

15th July 2015

From Councillor Spencer Drury

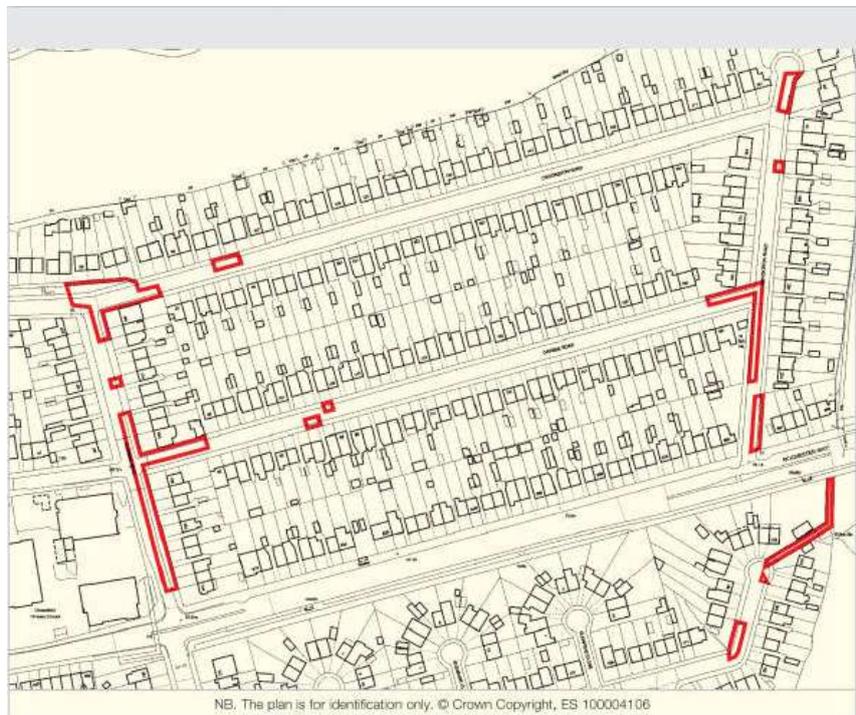
Dear Resident,

RE: SALE OF PAVEMENT, ROAD, PATH & VERGES AROUND CROOKSTON, DAIRSIE, GLENESK AND DUMBRECK ROADS

Following contact from a number of local residents, I wanted to write to update you on Greenwich Council's position on the sale of land around your home.

Many residents were contacted by Allsop Auctioneers about the sale of land near to their homes in an auction on 16th July, which caused understandable concern. The lot being sold is described by the auction house as *"Thirteen Freehold Parcels of Land extending to Approximately 0.327 Hectares (0.807 Acres) in Total. To be offered Collectively as One Lot"*

To be honest, I think that the map below is probably the easiest way of seeing exactly what is being sold.



Further details offered by the auctioneer include:

"The parcels of land are predominantly located to the north of Rochester Way, with the exception of three parcels which are located to the south. A range of shops and local amenities is available in

Eltham, with the more extensive facilities of Greenwich being available to the north-west. The A2 and A205 (South Circular Road) are also accessible. The open spaces of Eltham Park, Eltham Common, Oxleas Meadows and Oxleas Woods are also situated within reach.”

Given that the vendor is described as ‘Bilton Land Limited’ I can only assume that these are pieces of land left over from when the houses were built in the 1930s by that company, not least as many of them appear to be bits of pavement/road which are not in front of any house and so probably have not been included on anyone’s deeds.

I have written to the Chief Executive of the Council about this and am reassured by the Council’s response. While they have refused to countenance buying the land, they have informed me that:

- *Whilst the owner is free to sell the land they are only able to do anything with it if the highway authority extinguishes (stops up the highway), ie. neither they nor any successive owner is able to build on that land, or stop the public or a resident having access to that land, until and unless the Council, as highway authority and after due process extinguishes the use as public highway.*
- *The Council has no plans to extinguish the public highway for those parcels of land and neither can I foresee a situation whereby we would want to do so. On this basis I don’t think the Council would need to buy the land as the use is already safeguarded.*

In further conversations, Senior Officers have confessed that they have no idea why anyone would want to buy this land, although did suggest it may be some a new form of land banking (where companies hold land for long-term future development).

One local resident did find some evidence to back up this land banking suggestion from Gloucestershire where Bilton sold a similar lot of bits of land for £13,000 (which can be seen at on the BBC website under the title “Cheltenham housing estate grass verges sell for £13,000”). Given that this sale took place in March 2014 and there appear to have been no concerns, I suspect that the Council’s Officers are correct and there is no clear plan from the purchaser on what to do with the land.

I do hope that this information is of interest to you and I will endeavour to find out the final sale price of the land once the auction has been completed. If you would like me to email you with this information, please do let me know at spencer@spencerdrury.com or check on my website at <http://spencerdrury.yourcllr.com/>.

Yours faithfully,



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PS The other issue many residents have written to me about is the amount of weeds across our streets – I am in conversation with Council Officers on this issue as it appears no one was appointed to deal with the problem until late June.

CONSERVATIVES: STANDING UP FOR ELTHAM