

WENSLEY ROAD ESTATE IMPROVEMENTS

Newsletter | December 2022



WENSLEY ROAD
live. play. grow



Dear Resident,

It has been a difficult year for many, especially at this time of rising energy costs and the cost of living crisis.

The Wensley Road Improvements project has not been immune from such difficulties, and whilst we'd have liked the project to have seen more progress than it has, we're looking forward with optimism to completing 46 new homes and beginning work to improve the existing blocks on the estate.

In the meantime, I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and would like to thank you all for your understanding whilst we go through this period of change. Your support is appreciated and we hope it will be worth it once finished.

Should you need support over the Christmas period, please note our opening times on the back page.

Kind regards,

Zelda Wolfe

Reading Borough Council Assistant
Director of Housing & Communities

PHASE 2 UPDATE

For Phase 2 of the Wensley Road improvements programme, tenders have now been received and we will be reviewing them after Christmas. These will then be assessed with the help of our tenants' panel to appoint a contractor in the new year.

The chosen contractor will then work with officers during a pre-contract period to establish a works programme and process, including the order in which the blocks are improved. We are expecting work to begin on the towers in the late springtime and will update you when the contractor is appointed.

Reading Borough Council
is working with you
to improve your community.

www.wensleyroadimprovements.co.uk



NEW ROAD AND PARKING 3

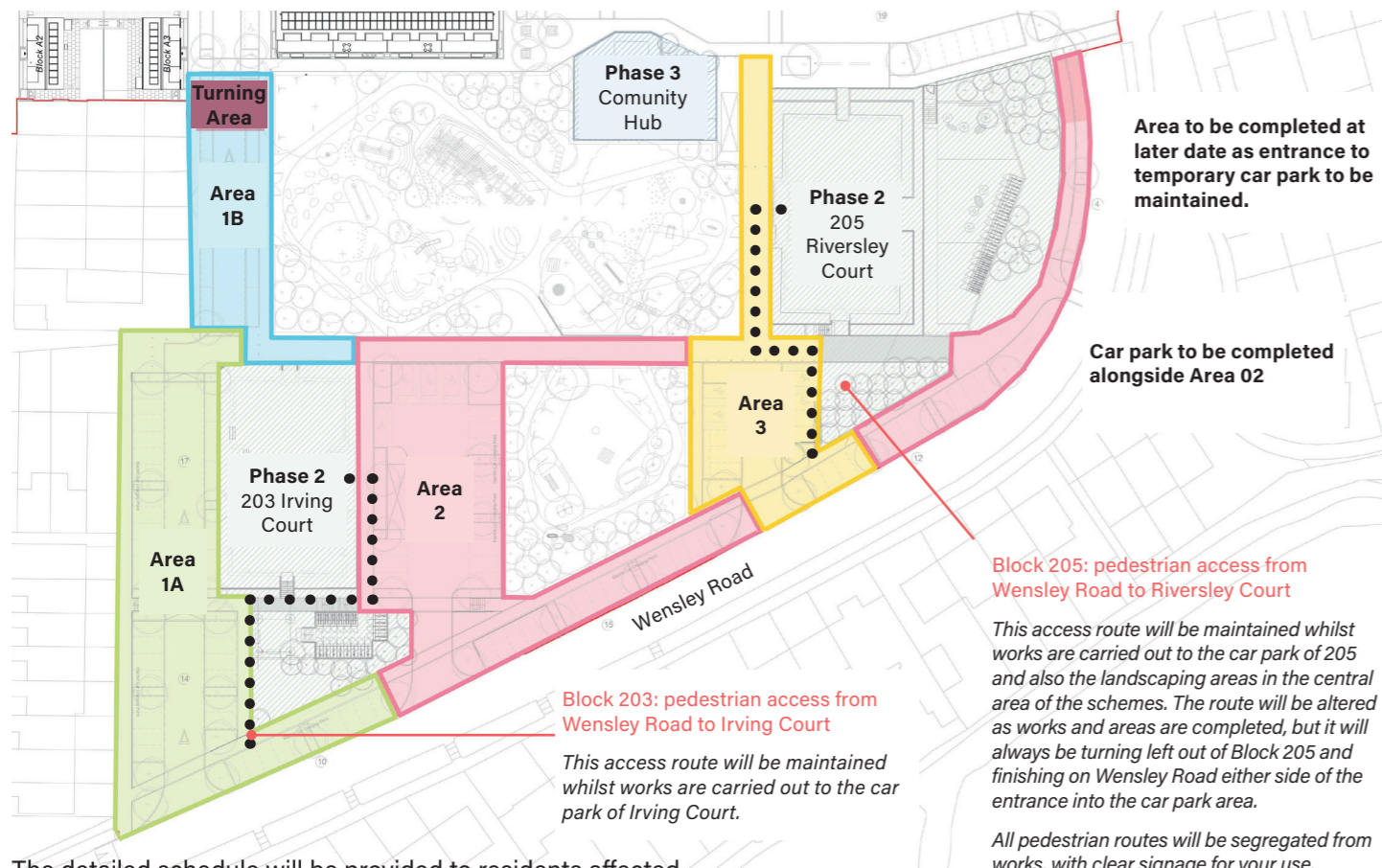
As part of the new development, work to build the new roads and parking spaces has begun. Replacement parking spaces are being built along the new North to South road running through the development and the road will be opened in stages - with the southern end first - to allow access to parking.

