

WILMSLOW PARK ROAD USERS ASSOCIATION

Web Site: www.wilmslowparkroadusers.org.uk

September 2023

Dear Resident,

We are writing to you, as we do each year, seeking your support and contribution to the Wilmslow Park Road Maintenance Fund. The fund is necessary since Cheshire East Council does not maintain or repair the road or footpath through the Park because it is unadopted and private, and any costs have to be borne by those using the road. In order to keep the costs to an absolute minimum all the work done by the Committee members is done on a voluntary basis. Sharing the costs in this way is obviously the most equitable and last year over 90% of residents in the Park made the contribution, the highest ever achieved. We remind the increasingly few who did not that non-payment simply increases the burden on all other residents in the Park.

The contributions directly benefit everyone in the Park. For example, if not for the work of the Association, the road in all likelihood would have been closed indefinitely at the bridge as a result of the subsidence there. Cow Lane, which is not part of the Association's responsibility but has been neglected for many years has also been given running repairs by our volunteers, allowing continued access to Wilmslow Park Road for those residents, e.g. in Briarwood, from where we still receive the fewest contributions.

We also appreciate the financial challenges facing everyone with the increased cost of living and although the next road resurfacing cost is likely to eat very substantially into the Association's cumulative income, we are keeping contributions unchanged once again this year. With the road needing to be resurfaced again in 2025 and this cost inevitably being much greater than initially expected we do expect to have to increase contributions for 2024/25 but we will keep this as low as possible and of course this increase will be further mitigated if everyone contributes this coming year.

The contribution requested for the year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, unchanged from last year, is:-

FRONTAGERS: 40p per linear foot of frontage OR the Non-frontager contribution if this is a greater amount

NON-FRONTAGERS: £20 for the first car and £10 for each additional car

RESIDENCES WITHOUT A CAR: are requested to pay £20

It would be greatly appreciated, wherever possible, if residents would please make their contributions by direct bank transfer into the Association's account. Please contact the treasurer by email at treasurer@wilmslowparkroadusers.org.uk for account details

When making your direct bank transfer, please enter your address in the 18-character reference field of your payment instruction.

If you would still prefer to make your contribution by cheque, or this is your only option, please complete the payment slip below and forward your cheque payable to Wilmslow Park Road Users Association to the Association's Treasurer, John Cudlip at 25 Overhill Road.

We would like to thank all those in the attached list who contributed last year and would ask everyone to support the voluntary work of the Committee by making your contribution as soon as possible, so avoiding the costs of having to send out reminders.

Yours faithfully

Neil Masom (Chairman)

Frontagers. Please pay the greater of £ _____ based on your frontage of _____ ft.

OR the non-frontage contribution shown below based on the number of cars.

Non-frontagers. Please pay £20 for your first car plus £10 for each extra car

Non-car owning residences. Please pay £20

Name _____ Address _____

Amount Enclosed £ _____ Date _____

WPRUA CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

In the rest of the Newsletter you will see the increasing amount of work that our volunteers have undertaken to, amongst other things, make running repairs to the road surface, keep the drains and gullies clear, cut back overhanging hedges, and regularly clear the verges of litter. It is only through this voluntary effort that we are able to keep Wilmslow Park Road to such a high standard, and I am sure we all appreciate their efforts. We have also sought to keep costs to an absolute minimum this year especially in the area of road sweeping, drain and gulley cleaning. Ansa, the Council services provider, have increased the number of occasions that they have swept the road for which we are grateful, and it has allowed us to reduce and focus the areas where we need to pay for specific gulley work. These combined efforts have meant that the impact particularly of the heavy rain we have had this year has been minimised.

