

Nash Mills Parish Council - Borough Councillor Report - November 2020

So much has happened in Nash Mills this month. This is a fairly detailed report on the main areas I have been working on, although there is much more!

Nash Mills Wharf

As you will know, Nikki and I met with two people from Vistry (who have taken over Linden Homes), via Zoom, last week. Their plan is to properly and satisfactorily rectify everything as quickly as possible so they can finally 'sign off' this site. They talked us through their list of issues that they have compiled over the last few months, since they took over the burden from Linden Homes. This is a brief update of their list:

- Weir repair – The issue here was a broken sluice gate. The design of a replacement has finally been agreed and the gate is being made. This should be installed in December and the area they call the Mill Race (the pool above the weir) should be refilled by Christmas, Covid complications permitting
- Fish Ladder – This is another issue that has proved to be complicated to resolve, but the Environment Agency has been working with Vistry to design a suitable fish ladder. This will be installed in the spring of 2021
- Rats – There has been an issue with rats on the site, especially around the weir area, and this is now being addressed by a pest control contractor. The nests have been located and they are being treated. The contractor also confirmed that once the inlet is reflooded this will help to keep the issue at bay
- War Memorial repair – The memorial was repaired within the planned time frame, but its return was slightly delayed due to situations beyond the developer's control. However, today we received the news that this is now back on site and reinstallation works will be completed in time for Remembrance.
- Mill Canal – This is the watercourse that is supposed to flow right through the site, and has been empty since January. The plan is to fully restore this area in the spring, so it is taken back to the original approved site plan. Meanwhile, the developer is sending in a contractor to cut back some of the overgrowth and trees as an interim measure
- Lower Road Car Park – The car park refurbishments are underway; so far the barrier has been installed but is not in use yet. After Christmas the developer will continue with the refurbishment
- Website – The developer is in the process of setting up a website that will be used as a 'noticeboard' to keep the residents fully updated with their progress as this 'snagging' list is completed
- Cladding Certificates – Many residents are struggling to sell flats in the development due to not having certificates to confirm that the cladding complies. This appears to be in progress at last – I'll be happy to update everyone at the meeting if I have managed to find out more
- Site Meeting – I was due to have a site meeting this Friday (6th November) with directors/managers of both Crest Nicholson and Vistry, Sir Mike Penning MP and a representative from the residents of Dickinson House (this is the building most

affected by the weir issue). Sadly, due to the latest lockdown this was postponed until December, so I will update NMPC as soon as the meeting has been held

Nash House

- The planning application is still with the planning officer and I am awaiting an update from him.

The Denes

- Empty unit – This is no longer empty as the laundrette was reopened today!
- CCTV – The monthly parish meetings are so full I will update this matter here and councillors can decide whether they would like it added to a future agenda. The CCTV camera that is currently installed is quite old and is scheduled to be replaced in the next 12 months. I spoke with the CCTV manager at DBC to discuss the possibility of a second CCTV camera at the other end of the shops, near Amy's and the bins, which will have the capability of viewing the alleyway at the side of the shops and the entrance to the flats above. The manager provided an estimate for this (which was substantial) but has also offered to look at providing a refurbished camera to reduce the cost. If NMPC would like this to be explored further I would be happy to and bring it to parish council at a future meeting.

Hospital Campaign

Last week I spent 2 days 'attending' the Judicial Review [online] that was brought by the New Hospital Campaign (NHC) team, of which I am a member. Our QC put forward a very strong case and was outstanding, but we agreed in our 'debrief' meeting that we really couldn't guess which way the judge will rule. I hope to be in a position to update everyone in time for the December meeting.

In addition to the Judicial Review, Sir Mike Penning MP and the NHC are challenging the West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust (WHHT) and the Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG) via the National Audit Office (NAO), as we believe that these organisations have not followed a proper process. The NAO is meeting with Sir Mike after the findings of the Judicial Review are published.

Highbarns – Collapsed Shaft

During the evening of 14th October, a 6' deep (and between 3' and 4' diameter) shaft was exposed when a resident stepped on a patch of grass. Luckily he realised in time that the grass was giving way and managed to not fall down. He called the fire service and two nearby parish councillors attended (MB & LB). They contacted me and I went straight to the site to see what was happening. The 'hole' is a circular brick built shaft; the fire officer put a pole down to see how deep it was, and ascertained that there was earth around 6' below the surface. They covered it with a small sheet of metal, put tape around it and left the site.

I contacted Mike Penning, who agreed with me that as this is within 5 metres of where concrete was being pumped under the chalk mines, it MUST be properly investigated. Dacorum Council's immediate reaction was to simply fill it, but Mike and I pointed out that we have a duty of care to the residents, and with the history of the area they really had to fully investigate the problem. Thankfully we persuaded DBC to look further into it and they brought Arcadis (the original chalk mines surveyors) in for a look. Arcadis agree with us that it definitely needs to be surveyed and last Friday DBC instructed them to urgently investigate. They should be on site by the time this report is published. As always, I will keep you informed as things progress, but we are hoping for a swift outcome.

Various

- Land at the rear of 292 Belswains Lane – This is now being investigated by our Enforcement team
- School Appeal – The appeal I supported was upheld, which is a fantastic outcome!
- Willow trees – these are in progress and DBC are planning to plant them in November/December

Please don't hesitate to ask if I have missed anything!

Jan Maddern

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