



# **Ethelburt Avenue Road Improvement Group**

## **Survey of Residents' Views, March 2021**

Dear Neighbour,

### **Introduction**

In 2004 and 2007, surveys were issued by the Road Improvement Group of the Residents' Association asking for the views of Ethelburt Avenue residents about the state of the road and how we should manage its maintenance. Many properties have been sold since then, so we are re-issuing the survey to get the views of current residents. If you are a tenant, you are welcome to take part in this survey, but we request that you also pass a copy to the house owner.

We thought it would be helpful to give a bit of background:

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

The road and other common areas of Ethelburt Avenue are owned by Herbert Collins Estates Limited (HCEL). This company was formed in 2017 when the freehold of all land previously held by Woodhill Properties Limited, a company owned by members of the Collins family, was transferred to it, along with the benefit of and the right to enforce covenants.

Road maintenance is the responsibility of all homeowners in Ethelburt Avenue due to covenants in the leases, or covenants in transfers if the freehold has been purchased.

Ethelburt Avenue is classified by the highway authority, Southampton City Council (SCC), as an Unadopted Highway. This means anyone has a right to travel up and down the road, but no right to wait or park. Parking on the road is at the discretion of the freeholder, HCEL.

If the road condition falls below a reasonable standard, SCC have the power to require the road to be improved by the frontagers (effectively all households) and if they fail to act, to undertake repairs itself and charge the frontagers for the cost of doing so. SCC last made such a request in 1995, at which time the residents undertook the improvement works themselves.

## **Current Maintenance Management**

The Herbert Collins Estates Residents Association (HCERA) was established to advance and protect the interests of residents and preserve the amenities of the estate. This role currently includes maintaining Ethelburt Avenue to an adequate and uniform standard, with homeowners (freeholders and leaseholders) in Ethelburt Avenue sharing the effort and cost.

The Road Improvement Group (RIG) is a sub-group of HCERA whose purpose is to co-ordinate road maintenance activities in Ethelburt Avenue and is composed entirely of volunteer residents.

The current road contribution level of £30 a year has remained unchanged for many years and has been progressively devalued through inflation. The current contributions are only sufficient to pay for pothole repairs. There are cash reserves of £16,000, but these could quickly run out. For example, the asphalt ends of the road, which are the responsibility of residents, are rapidly deteriorating and would cost over half of this amount to fully repair and resurface, leaving little in reserve for unexpected problems.

## **RIG survey**

To gauge current opinion about how we maintain the road, whether the standard of maintenance meets expectations and the appetite for funding improvement works, the RIG invites all residents to complete the following survey. The first section of the survey includes the same questions asked in 2007 to see whether opinions in general have changed. The questions are worded assuming an individual is responding, but returns as a household are fine.

You can drop off your completed questionnaire at any of Numbers 18, 34 or 58 Ethelburt Avenue. Please return your responses by 19 March. If you prefer to complete this electronically, this questionnaire will be made available via the HCERA Facebook page and the HCERA website [www.herbertcollins.co.uk](http://www.herbertcollins.co.uk). Returns can also be made via email to [rig@herbertcollins.co.uk](mailto:rig@herbertcollins.co.uk)

The survey can be completed and submitted anonymously if you prefer.

The results will be collated and a summary provided once available – which will be the same information used by the RIG to produce a plan for future maintenance that takes the majority view.

In anticipation, many thanks for your views.

Best wishes, RIG

Name (optional):

House Number (optional):

Please tick the box nearest your views.

### Section 1

Which of the following do you consider to be problems at present? Please tick the appropriate boxes:	Major Problem	Minor Problem	No Problem
Damage to own vehicle arising from potholes and loose stones.			
Discomfort driving over bumpy surfaces.			
Excess vehicle speeds.			
Poor provision for pedestrians.			
General appearance.			
Damage to verges from parked vehicles.			
“Nuisance” parking by vehicles not owned by Ethelburt residents at the ends of the road.			
“Nuisance” parking by vehicles owned by Ethelburt residents			
Drainage issues / flooding.			
The effect that the current road condition has on house prices.			
Dust related nuisance and possible health issues arising from it.			
Untaxed / unused vehicles creating a nuisance			
Other — please describe.			

## Section 2

Views on options for altering the way the road is maintained in future.

Option	Agree	Disagree	Maybe, pending more information
The typical road condition of Ethelburt Avenue is suitable for the demands placed on it.			
I consider the condition of Ethelburt Avenue overall needs to be improved.			
I currently contribute to the road maintenance fund.  <i>If you don't currently contribute, please indicate why in the comments box at the end of the survey.</i>			
I would prefer to contribute to the road maintenance fund at the current level, increasing with inflation, in the knowledge no improvements could be made.			
I would prefer to pay more into the road fund to see the condition of Ethelburt Avenue improved at a faster rate than at present.			
Having the option of monthly payments to the road fund – through direct debits, would make me more willing to contribute more.			
I would like the road surface maintained as gravel with no significant changes. Cost as at present, increasing with inflation over time.			
I would like to see improvements and for those improvements to be made quickly. I would be willing and able to contribute to the cost “up front”, even if this were several thousand pounds.			

### Section 3

Questions about specific proposals and what they might cost to carry out. These measures could be introduced over time, so the total funding needn't be required immediately. Costs are approximate and would need to be confirmed. Costs assume that every household in the road contributes.

Option	Agree	Disagree	Maybe, pending more information
I would like to see drainage improvements, that would reduce the risk of flooding and volume of water running down the road, helping reduce future maintenance requirements on the gravel. Estimated cost £500 per house for installation, plus ongoing maintenance.			
I would like to see kerbs restored or provided where they don't exist to keep the road separate from the verges and allow improved drainage, reducing the frequency of gravel maintenance. Estimated cost £3,000 per house for installation, plus ongoing maintenance.			
I would consider a bituminous ("tarmac") surface, requiring kerbing, additional drainage and changes to the levels of the road and verges. Cost estimated at £15,000 per house with further annual costs of around £500 per house for ongoing surfacing maintenance in future. No further gravel maintenance.			
I would like Southampton City Council to adopt Ethelburt Avenue, which would involve all works as the bituminous surface proposal above, plus street lighting improvements. Cost estimated at £20,000 per house with no further costs for road maintenance, except verges and greens.*			
I would like additional speed limit signs. These would be provided as repeater signs down the road. Estimated cost up to £20 per house for installation, plus ongoing maintenance.			
I would like a residents parking scheme for Ethelburt Avenue to discourage problem			

<b>Option</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Maybe, pending more information</b>
parking, managed by a private parking operator. Signage would be required plus permits for residents' cars and volunteers to notify the parking operator of infringements. Estimated costs £50 per house per year as running costs.			
Carry out further tree planting works. Minimal cost.			
Improve the appearance of the ends of Ethelburt, possibly with "gate" features or other street furniture to discourage nuisance parking. Cost £50 - £100 a house for installation, plus ongoing maintenance.			

\*The option of the road being made up by Southampton City Council would allow the option of the cost being spread over a maximum 30 year period. Adoption of the road would likely include relief from the responsibilities of maintaining verges.

If you have any views not covered by the survey then please add them in the box below:

Please see page 2 for details of how to submit your views. Thank you for your time completing this questionnaire.

Regards

RIG.