



THE POST

LMEHA NEWSLETTER

LIFESTYLE - NEWS - FUN



March 2025

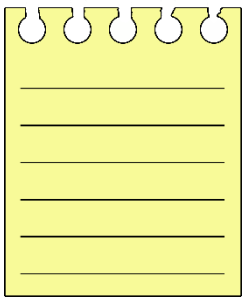
Welcome to the Spring edition of THE POST. This is the LMEHA newsletter that celebrates all that's good about LME and also gives news, tips and recommendations about local services and places to go etc.

We hope you enjoy reading it!



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Message from our LMEHA Chair

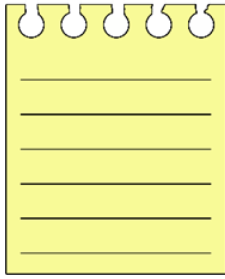
Chairman's Message – March 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to the February 2025 edition of “The Post” the LMEHA Newsletter. An especially warm welcome to those new LMEHA members who are receiving this for the first time. The objective of “The Post” is to keep members informed about LMEHA activities as well as other items of interest around the estate and the local area.

The purpose of LMEHA is to *“Represent the interests of homeowners at LME. We bring owners together for fun and frivolity while working together to enhance and preserve the value of our mutual investments.”* As homeowners we are a diverse community with respect to what we want from the estate and sometimes this can be challenging.

The Service Charge is probably the most common area of interest amongst LMEHA members and since June last year we have been, and still are, particularly active in this area protecting members' interests. As soon as we received the 2023 Statement of Accounts it became apparent that there were problems with the financial management of the Service Charge, most notably with the increasingly large amount of bad debt which had accumulated over a number of years. We had highlighted this with the 2022 Statement of Accounts and despite assurances the situation had only worsened. After raising our concerns, the landlord, to his credit, accepted that there were serious problems and committed to improve. The positive side to this story is that the bad debt has been significantly reduced and LMEHA now has quarterly reviews and access to data from the financial system which is a completely new level of transparency from which we will all benefit.

No sooner had the discussions on the 2023 Accounts been completed then the 2025 budget discussions began and we have still not reached agreement on the landlord's non-resident contributions.



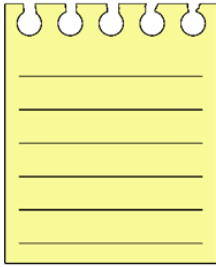
Message from our LMEHA Chair – cont'd

We believe we understand the landlord's strategy and goals for LME. The execution of this strategy forces LMEHA to be constantly vigilant to protect homeowners' interests. It is unfortunate that there is no clear alignment between the landlord and LMEHA and consequently LMEHA is perhaps viewed by the landlord as a thorn in his side rather than a partner. We are currently seeking expert advice on the issue of all HFG employees and their friends and family having access to the estate and its facilities and also the landlord's non-resident contributions to the Service Charge. We will keep members updated when we receive the advice.

In summary, we currently have two disputes with the landlord.

The association has a number of specialist groups and sub-committees focussed on specific areas; these are:

- **Service Charge:**
 - Led by Tim Hopes, working to ensure the Service Charge is realistic and well managed.
- **PPM:**
 - Led by Jo Felstead, the PPM initiative works to plan longer term maintenance and equipment replacement. Lower Mill has the infrastructure of a small town and until recently did not have an asset register.
- **Membership:**
 - Led by Ryan Fernandez, the more LMEHA members the more influence we have. "How many members?" is a question frequently asked by the landlord.
- **Net Zero:**
 - Led by Mike McKeown, an initiative to reduce emissions from the estate.
- **HROC:**
 - Led by Andy Mortimer, looking at rights and obligations, currently driving the enfranchisement initiative.



Message from our LMEHA Chair – cont'd

- **Renting:**

- Led by Neil Smith, this sub-committee works to establish consistent renting standards.

- **Rural/Nature:**

- Led by Hilary Collins, the Rural Group holds nature walks and works closely with the estate team and the ecologist to promote and protect the nature at LME.

- **Social:**

- Here a number of homeowners contribute to hold events such as the Safari Supper, the Drinks Evenings, the Charity Duck Race and of course the Summer Festival. We are always open to more social event ideas and volunteers.

- **Spa:**

- Led by Reg Pressney, the Spa sub-committee works with the Spa management to maximise everyone's enjoyment of the Spa.

Other members of the committee contribute in various ways depending on the situation. Everyone, on the committee freely gives their time, energy, knowledge and experience for the benefit of all LMEHA members. We are all kept in order by Nikki Clark our Committee Secretary.

If anyone would like to become more involved, please contact me or Nikki at secretary@lmeha.com

The committee really appreciates the numerous messages of support and encouragement that we have received particularly concerning the disputed issues.

Dates for your diaries:

- 3rd May AM AGM
- 3rd May PM Chairman's Drinks
- 4th May Charity Duck Race
- 23-24th August Summer Festival

Wishing everyone a great 2025
at LME.

Graham



LMEHA- Info & News

A message from Andrew Bonner, Estate Services Manager

The grounds team are now coming to the end of the Ecology works on site and have had a really productive few months to make the Estate look as good as possible and to encourage the wildlife and planting to flourish. We hope you can agree that it looks better than ever, including the new sections of hedge laying.

