

BERA – NEWSLETTER 8th May 2017- www.bera.co.uk

1. The date of next **BERA sponsored coffee morning** is nearing and will be on Thursday 18th May from 10:00am to midday in the Methodist Church on the corner of The Broadway and Johnstone. Meet up with neighbours and friends for a drink and a biscuit. Hope to see you there.

2. Also, don't forget to pencil in your diary the **Burges Estate Residents Association Open Garden afternoon** to raise money for the Tram Stop Shelter project. It will be taking place on Saturday 17th June from 1:30-4:30pm. For further information click the link on our website www.bera.co.uk.

3. Many of you may have noticed a hole opening up at the junction of The Broadway and Johnstone Road. It has been cordoned off by the council. The water authority has examined the site but the council are still awaiting the findings of their investigation. We can assure you that once that information becomes available, the highways contractor is on standby to make repairs.

4 We received some information about dubious **cold calling** tree surgeons/landscape gardeners having entered our area, who are suspected to have been committing offences in other parts of the town. We would advise you to think twice about engaging cold calling traders.

5. New Government Litter Strategy for England to curb littering with proposals for new enforcement, education and community engagement

Litter louts could be hit with £150 fines as part of ambitious new plans to tackle rubbish in England.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom unveiled the Government's first to reduce the [Litter Strategy for England](#) near £800m burden to the taxpayer of clean-up costs.

Under the new measures, the most serious litterers could be hit with the £150 fines, while vehicle owners could receive penalty notices when it can be proved litter was thrown from their car – even if it was discarded by somebody else.

The new motoring rules, which are already in force in London, make owners liable even if they didn't throw the litter themselves.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said: "Litter is something that affects us all – blighting our countryside, harming our wildlife, polluting our seas, spoiling our towns, and giving visitors a poor impression of our country.

6. **Kent Elms Junction works update**

As you are aware the restriction for right turn into Bridgewater Drive from Southend bound carriageway – A127, is still ongoing.

Eurovia's task to install the pipe connection to the existing stormwater drainage manhole at the centre of the intersection for 3 metre deep placed a challenge. If, Eurovia decided to excavate directly above the manhole, there would be major disruptions to the junctions with banning of turns and road closures. Therefore, a solution was put in place to dig at the existing island to turn right into Bridgewater Drive and tunnel towards the manhole underground at the intersection. This method only requires the right hand turn into Bridgewater Drive, lane to be closed and this move has considerably less impact on traffic movements.

Currently, the National Grid is still working on the South-Eastern corner as adjusting to the correct level of the gas pipe line accordingly. Therefore, the road widening of the London bound carriageway of the A127 in the south eastern corner will commence in September.

Upcoming works

- Construction of footway, landscape and pedestrian guardrail on the North-Eastern corner of the junction until 663 Prince Avenue
- Construction of the drainage at North-Eastern corner
- Construction of the new pedestrian crossing and footway near the Kent Elms Health Centre

- Drainage connection to the existing stormwater manhole in the centre of the Kent Elms junction
- Installation of wires and lamp to the newly erected lamp post along North-Eastern corner to 663 Prince Avenue
- Concrete work along the middle part of West Bound road –from Kent Elms Health Centre to new bus stop

Off- peak lane closures will still be in place between 09.30 – 15.30. The restrictions around Bridgwater Drive should be completed shortly.

School Crossing Patrol are in place for the duration of the works during school times.

7. Following our comments in a previous newsletter there is some good news about certain **leasehold contracts for new houses**. Once again it seems we are leading the way in fighting the onerous covenant and leasehold situations.

Please see the article below.

Taylor Wimpey, one of the UK's biggest housebuilders, has set aside £130m and apologised to home buyers in a dispute over sharply rising fees.

It is the first major builder to apologise after criticism for leaving customers with onerous leasehold deals.

The contracts meant that ground rents - which are paid to owners of the property - doubled every 10 years.

MPs have described the situation as a "national scandal" and the "PPI of the house building industry".

Other builders have also been criticised for drawing up similar contracts, but are yet to set aside compensation.

- Someone who owns a property outright, including the land it is built on, is a freeholder.
- Most houses are freehold but some might be leasehold - usually through shared-ownership schemes.

- With a leasehold, the person owns the property for the length of their lease agreement with the freeholder.
- Leaseholders have to pay their freeholders ground rent and other fees in order to make changes to their homes.
- When the lease ends, ownership returns to the freeholder unless the person can extend the lease.
- Some wish to buy their freeholds to save themselves these costs.
- **'Ripped off'**
- In a debate on leasehold reform in parliament last year, MPs said thousands of home buyers were being "ripped off left, right and centre" and that it was "nothing short of a national scandal".
- As well as sharply rising ground fees, many of the contracts also allowed third-party firms to buy freeholds to houses, making it more difficult to sell the homes.
- Taylor Wimpey said the leasehold contract, which contained the doubling clause, was issued to some customers between 2007 and 2011.
- The firm said: "It is clear from our review that the impact of these doubling rent review clauses is now causing some of our customers understandable concern."
- The company added that it was "sorry for the unintended financial consequence and concern that they are causing".
- The £130m will go towards making ground rents for those customers "materially less expensive".

Taylor Wimpey said it was in negotiations with the majority of freehold owners to change the contracts, and would "pursue other avenues" to help other customers.