

Notes from Calthorpe Residents Society Extraordinary General Meeting for the purpose of discussion about the proposed Calthorpe Estates Freehold Sales

Held on Thursday July 2nd, 2026, at Edgbaston High School for Girls

1. Welcome and introductions.

- a. Peter Arnold (PA) (CRS Chair) welcomed over 175 people including Preet Gill MP for Edgbaston and Councillors Matt Bennett, Deirdre Alden (Edgbaston), Sam Forsyth (Quinton) and Martin Brooks OBE (Harborne) as well as CRS officers Nick Brown (Secretary) and Colin Morley (Treasurer) to the meeting. He thanked Clare Macro Head of Edgbaston High School for Girls for allowing use of the Senior Hall for the meeting.

2. Background, Calthorpe Estates Plan to Sell off 200 lots.

PA introduced the matter by outlining a timeline commencing with a telephone call that he had received on May 22nd from Haydn Cooper (HC) CEO of Calthorpe Estates (CE). In that call HC told PA of Calthorpe Estates plans to sell land off in 200 lots (including Residential blocks, private roads and amenity areas) with the first sale by auction on July 9th, 2026, and wondered whether CRS members may be interested in this news! PA questioned how residents were to be informed; HC answered that sale boards would be erected in advance of sales! This was followed by a letter to PA received on May 26th which outlined the reasons for the sale (largely concerned with changing legislation which CE claims to disincentivise landowners) and the view that CE would wish to “sell off for the benefit of residents”.

- a. The first plans were revealed in a communication of June 8th and on June 11th more detailed plans appeared including the proposal to sell a large lot at Hampshire Drive including the roads and amenity area. The latter was described as having “development potential”.
- b. On June 12th CRS officers along with Councillors Bennett and Alden met with HC and Richard Suart (RS) (CE Property Director) for a robust discussion! At the meeting as well as expressing extreme disappointment with CE’s actions and proposed timescales and methodology which CRS considers disadvantageous to residents CE were urged to delay the first sales and to reveal the fuller plan for sales over the coming years.
- c. After a couple of days CE responded and refused to move on any of the requests made to them but on June 17 communicated once more with an offer to remove the road(s) from the Hampshire Drive sale on the condition that residents respond positively within 48 hours! This could not be accommodated by the residents who had no opportunity to formally organise a reply to the proposal, However, the road(s) were subsequently removed from the sale and will be sold at the next auction on October 22nd, 2026.
- d. CRS has consistently expressed to CE that it considers the timescales and method of sale through auction goes completely against the expressed wish from CE to sell off to residents. Purchases by residents of roads and amenity areas are not simple and will require at the least the establishment of management companies with clear governance, establishment of bank accounts, sound legal advice and more to say nothing of the consideration of the position of residents who would not wish to join any buying consortium. 5 weeks is simply not enough!
- e. In addition, CRS has received many expressions of anxiety and uncertainty from residents about the sales, their potential impact on the future of the area. These have been brought home forcefully to CE!

3. Calthorpe Residents Society’s actions to date

- a. Colin Morley described some of the actions of CRS, in addition to the above. These include.
- b. Member wide Communications. E mails, these have mainly focussed on keeping members informed as we receive information from CE and other stakeholders. As PA said there has been a vacuum when it comes to communication from CE to residents hence we are trying as best as we can to fill this gap

- c. Member Meetings. There have been two such meetings so far and these have been open to both members and non-members. The first meeting focussed on the amenity and pond sale and was attended by almost 100 residents and now this meeting is a general catch up on the land sales.
- d. Communications with individual members and groups. There have been a large number of e mails received with members questions and concerns. We have tried to answer all of these as best we can and are keeping a log of issues and questions for use in our thinking and our discussions with CE.
- e. Meetings with CE. We have focussed on getting over the anger, dismay and concern felt by the residents and highlighting issues that the sales are and will lead to. We have robustly argued that the process needs to slow down and that they need to communicate directly with the residents of their estate.
- f. A letter has been sent to Sir Euan Hamilton Anstruther-Gough Calthorpe expressing our and the residents dismay and disappointment in CE's plans and asking him to consider a delay to allow residents more time to organise.
- g. Liaising with Local Councillors. We have been heavily involved in what they are doing and vice versa and they joined us in our initial meeting with CE.
- h. Involvement with the Press. Statements, information and quotes have been provided to the press and have resulted in an Article on Birmingham live social media sites yesterday and front page spread in the Birmingham Mail today. We will continue to liaise with the press and keep the pressure on Calthorpe Estates to involve residents in the process.
- i. We have been very focused on imminent sale of amenity land and pond and lessons from that will prove helpful in the work required across the Estate.
- j. Legal advice. In the past few weeks, we have approached lots of legal professionals on the estate for advice, and ideas. Given the very specialist nature of law relating to the leasehold reform act and scheme of management this is outside the comfort zone of most legal professionals however some ideas and advice have proved useful. To obtain full legal guidance on any one specific issue would probably cost £5-£10k as a minimum. We will also need legal advice in posting any objections to planning applications that may be made in the future by new owners around the estate.
- k. Review of the legal documents. Having said the "legals" are quite complex we have reviewed the 100 plus page legal packs for the lots going to auction next week and some of our understanding of issues arising from this review we have managed to confirm with the Calthorpe Estate legal team – these will be discussed later on the agenda.
- l. Going Forward. CRS has limited resources, the committee is a small team with limited specialist property legal knowledge and most of the committee work full time. Hence going forward our work will focus on keeping members informed of developments, keeping the pressure on CE through a variety of means, and in setting up distinct work streams for residents to get more involved in the process as ultimately the land sales are going to affect a large number of the Estates residents with many of the houses in the estate potentially losing value. These workstreams we will discuss later in the agenda.