Details of the changes were presented at the last drop-in event on 30 November, and will be discussed in more detail at the next drop in in event on 25 January (4pm - 6pm).

The changes will involve a phased programme of opening up new parking areas to allow for existing car parks to

be closed off for redevelopment. The first area is due to be ready early in the new year, with the other areas following on as the existing car parks are emptied for redevelopment. New parking will be available before existing parking areas are closed for work to begin, and pedestrian access will be available from the new parking areas to the front entrances of the blocks.

The first thing to happen will be the opening of Area 01A, and then Area 01B, followed by the closure of 203 carpark - with residents needing to then use the 01 car parks instead.



The detailed schedule will be provided to residents affected in the new year, and will include:

ORDER	AREA	STATUS	WHERE?
FIRST	AREA 1A	OPEN	LOWER PART OF NEW ROAD TO THE WEST OF BLOCK 203
NEXT	AREA 1B	OPEN	MIDDLE SECTION OF NEW ROAD
NEXT	203 CAR PARK	CLOSED	
NEXT	AREA 2	OPEN	TO THE EAST OF BLOCK 203
NEXT	PERIMETER PARKING	OPEN	TO THE SIDE OF BLOCK 205
NEXT	205 CAR PARK	CLOSED	
NEXT	AREA 3	OPEN	BELOW BLOCK 205



Area 1A being prepared

CHRISTMAS EVENTS



WARM WELCOME

Every Tuesday, 10.30-3.00pm, All Nations Christian Centre, Berkeley Avenue

Come along to a warm, friendly environment where you can stay for as long as you want, enjoy a hot drink, chat, puzzles, board games and food. There are also activities available for children.



CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

Saturday 24th December, 4.30pm, outside Coley Baptist Church, Wensley Road

REMEDIAL WORK TO TEMPORARY CAR PARKS

Some residents have raised concerns about both the entrance and exit to the temporary Lesford Road strip car park and the surface of the temporary car park by 205. We have arranged with our Highways works team to carry out works to both car parks on different dates.

Work to the Lesford Road car park will take place in mid-January and will mean that we will need to empty and close the car park for the day. We will be putting up signs in the area publicising that date, so please keep an eye out for this.

The temporary car park by block 205 will also need to close temporarily for a few hours on another date, to be confirmed, to avoid risk to pedestrians and vehicles parked there. We will include more details and a date for this when we write to residents affected by the parking changes on the development in the new year.

We apologise for the inconvenience caused but it is important that we improve these car parks and need them emptied to do so.

NEW GARAGES

Eight new garages have been built at the rear of 51 - 65 Wensley Road as part of the Wensley Road Improvements programme. These replace the garages demolished next to Wensley Court. They are being offered first to people who rented one of the original garages, and then in order to people on the waiting list for a garage in Wensley Road. If you're interested in renting a garage from RBC, please email garages@reading.gov.uk to let us know.

Four unreserved parking spaces in the courtyard area will also help alleviate parking pressure locally, and are surrounded by landscaping and new fencing, with access points for wildlife.