Keeping costs to a minimum is also particularly important in the current economic climate - firstly, in terms of people being prepared to contribute to the road fund and we remain extremely grateful to the vast majority that do. Secondly is the impact of inflation - we regularly dress the road surface to keep it in good condition and we are next due to do this in the next year or two, funds permitting, when we also plan to include the 20mph signage which residents have expressed a wish for. Whilst our cash reserves appear healthy, we are expecting a significant price increase from the £27000 it cost us in 2019, and whilst we have yet to receive an estimate from the Council, indications are that it may cost us at least 50% more unless we can negotiate a significant discount. Regular dressing remains the most cost-effective way to maintain the road condition, but in future we may need to consider resurfacing less frequently, or significantly increase contributions, something we are very loathe to consider. We will continue to lobby the Council to keep resurfacing costs down, but it makes your contribution all the more important this time.

I mention above the work of our volunteers, and I have previously reached out to potential volunteers to contribute to the work of the Association. This year I would particularly like to ask if anyone has digital/media skills, particularly to enhance communication with and amongst residents, and managing/improving our website which is pretty much defunct - we have lots of really interesting material about the history of the Park that we would like to add to the website. If anyone would like, or knows someone who might like, to contribute in this important area then please do get in touch.

I could not write a report without mentioning parking, which continues to be an issue especially when cars are parked on the pavement showing little consideration for pedestrians, people with pushchairs and the visually impaired. We kindly ask residents to be mindful of where and how their visitors/contractors park. Residents are reminded that the footpath is a public right of way and blocking it is an offence that the authorities have in the past shown they have been prepared to act on. We will continue to encourage them to do so in the case of persistent offenders.

The other topic I get most comment about is overgrowing border shrubs, whether it be over the footpath or the road itself. As an Association we try and keep the common areas trimmed. United Utilities have also been quite diligent in trimming the holly bushes by their land, but in many other areas it is becoming an increasing issue - Roger has been specifically speaking to people, but I would also again ask residents to be considerate in keeping their borders away from the path and road.

My email for all correspondence is chairman@wilmslowparkroadusers.org.uk

With warmest regards

Neil Masom

WPRUA TREASURER'S REPORT - 2022/23 (John Cudlip)

Following the most recent road resurfacing during 2018/19 and the footpath resurfacing in 2020/21, the Association's asset/cash balance is now building again towards the next major Wilmslow Park Road resurfacing project, the timing of which has yet to be confirmed. It remains our policy to maintain a prudent cash buffer for any unforeseen expenditure going forward, which impacts the timing of the next road resurfacing.

The number of contributions from Wilmslow Park residents and landlords of rented properties for financial year 2022/23 totalled 234 out of 261 possible contributions (90%). This includes one late contribution which was received after the closure of the Association's accounts on 31st March 2023. This will be included in next year's accounts. On behalf of your Committee, I would like to warmly thank those many residents and landlords who contributed to the Road Fund this past year.

Three properties within the Park were either empty or in passing occupation during the year. This does however still mean that 24 residents or landlords within Wilmslow Park decided, for whatever reason, not to contribute to the Fund. It remains our practice to request contributions for the current Association year (April to March) in our annual Newsletter in September. We then deliver reminder letters in November to those properties from which we have yet to receive a contribution. In many cases, this has simply slipped people's minds. We then deliver a further and much smaller number of reminder letters to continuing non-contributing addresses in January. All this clearly continues to take time and effort, especially preparing and posting letters through doors around the Park.

Despite contributions being largely voluntary, most of the Wilmslow Park residents agree that there is a strong obligation on us all to make what is generally considered to be a very modest contribution to the Road Fund. As you will notice, yet again, there is sadly a small 'hard core' of regularly non-contributing households, which is a big shame and very frustrating for their fellow residents who kindly contribute every year. We must all use the through road, and in this respect, non-contributors are no different to the rest of us.

86% of contributing residents chose to make their contributions by direct bank transfer this past year, continuing the year on year increasing trend. Bank charges are now levied. As well as a standing monthly charge, every cheque or cash transaction incurs a small additional charge, so it is very important that residents use their on-line banking facility provided if they have this. This is also clearly more convenient for residents, as well as reducing the administrative burden of those cheque and cash payments.

I continue to work with letting agents (8 different ones) to secure contributions from the landlords of the let properties across Wilmslow Park. Some of these are owned by absent landlords who let their properties directly, not through letting agents. We currently have 19 let properties across the Park. Nearly all landlords of properties working through letting agents again made contributions this past year.

