



The Oakdale Manifesto 2015

The Oakdale Manifesto has been put together with comments and ideas from people across the Oakdale estate, from residents of all tenure types. Oakdale Links has encouraged anyone who wants to take action themselves by talking to the main protagonists and the Town, District and County Councils. We have put items together in order of highest risk to life and health and are adding to it as we receive suggestions.

1. Our neighbourhood is now reaching the important threshold of 200 homes. We are cut off by vehicle from all roads except the A48 bypass. We are in danger from cars that do not slow down for the roundabout and aggressive drivers who do not like to give way to traffic from Oakdale. Steps lead down from Feathers Drive, a street where many children play out on the road and on a small grassy area. These are steep, are not gated and lead straight onto the bypass. The first item in our Manifesto is for higher fencing to guard against balls going over onto the A48, for a gate on the top of the steps and for a speed limit of 30 mph on the approach to the Oakdale roundabout and beyond to the turn-off for the Foundry.
2. We have already had one serious accident involving a child who broke both bones in one leg when he was knocked over on our estate roads. In addition, many cats have lost their lives or had accidents because of drivers going too fast. We would like a suitably low speed limit and investigations into traffic calming measures as a matter of urgency. There is generally only one parking space per car and so there are many examples of cars parked in awkward and dangerous places, blocking pavements etc. The combination of this, many young families, young inexperienced drivers and the present 30 mph speed limit is a dangerous, possibly fatal fact of life here that could be improved. In the case described, the ambulance got lost due to there being no road sign for Feathers Drive. We would like an apology from Kier Partnership to

all residents, but in particular the boy who was knocked down, his family and others who have waited too long for the ambulance to come.

3. The street layout of Oakdale is a complex one. The provision of one sign per street (notwithstanding the two year delay to get any sign up for Feathers Drive) is not sufficient. Extra signs are needed and we have drawn up a map to show why. All the emergency services have got lost here at various times, most especially the ambulance service. There are also no signs on the apartment blocks telling people which flats they are and in which road. When flats physically in Bledisloe Way are (by postal address) in Overstreet Green for instance, what chance does anyone have of locating them, especially during night time emergencies?
4. Pedestrian links to Oakdale are also poor. We would like a footpath connecting the estate with Lakeside Avenue. As far as we are aware, Lakeside residents have never objected to a pedestrian link and objected only to vehicular link. At the moment, to save a 20 minute extension to the journey time and to go in the right direction, most parents travelling with children to Severnbanks School go through a muddy patch of waste ground that is slippery, muddy and dangerous. Some children are afraid of this path and the Head Teacher is very concerned that this is the route to school, as are we.
5. The only other pedestrian route is used by cyclists as well with no division on the pavement because the road is in a very dangerous state for them. It is blocked off with concrete barriers that are unsightly and very bad for the overall perception of the estate from the town centre direction. It took a long time and much campaigning to even get street lighting on this footpath and it is high time it was finished off properly and that planning conditions for a bus link were met.
6. Bins were installed for litter on the main play area and two small play areas. No one arranged for these to be collected and indeed they can't be collected by contractors Biffa as they are bolted in and cannot be lifted out. Oakdale Links have been asking for the bins to be replaced and for dog waste bins to be located on appropriate places on the estate (away from play areas but near dog walking areas such as the old golf course and the road to the Boating Lake). The bins are frequently overflowing, although they are occasionally emptied.
7. Upkeep of the estate is haphazard and when done, is not done at all expertly. Grass trimmings have been left to block up important drainage ditches, weed killer is routinely and unnecessarily used around trees and on flower beds despite us being told that one application only, when paths were laid, was going to be done. Weeds coming up in the paving block work in the car parks and areas of shared road usage are not treated. We would prefer this to be done in an

environmentally friendly way (e.g. with a flame) as we want to teach our children to look after and enjoy their natural world.

8. Play equipment is installed in the large play area (the Green). The community were not consulted on the location, style, or type of equipment even though many residents were living here when it was installed. This led to the loss of any open outdoor space large enough to put up a marquee and hold community events. We have no indoor community spaces, so this was a severe blow to the efforts of Oakdale Links to set up opportunities for the community to come together. We would like a complete rethink of this area and also the completely inadequate equipment in the smaller play areas.
9. Mature trees on the development are in a dangerous state. We commissioned a report from Evolution Trees, who are local expert tree surgeons. We have sent this to Bromford and would like work to commence as soon as the correct permissions can be obtained from the District Council, who placed Tree Preservation Orders on almost all mature trees on the development. Saplings that were put in by developers have often been placed where they cannot survive (e.g. roots in a flooded area) and many were planted in the heat of the summer but not watered (except by those that were taken care of by Oakdale Links members). This meant that we now have 25 or so dead or dying trees that should be replaced as planting of new trees was a planning condition.
10. Gardens on the estate have been waterlogged and flooded in some cases. We believe the whole estate should be surveyed and work undertaken with a fair system of prioritising. Where gardens have been flooded, a full damage assessment of the properties should be undertaken as we believe that subsidence has occurred in at least one house. Where mature trees have died as a result of works and residents have incurred costs to remove them and gain permission from the District Council, they should be suitably compensated.
11. Repair issues such as windows that have broken because of internal pressure and not from accidental damage (there are several such cases reported to us), toilets that continually block, damp problems, incomplete guttering, gas boilers blowing up, electricians in ovens being incorrectly installed, regulators on water flow impairing the boilers etc should be taken seriously, compared with other similar repairs and dealt with as promptly as possible. Where mistakes have been made such as the installation of radiators that are too small, these should be rectified as soon as possible without any more quibbling and with compensation for those who have had to spend Christmas huddled in the upper rooms of their houses to keep warm.

12. Oakdale Links would like an open acknowledgement that the change of plans to homes in Overstreet Green has led to loss of light from living windows being blocked. While this was legal, we are astounded that Bromford appear to have not checked the change of plans, not notified their tenants of such and have not objected strongly to this detrimental and unnecessary repositioning of the house next door.

13. We have a project in mind for land in Par Four Lane near Feathers Drive. This has a steep slope down to a fairly deep pond that sometimes floods and drainage ditches. It has our oldest oak tree, which needs a considerable amount of restoration work as it is covered in ivy. We have the offer of a team from Amey to come and work with us for the day to turn this area into a safer wildlife area with board walks and properly cut steps. Any community project like this will need permission from the land owners and would be greatly aided by our social housing provider, Bromford, getting involved in encouraging tenant participation. Our challenge to them is to believe in their own rhetoric as this will mean not only happier customers, but happier staff and a return to their roots as community champions.

Oakdale is an amazingly creative place with a diverse skill set to draw on. We have carers, nurses, demolition experts, entrepreneurs, engineers, electricians, artists, writers, designers and home-grown gutsy campaigners. Many talented people would like to move out at the first opportunity because of the difficult living conditions. Some are being forced to relocate because of bedroom tax. In short, we are experiencing the first signs of social instability and the cumulative effects of living on the edge of survival. We would like all the help that we can muster to turn this around and make our community somewhere that has a waiting list for people wanting to come and live here and be part of it. We have grown stronger together through adversity, but true community building can and will only happen when we have a sporting chance: places to come together and an end to the continual struggle against a tide of indifference and the shifting sands of accountability. Our lives are worth more than the cost of a few street signs. Our children are of equal worth to those in the rest of our town. Our neighbourhood is here, it is real and we are not going to be silent until that is recognised, however long and arduous the journey.