4. Chancellors Hall RA & Norfolk Park RA actions

- a. Nick Brown spoke to this both as an expression of facts about what has occurred and as an exemplar of what may be needed in other parts of the Estate.
- b. The significant amenity area included in this sale is the first of 5/6 such lots across the Estate as a whole. It is quintessentially "Edgbaston" with delightful green grassland and a pond. Albeit the latter has seen better days having been neglected for some years! Its "potential for development" leant urgency to the need for organised action.
- c. Jonathan Middle (Chair of Chancellors Hall RA) established with Norfolk Park RA and CRS a meeting held at Berrow Court on June 23rd at which people, ideas and feelings were exchanged!
- d. Actions followed immediately.

- e. Two ACVs were nominated. An asset of community value (ACV) is a building or piece of land that is deemed to improve the social wellbeing or interests of the local community. A building or piece of land is judged to have community value if it furthers the cultural, recreational or sporting interests of the local area. Listing an asset gives local groups a window of time to raise funds and bid on the property if it is put up for sale. ACV applications were completed for both the Amenity area and Rose Garden on Norfolk Park and will be considered possibly as early as Friday Nick thanked Matt Bennett and Council Officer Rachel West for their considerable help with this matter.
 - f. Town and Village Green (TVG) application. A town or village green is an area of open space which by immemorial custom has been used by the inhabitants of the town, village or parish, for the purposes of playing lawful games and recreation. The core requirement common for applications to register new town and village greens under section 15 of the Commons Act 2006 is that: "a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, have indulged as of right in lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of at least 20 years." Registration of land as a green is likely to prevent development. Therefore, it is a serious issue for developers if land is at risk of registration as a green. A great team of people led by Carol Ann and Bill Fletcher completed a few months' work in a week which culminated in CRS (nominated applicant: Nick) placing an application for Village Green status at midday on July 1st the day that bids were due!
 - g. Events have, of course, continued apace!
 - h. We discovered a few hours prior to the meeting that the amenity land and pond had been acquired prior to the auction by local residents. Congratulations to Harj, Randeep and their small team from Yelverton Drive whose bid for the land has been accepted!
 - i. CRS had met with CE at 4pm earlier today and at that meeting CE did admit that they need to improve their communications! And to reconsider timescales for sales to give residents greater information and notice. CRS will now meet regularly with CE specifically to discuss these matters. CE have also agreed that they will consider selling complex lots such as development areas with many roads and/or some residential blocks in more realistic lots e.g., particular roads on a development area rather than all of them and specific residential blocks rather than all of them all on a development area. This will both simplify sales and offer residents something of particular relevance and appeal that they may truly wish to own and take control of! However, key issues for the ownership of roads including the retention of reserve funds for their use on maintenance and the ability of a new owner to legally demand service charges remain uncertain. Finally, CE expressed that "We would rather work with residents than acrimoniously!"
5. MP Preet Gill and Local Councillors Matt Bennett and Deirdre Alden all of whom have been working hard to assist residents about these matters were invited to speak.
- a. Preet Gill MP spoke of her frequent communications with Haydn Cooper and her wish to impress upon him the need for constructive relationships. A theme to which she often returned in her address. She told the meeting that Haydn had assured her of his wish to work with residents at all times. She also repeatedly messaged the need to preserve the area and that this could best be achieved by people working together and working together with CE.
- She referred attendees to the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Bill which whilst not finalised should come into force next year. This would give leasehold residents and local residents additional rights to hold land and property as commonhold. These sales have clearly been scheduled to be in advance of such a change!
- She reiterated that CE have now undertaken to give three months' notice of sales including those of roads and amenity areas and urged residents to strengthen existing associations or form new ones in order to begin to get organised in a timely fashion! She also opined that residents may wish to either get together, or in the case of small lots that are joined to existing plots, act and bid to CE in advance of auction to secure what they wish!

- b. Matt Bennett then spoke reflecting on his disappointment at CE's initial response and his hope that the slightly more positive messages that we were now hearing were carried through.

