

CRS June 2025 Newsletter

Chairman's Introduction

I have pleasure in offering you our latest CRS Newsletter. I hope that there is content to interest you. There are pieces relating to local landmarks including the Edgbaston Croquet Club, Martineau Gardens and Botanical Gardens, as well as a report on the fascinating lecture given for us by John Claughton on language learning at Harborne Academy.

The work of the CRS Committee continues. We remain in close dialogue with Calthorpe Estates, Principle Estate Management and our MP Preet Gill over the issues of outstanding accounts, cash reserve fund transfers and debt management including outstanding service charge payment arrears. Some of these issues relate to the delays in the handover of financial information to Principle Estate Management from the previous managers (FirstPort), which were set out in a circular dated 25th April from Calthorpe Estates to some of our affected members - some received this circular twice!

In addition, and in accord with our concerns at the safety or otherwise of our local roads, some CRS Committee members along with members of a local Streetwatch group, have formed a Community Speedwatch group which has begun to monitor speeds on our roads.

Finally, a reminder of our next social event which is to be held at Martineau Gardens on August 10th, come and enjoy brunch and a gardener's question time with us!



Hadyn Cooper (L) Cllr Deirdre Alden, Cllr Matt Bennett

Edgbaston community garden opening

The morning of the 13th May was the opening of the Calthorpe Estates sponsored Community Garden in Edgbaston Village. Originally a discrete piece of neglected land, Calthorpe resources created a pocket park, designed with a variety of local interest groups, in a vibrant commercial area. Calthorpe are pleased with the fact that they primarily used recycled materials from the estate. The opening was well attended with local councillors and other local names of repute. A few public words, including the CE Chief Executive, Haydn Cooper, a walk around, networking between influencers and canapés with soft drinks. We look forward to community engagement to enjoy this pleasant place.



Community Speedwatch 5 CRS members recently undertook training with PCSO Scott Ohren to undertake Community Speedwatch on local roads. This initiative is aimed at improving road safety by reducing vehicle speeds. A calibrated speed gun is used under the supervision of a police officer and vehicles travelling at speed are advised about their infraction by letter from the police detailing time, site and speed.

Fines are not levied but data from are forwarded centrally so that the police may know of likely "hot spots" of speeding that they may wish to target with traffic police who have full legal enforcement powers.

To date, speedwatch sessions have taken place on Norfolk Road and Augustus Road which resulted in finding almost one vehicle per minute breaking the speed limit – a rate that may not surprise many of you who share our concerns about speeding locally! Further sessions are planned, including at St James Road and Harborne Road. If you wish for further information, to be trained to join the group, or to suggest sites worthy of review, please contact us.

CRS Traffic Incident Log -A reminder that CRS is trying to compile evidence about local road safety by way of collecting information about significant accidents or incidents. A reporting form can be found on our website [here](#)

CRS Litter Picks

You may know that CRS runs litter picks at two sites – Chad Square and Templefields on the fourth Saturday morning of each month. These have been suspended for the last few months during the refuse collectors strike because of concerns that leaving bags of litter as we usually do at an agreed point for pick up by council workers may have attracted fly tipping.

As refuse collections seem to be regular again in our area of Birmingham, it has been agreed with advice from Councillor Deirdre Alden, that the litter picks will restart on Saturday June 28th at the usual venues but with collectors taking a bag of collected litter to join their own domestic litter for collection from home.

You are very welcome to join us to help tidy up the estate area and be rewarded with a drink afterwards at The Physician.



Chrissie Twigg & John Cloughton

Education in a Multilingual Society - Review

There was a splendid turnout on a balmy April evening (when a Pimms in the back garden was, no doubt, a tantalising option) for John Cloughton's provocative talk on multilingualism. Top marks to Calthorpe Residents!

As former Chief Master at King Edward's School (KES), John told us that in 1970 there were just 3 non-white children compared with today's multi-ethnic mix, 50% of whom describe themselves as bi-lingual. John also pointed out some 82% of primary school pupils at West House School are of non-European descent and that 85% of children at City Road Primary do not have English as a first language. And yet, rather than embracing the myriad mother-tongues of these schoolchildren, traditional language teaching has ignored the languages spoken at home with the effect that many pupils, until recently, felt part of their identity had to be hidden. John recommended Osman Yousefzada's book *The Go-Between* about growing up in Balsall Heath to help understand multiculturalism in all its complexities.

Frustrated that existing primary language education concentrated on individual languages such as French and Spanish rather than offering a more holistic approach to language learning, John and fellow language specialists developed WOLLOW, (the World of Languages for Languages of the World) to foster a deeper understanding of language structure, grammar and the history and development of languages with the aim of promoting inclusivity and a greater appreciation for linguistic diversity.

Top marks go to John for a rousing talk and top marks to Harborne Academy for providing a superb venue. Double top marks, however, were awarded by all who munched them to the delicious samosas.



