



Next steps – opportunities for consultation

We want to share our plans and hear from as many residents as possible. These plans have been changing and evolving over the last few months, and we are now nearly ready to share these with everyone, before applying for planning permission.

We are planning a consultation event with residents, to take place in the next few weeks. We will look to run this both during the week and also at a time to suit those who are normally working then – when set up, we will make sure all residents are aware of the arrangements.

Darrick Wood Sounding Board



If you wish to be kept informed directly of any progress we make throughout the process, please let us know. You can also join the Sounding Board.

You can speak to Lynn or Vivienne to find out more about how you can get involved. Feel free to pop into the office or you can phone / email us on:



01689 889700 lynnruss@kenistonha.co.uk
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If you have general queries about anything else you have read in this newsletter, please contact one of the following members of staff:

- ⇒ Jonathan Card - Chief Executive
- ⇒ Vivienne Astall - Operations Director
- ⇒ Tony Coward - Property Services Director
- ⇒ Housing Officers - Andrea Spittle or Susan Rimmer

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We write to update you on a petition we recently received, regarding the proposed new homes planned at Darrick Wood, as set out in 'The Future of Darrick Wood' newsletters.

The petition – for those who may not have seen it – raised some concerns regarding our plans to build new homes on the site near to the top of Isabella Drive. **Keniston welcomes all comments from its residents.** Having considered the contents of the petition, we recognise that there is an opportunity for us to communicate better in the future to ensure residents feel fully informed about our plans and have the opportunity to shape our thinking. We have therefore carefully reviewed the points raised and have developed a response with our Board which is outlined in this newsletter.

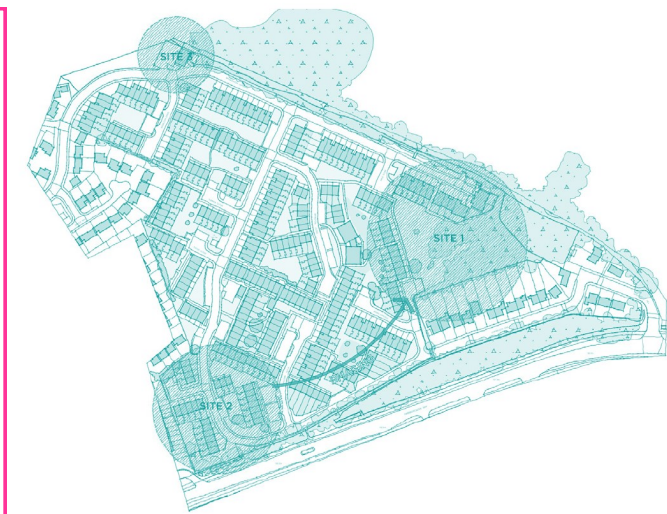
Why are we planning to build new homes at Darrick Wood?

There is – especially in London and the South East – a **huge shortage of genuinely affordable housing.** Council waiting lists are growing, and a lack of available homes means more and more people are having to rely on expensive and insecure private rented housing.

Keniston's Board has made a strategic decision to make a meaningful contribution to meeting this need and our five-year strategy and finances allow for a building programme of new homes. Land is expensive to buy, and suitable sites are hard to find. Our approach therefore includes – where appropriate – building on land that we already own to deliver high quality and secure homes for those who need them.

While we think that Darrick Wood is suitable for building between 30 and 40 additional homes, our plans are very much at the beginning stage of developing our proposals.

We have not yet applied to Bromley Council for planning permission and we always planned to engage with residents before doing so.



History of the estate

We do appreciate that there has in the past been some disruption from building works at Darrick Wood. Some 15 years ago we needed to carry out a programme of structural work to make sure all the houses were stable and safe. Nine years ago we built the new homes at the top of Broadwater Gardens. When selecting contractors, we are careful to choose those who are used to working on existing estates and who treat residents with respect. **When it comes to doing any works on an estate, we will not cause any more disruption than necessary** – and we wish to work with residents to ensure our future approach works well at Darrick Wood.





The Future of Darrick Wood

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The Future of Darrick Wood

We think that Darrick Wood is a great place to live, providing good quality homes for around 850 people. The satisfaction survey we carried out last year tells us that a high proportion of Darrick Wood residents agree – **86% of you said you were satisfied with your neighbourhood**, and **91% satisfied with the quality of your home**. Nothing we are doing or planning should change this. In fact, we believe there will be opportunities to further enhance the quality of the estate. We are keen to see whether for example we can improve the open spaces and we would very much welcome input from all residents on this, including through the Sounding Board of interested residents.

We will this year be looking further at the options for the **community centre** – the current building is getting to the end of its usable life, and the building itself is not ideal for all the potential uses. We know that it is a valuable community resource, so we want to protect the centre’s longer term future. We will be consulting with residents over the next weeks and months to help take this forward.



Our approach to engaging with residents regarding the development

Our approach to any development of existing estates is that we will be open and honest, and to try and include improvements to benefit all existing residents, as part of the overall package. This has been the approach we have endeavoured to deliver for Darrick Wood.

Early on in the process, we set up a resident **Sounding Board**, of interested residents who we could talk to, helping to shape the plans for the estate as they move forward. All residents were offered the opportunity to join in with this via a newsletter in May last year. Eight residents volunteered as a result. The membership of this group is not fixed, and we welcome all interested residents who are willing to engage constructively with us.

In addition, we have sought to gain wider feedback from residents on wider estate issues such as via the questionnaire survey early last year. We know from this that a number of residents were concerned about poor mobile reception and internet – **so we are planning to install a Wi-Fi network across the estate**. Our approach throughout has been to encourage residents to work with us as much as possible, but we recognise that there is more we can do to engage with you so we can get the best outcomes for everyone.



We want to continue to engage with the **Sounding Board**, but we also want to ensure that we regularly communicate with all residents about our plans. This is why we have produced a series of **‘The Future of Darrick Wood’ newsletters** for all residents on the estate, and we will continue to produce these, and to update the website and Facebook page. If residents would like updates by different communication avenues, such as text message or email, we can also develop these if desired.



The Future of Darrick Wood

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Plans for ‘Site 1’ – the ‘wooded area’

The petition suggests that Keniston has been unclear about where new homes may be built – whether in the ‘wooded area’ or on the grassed area at the top end of Isabella Drive. **The designs have been evolving over a number of months – and nothing is yet fixed**. We have not submitted a planning application as yet, and our intention is to ensure that we properly consult with residents and other interested parties at a series of events before we submit an application. All residents will have an opportunity to see what is being planned, and to talk directly to the architects that are working with us. You will be able to see the plans and how they have evolved, and to say what you think.



Plans for Site 2

As referred to in the last ‘The Future of Darrick Wood’ newsletter, we are also looking at building a small number of new homes on ‘Site 2’, in the south west corner of the estate.

Impact on existing residents

Any building work causes a degree of disruption to those living nearby. **We plan to minimise this and have strict controls over activity such as working hours**. Our contractors – carefully chosen – will be fully aware that they are working on an estate with existing residents, and will show proper respect and consideration of others’ needs. We will work with residents to develop our approach to this in more detail.



Impact on wildlife

The petition recognises that there is a lot of wildlife in the area, and this is valued by residents. **We are fully committed to ensuring that our plans do not harm valuable local wildlife**. We have already carried out an ecology assessment, and the council, as part of the process of considering our planning application, will need to ensure that our plans will not damage the local wildlife.