John Cudlip
Treasurer WPRUA

WPRUA OPERATION'S REPORT (Roger Hill)

The activities carried out over the last 12 months are as follows:

- Carried out weekly inspections of the road, clearing gutters and drains, and responded to residents' notification of flooding issues etc.
- Regularly cleared leaf and soil litter from the sides of the road, pavements and around the speed limiter to ensure road and pedestrian space does not narrow.
- In the absence of Council repairs, filled potholes with Tarmac in Cow Lane and where Cow Lane joins Wilmslow Park Road at the Association's expense for the benefit of Cow Lane residents to improve their access to Wilmslow Park Road.
- Laid Tarmac around speed limiters where wear was evident.
- Liaised with Cheshire East Council regarding road sweeping, endeavouring to move as many parked cars off the road to ensure an effective sweep.
- Liaised with private commercial drainage companies, obtaining quotations to clear selected gullies to aid drainage in readiness for the Autumn and Winter.
- Carried out hedge-cutting where foliage was encroaching onto the road and footpath.
- Sprayed weeds along the roadside and pavements throughout Spring and Summer.
- Cut down and sprayed the invasive species Himalayan Balsam close the bridge before it started to smother indigenous plants and potentially damage the bridge structure.
- Liaised with Cheshire Highways, arranging site visits to enable quotations to be issued for road re-dressing, which is due in 2024, as well as rectifying the worn areas of road surface around the speed bollards.
- Liaised with utility and other companies working on Wilmslow Park Road, sought clarification where unannounced works occurred and ensured proper signage was in place as well as acceptable access for residents.
- During the ongoing building development, utility works and bridge repairs in Adlington Road, ensured at appropriate times that the Council placed clear 'no through road' and 'road closed' at each end of Adlington Road to deter Wilmslow Park Road being used as a cut-through to the town centre.
- At the suggestion of a Wilmslow Park resident, applied for a Green Communities grant for £200 to be matched by a similar payment from WPRUA funds to purchase sufficient indigenous wildflower seeds to cover the scarred area by the bridge following the extensive erosion and drainage works, thus encouraging wildlife and for the enjoyment of people who use the road. Attended a Town Council meeting to present our case and it was given the green light subject to approval by the landowner.
- Started to collect historical photographs and maps of Wilmslow Park to enable us to build a history archive on our website. **IF ANYONE HAS OLD PHOTOGRAPHS AND/OR HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT WILMSLOW PARK, I WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL TO RECEIVE THEM (operations@wilmslowparkroadusers.org.uk).**
- Our thanks go once again to our regular litter pickers who help to keep the road so well presented, including Barbara Rosenthal, and Celia and Rachel Tinsley.

WPRUA PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT (Mike Archer)

A) Hillside. (Planning Reference 22/0922/M)

The development of "Hillside" 21 Adlington Road, which involves the partial demolition of the existing building and construction of extensions to provide 10 apartments, was finally approved 1/9/2023. A number of conditions were made, none of which impact directly on the use of Wilmslow Park Road.

We will be keeping the development under close scrutiny to ensure full compliance with the **Prohibition of Entry Order** to Wilmslow Park which renders unlawful any vehicular access from Wilmslow Park Road to Hillside or parking on Wilmslow Park Road related to Hillside either during the construction phase or thereafter.

B) Bryancliffe

The developer of the Bryancliffe site, Oaklyn Construction, hopes to have a planning proposal to submit to CEC Planning Office in the summer, but nothing has appeared on the Planning Portal to date.

With warmest regards,

Mr Neil Masom OBE (Chairman), Southfields chairman@wilmslowparkroadusers.org.uk

Mr John Cudlip (Treasurer), 25 Overhill Road treasurer@wilmslowparkroadusers.org.uk

Ms Anne Quilligan (Secretary), 2A York Crescent secretary@wilmslowparkroadusers.org.uk

Mr Roger Hill (Operations Officer), 6 Blenheim Close operations@wilmslowparkroadusers.org.uk