Edgbaston Croquet Club

Edgbaston Croquet Club has been aptly described as “Edgbaston's hidden gem” on the Calthorpe Estate. It has been on its current site since 1915, but its location behind the high hedge in Richmond Hill Road just along from The White Swan pub renders it all but invisible to even those who pass by regularly.

Entering through its gate however, the visitor will immediately behold three immaculate tournament-size croquet lawns at the far end of which is the little clubhouse which catches the evening sun, a wooden gazebo providing shelter and shade, and a patio area ideal for barbecues and entertaining.

Croquet is an amateur sport and as such participation is much cheaper than in others – no huge physical strength is required and improvement is as much from tactical ability than shotmaking. It's often described as a cross between chess and snooker on grass!

Many of the club's members just play socially, but others with a more competitive edge can be seen at team events at home and at other West Midlands clubs. Because of the excellence of its lawns (the best in the West Midlands!) the Club has often hosted national and international croquet events.

Croquet is a sport which can be taken up at any time in life – our members range in age from 13 to 94! Newcomers are always made most welcome and can take advantage of the free sessions on offer before committing to membership. Special subscriptions are available for first-year members, and those still in full-time employment.

The club's [website](#) provides information on all of the above, plus the club's history and links to the sport's governing body Croquet England, where the national and international croquet scene are described.



Crowdfunding Cuppa at Martineau Gardens, Saturday 19th July 12-2.00 pm

As part of the campaign to raise £50,000 towards the cost of a new £1 million community hub, Martineau Gardens launched the “Small Seeds, Big Dreams” appeal in June 2025. The final Crowdfunding Cuppa will take place between 12pm -2 pm on Saturday 19th July at Martineau Gardens, [27 Priory Road, Edgbaston B5 7UG](#). Over 10,000 packets of wild seeds are being handed out by the charity so come along and collect a packet to plant a little joy in your own window box or garden.

Details of the crowdfunder are [here](#).



Development Plans Lunch at Chapter Wednesday, September 24th, 2025 Noon

Welcome drink | Two course lunch £33.75 per person (all-inclusive of VAT and service charge)

Come along to Chapter for a deliciously seasonal 2 course lunch plus Welcome Drink on arrival to hear about the fantastic development plans for the Botanical Gardens.

'Growing our Green Heritage' is a £25m masterplan to safeguard Birmingham's Botanical Gardens. The £19.5m, four and a half year first phase of the capital development project is anticipated to start in late 2025 and will restore the Grade II* historic glasshouse estate, improve visitor facilities, and extend community engagement to create a place of horticultural excellence and an outstanding green space for Birmingham and the Midlands' region.'

Book by ringing 0121 200 3020. Full payment will be taken at the end of August.

What's On

- July and August have the potential to be busy months for our members with a host of local events and activities they can get involved in, some of which we have highlighted below.
 - The long weekend of July 10th - 13th sees Birmingham hold its Annual Cocktail Weekend with three of our local bars (Smoke and Ash, Chapter and The Highfield) being amongst the 46 citywide establishments offering up bespoke cocktails and mocktails. Further details on this [here](#).
 - Local restaurant Chapter have a busy few months including a breakfast offering for the Edgbaston Test Match days, and a couple of collaborations with other local concerns. On 8th July an evening collaboration with Elmhurst Ballet School holding a black-tie summer gala, and on 14th August they are collaborating with Loki Wines on a Hattingley Valley Wine Dinner. For more information please go [here](#):
 - Greenfield Crescent is also hosting Summer Sounds on the Crescent, involving free live music events every Saturday (excluding market days) on the Crescent from 3-6pm
 - The summer sun sees The Highfield making use of their wonderful garden with a series of events over the next few months including live music and bbqs. Please go [here](#).
 - Winterbourne are also making the most of their beautiful Garden hosting on 9th August Shakespeare's comedy Illyria - picnics and blankets welcome.
 - And whilst on the subject of beautiful gardens Martineau Gardens recently provided further information on their planned brand new community hub, an ambitious £1million project that is just beginning – read about their plans [here](#).
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Next CRS event

CRS Sunday Breakfast with croissants and pastries at Martineau Gardens, 27 Priory Road, B5 7UG, Sunday 10th August 2025, 10:00 – 12:00. **Your gardening questions answered** plus an update of developments at the Gardens. The fee is £5:00. To reserve your place, please use this [email](#).

Closing remarks

We hope that you have enjoyed this Newsletter and found items of interest. Please let us know what you think and contact us with your news and events so that we can publicise them to fellow members.

In addition, we love to hear from individuals and resident's groups across the Calthorpe Estate. This enables us to represent your views and ask your questions at regular meetings with Calthorpe Estates senior executives, the University of Birmingham and Birmingham City University, and when we attend Ward Forms and Police Community meetings.

The best way for you to contact us is through the [Contact form](#) on our website, or use the [email address](#) where contact form submissions are collated. All communications will be acknowledged, but it should be noted that detailed responses will only be provided to paid up members of CRS.