Michaela's scrumptious apple cake.

I certainly enjoyed the event, and the opportunity to get to know more of my neighbours.

Sarah