He reinforced the messages about the amount of time and work that had gone into the last few weeks and the value of making applications for ACV and TVG status. These need to be considered in other localities as a matter of urgency!

He also underlined the need for frequent meetings and communication as well as judicious involvement of the press.

Finally, like Preet his rallying cry was about "working together to preserve Edgbaston as we love it".

- c. Deirdre then responded to a question asked outside the meeting about the possibility of Birmingham City Council adopting the currently unadopted roads informed the meeting the Council would only consider adopting/buying roads in good condition! This rules out Hampshire Drive which is currently subject to large potholes and probably many if not most other private roads.

6. Current position

- a. Even first auction schedule has now been foreshortened as bids needed to have been placed by July 1st at 4pm – yesterday!
- b. Answers from CE to questions regarding reserve funds and ability of new owners to raise service charges in future raise more questions than they currently solve.
- c. However, CE has agreed to give three months notice for future sales, to meet regularly with CRS to discuss the schedule of sales and to break down complex areas into smaller units including individual roads and residential blocks rather than sell as a whole.

7. Questions, comments, suggestions from the floor

- a. John Worwood expressed thanks to all involved in the considerable amount of work undertaken to date. He particularly wished to thank Carol Ann Fletcher for her work on the TVG application and the new owners of the amenity area for their action! He also asked everyone to consider volunteering to work toward the goal of preserving the area.
- b. Councillor Sam Forsyth reminded the meeting that CE extends beyond Edgbaston into Harborne and Quinton where she is a local councillor. She proceeded to remind the meeting of other significant pockets of green that may not be up for sale now but soon will be! The need to act and seek ACV and TVG status as a matter of urgency. She informed the meeting that TVG status is not easily gained (only one has been granted in Birmingham of late) but applications must be made. To that end an application may be made for the green at Fugelmere Close.
- c. The next question was about valuation advice to which the response was that value would clearly relate to planning possibilities. People were alerted to the "overage" clause in the sale packs giving CE 30% of an increase in value.
- d. A question was asked about whether anything was "off the table" with regard to sale.
 - i. CRS has only been informed that the Guinea Gardens, Bowls Club Martineau Gardens and Harborne Allotments (but not including the strip of land next to the allotments) are not to be sold. If any more information is made available this will be forwarded to members.
- e. John Hatch thanked everyone for the work undertaken so far but recognised that more was going to be needed!
- f. Arthur asked about CRS rationale for sales and in similar vein Jeremy asked, "why are Calthorpe doing this?"
 - i. CRS responded that CE has expressed that the principal reasons are concerned with legislative changes which disincentivise landownership along with their duty/wish to "get best value" for the Estate Trustees. CE is a commercial property company that simply doesn't want to run what it currently runs for little return!

- ii. Preet Gill added her view reinforcing the statement about CE as a property company saying that its losses on the residential Estate currently exceed income. She also repeated her view that these sales are a clear attempt to move ahead of the Commonhold and leasehold reform Bill. Finally, she informed the meeting of her research into some aspects of the original plan for the Estate which included mention of space and trees but she was unsure that these provisions would obstruct a determined developer.
 - g. A question was asked about existing renters.
 - i. CRS has asked about this and CE has stated that it intends to keep a small portfolio of short rentals, the position for longer lease rentals is sadly unclear.
 - h. Chris Spencer-Jones questioned the commitment to keep roads in good order that is explicit in the current arrangements.
 - i. Here again the concerns about the future of reserve funds and the future ability of owners to levy service charges clouds matters considerably with the serious risk posed by non-payers to the maintenance of the environment for all!
 - ii. In light of the costs to residents as new buyers and the potential lack of appeal to other “right” buyers at the meeting with CE earlier NB had offered CE a not entirely tongue-in - cheek bid of £1 per road; this was not accepted!
 - i. A resident of Fugelemere Close raised the question of the future of the Scheme of Management reminding the meeting of its origin enforcing obligations on freeholders as they began to appear in the 60s/70s.
 - i. CRS has been clearly informed that the Scheme of Management will continue to apply including where there are new owners. Its enforcement may yet be another matter!
 - j. Carol Ann Fletcher thanked the meeting for its thanks to her and reflected the sheer amount of work and teamwork involved in the TVG application for others who are now considering such!
8. Next steps
- a. CRS will endeavour to keep members up to date and involved as best it can.
 - b. CRS strongly believes that each resident’s area needs to mobilise rapidly to consider its needs whether that be to secure the future of valuable green land or to buy the road or block where they live.
 - c. CRS will establish working groups o share expertise, advice and knowledge for
 - i. Residential blocks
 - ii. Private roads
 - iii. Amenity areas
 - iv. Planning applications
 - d. If you are interested in being part of any of these please email Nick on info@calthorperesidents.org
 - e. PA requested that people join CRS and encourage others to join because that can only make our voice stronger with CE. This was a message strongly endorsed by Preet Gill and the Councillors!
9. The meeting closed at 8.30 but informal discussion continued for some time!