WARM SPACES

Here are some of the warm spaces around Reading where you can access warmth as well as company through the cold winter days and allow you to save on energy costs:

Grange United Reformed Church, Circuit Lane, Southcote, RG30 3HD

Wednesdays in term time, Café Alive, 3-4.30pm, teas, coffees, soft drinks, home-made cakes and children's activities; for all ages, run by the three churches in Southcote.

Lifespring Pavilion, Oxford Road, RG1 7UY

After school Warm Hub for Families IS open 5 days a week from 3.30pm to 6pm, during term time. This will provide a warm place where children will have space to play, do homework, and have something warm to eat. It is supported by churches in West Reading working together under the banner of Torch.

Salvation Army, 522 Oxford Road, RG30 1EG

Tuesday 10:00 - 13:30 (Coffee morning/lunch club)

Wednesday 13:30 - 15:00 (CAMEO/Chatter Craft).

St Matthew's, 205 Southcote Lane, Southcote, RG30 3AX

Fridays 12.30pm to 3.00pm Soup and bread in a warm space.

HELP WITH THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Our Money Matters website (www.reading.gov.uk/money-matters) brings together all the information and advice we have to help you manage your cost of living increases over the coming months, including a benefit checker and information about managing your health and wellbeing. We also have a team of highly trained and friendly advisors on hand to help tenants and any residents affected by the benefit cap or at risk of homelessness, by providing free, confidential, impartial, personalised advice.

If you are receiving an income-based benefit (not including Working Tax Credit) you could receive free school meals. Contact your child's school for more information and to

apply. If you are struggling to afford food, ReadiFood is one of several foodbanks that may be able to help. ReadiFood is a "by referral only" service - you cannot order a parcel for yourself so should approach someone at the Council, Social Services, the Job Centre, Doctor, School, or any professional body/agency who will be able to vouch for your need. However, if you feel your need is desperate you can call ReadiFood on 0118 987 2672 so they can assess your need and may offer a one-off parcel and point you in the direction of the right agency for you to contact to gain a referral. Details of other foodbanks are on our Money Matters pages.



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD EVENT

On 3 November we held, with partners, a Love Your Neighbourhood engagement event at Wensley Road, focusing on fire safety ahead of Bonfire Night. Residents were able to find out more about Fire Safety from Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue, meet officers from Thames Valley Police, get their bikes security marked and have the opportunity to see inside a police car. There were also opportunities to volunteer for a local litter pick and various resident projects.

Representatives were there from the Council to answer questions from residents including the Waste & Recycling Team, Anti-Social Behaviour Team, Housing Regeneration Project Team, Youth Work Team and Neighbourhood Initiatives Team. Thanks to all of you who came to say hello and share your views, which were all passed on to the relevant teams. Please continue to talk to us so together we can help residents to Love Your Neighbourhood.

COUNCIL SERVICES

CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS 2022 - AND HOW TO CONTACT US

Reading Council's non-essential services will close to the public over the Christmas and New Year period from 5pm on Thursday 22 December 2022 and will re-open again at 9am on Tuesday 3 January 2023 by appointment only.

The Call Centre will also be closed during the same period, but if you need to contact us outside of opening hours, then please call our out of hours number **for emergencies only** on 01189 373737.



Keep up to date with all the latest news at www.wensleyroadimprovements.co.uk

TENANT ENGAGEMENT: GET INVOLVED!

We held an information session on 30 November for tenants interested in finding out more about how they can get involved and get their voices heard throughout the improvements to the Towers.

Information was available on joining the Tenant Panel and being a block rep as well as other ways you can be a part of the project. A follow-up meeting was held on 15 December for anyone who was interested in being on the Tenant Panel to look at how tenants could be included in the process for the selection of the new contractors. A more detailed programme will be available in the New Year but if anyone is still interested in getting involved please contact Mary Hull 07834 335309 or email Mary.Hull@reading.gov.uk

We are also looking at how we involve and engage with tenants across the borough and across all Housing Services. We are looking to develop a new Tenant Engagement Strategy and we will need tenants voices to make sure we provide opportunities that work for you. Look out for details in the next edition of Your Housing or contact Mary Hull for more details.