This year we will be introducing the new gardening team here at Lower Mill and they will be specifically working on all individual gardens to ensure that the weeding, planting, maintenance and grass cutting of each property is completed to the highest level and nothing is missed out. As everyone knows, the grounds team is spread very thin and has a huge area and amount of work to cover, so we aim to ease this and have a focused team looking at gardens. This will be a four-man team headed up by one of our current team members and they will also be utilising the allotment and polytunnel to grow our own stock of plants and trees to reduce cost but also to improve our footprint.

2025 will be a big year for projects around the Estate. The biggest and main project will be the Spa outdoor pool repairs. This is a very large but critical project which will add significantly to the life span of the pool and be a key part of the Planned Preventative Maintenance for the future. Other projects will include new pathways, lighting, fishing swims, play areas, areas of interest, basketball hoops and many other smaller repairs and additions around the Estate.

In the office we are trying to improve our communication and make it as easy as possible for owners to contact us. **To that end, we now have an office WhatsApp number you can message the team on. This number is: 07821 668281.**

This will work alongside the usual email addresses, as follows:

- dutymanager@lowermillestate.net
- andrew.bonner@lowermillestate.net



Ecology Update

As the first Snowdrops begin to emerge around the estate, they provide us with a glimpse of the upcoming spring and an indication that warmer days are ahead. Spring marks the commencement of a busy and exciting ecology season at Lower Mill, with Bird, Bat, Amphibian and reptile surveys all beginning soon, we look forward to seeing what we'll discover in the coming months.

However, that's not to say this winter has been a quiet one, the grounds team (and myself managing Swillbrook reserve) have been working hard ensuring all the winter habitat work is completed before bird breeding season commences! Although it can look destructive in the winter, this habitat work is an important part of the ecology on site. Creating a mosaic of habitat at different stages of growth means we can encourage more species to thrive, increasing biodiversity within the Cotswold Lakes. This year also marked a successful one for the Brown Hairstreak butterfly, a whopping 201 eggs were recorded in surveys by the Wiltshire Butterfly Group, a massive improvement on the 83 found last year. Under the group's guidance, we continue to manage habitat in the area for this rare species, so we hope egg counts will continue to grow.

In December we hosted the annual homeowner winter wildlife walk where we explored the wider estate, finding quite a few interesting species! I will be hosting other wildlife events throughout the year so please keep an eye out for those on socials, they're a great way to learn more about the wildlife on the estate. Lower Mill Estate is also hosting its first House Martin competition, this is a great way to be involved with the ecology on site and help a struggling, red listed species, details of this can also be found on socials.



Wildlife News

Wildlife spotting at Lower Mill Estate

Although Winter is almost over, you can still get a glimpse of some of our fantastic winter residents before they leave for their summer breeding grounds. Teal, Goosander, Wigeon, Goldeneye, and Red Crested Pochard have all been spotted on our lakes this year along with a large flock of Lapwing seen near Somerford lagoon. Another, slightly rarer visitor, the Common Pochard, was also spotted recently on Mill Lake. Although the name suggests otherwise, the Common Pochard is no longer quite so common and is now red-listed in the UK, seeing a 74% population decrease since 1997, unfortunately making it an ever more uncommon sight on the water park.

Just as we begin to see the departure of some of these species, we see the arrival of others. As days get warmer, look out for Cuckoos, House Martins, Swifts, Chiffchaffs, Common Terns and more! It's also the perfect time of year to look out across the lakes and try to catch sight of the Great Crested Grebes performing their iconic dancing courtship display!

This is a great time of year to go and explore as the season changes, so head out and see what you can find!

James Ponting
Assistant Ecologist





Ballihoo News

Welcome to Ballihoo and warmer weather with hopefully more sunshine! The dafs are out and spring is in the air!

Our A la Carte menu is constantly changing with the seasons, featuring locally sourced produce from passionate suppliers. Look out for more takeaway retail options for a quick and easy fix over peak season and weekends!

We are also excited to announce an enhancement to our loyalty programme as a token of our gratitude for your continued support. In addition to your existing 10% homeowner's discount, you can now redeem your accumulated Ballihoo points! Read more below.

Easter at Ballihoo

Over Easter, look out for the Easter Bunny, who will be hiding around the restaurant and hopping from location to location, day after day. Always great for the kids to keep a tab!

We also have some great Easter craft kits available to buy over the Easter holidays at Ballihoo. Perfect for either taking back to your home or keeping the kids entertained in Ballihoo whilst having your coffee. And don't forget to guess the amount of Easter eggs in the jar; spin the wheel for prizes to be won!

Ballihoo frozen meals

Let us take care of your meals with our prepared high-quality meal kits, like homemade lasagne or chicken pie, perfect for popping in the oven for a quick fix for the whole family.

Wine Shack

Come, tap and pay. You can now purchase your charge card, order nibbles, choose wine, whiskey and sherry, all over the app in the wine shack. Great to entertain your guests and come for a light bite to eat.

New Rewards Program

- Point System: 1 point for every £1 spent at Ballihoo
- Redemption Value: 1 point = 1p (e.g., 500 points = £5)
- Flexible Redemption: Use your points for meals, shop purchases, or coffee.

Upcoming Events

We're planning several homeowner evenings throughout the year, including:

- Whisky Tasting
- Wine tasting
- Themed nights
- Dog walks

Stay tuned for dates and details.

Enhanced Thursday Discount

During the low season, enjoy an increased 20% homeowner's discount every Thursday evening.

We look forward to seeing you more often at Ballihoo!

Book Your Table Today!

To ensure availability, we recommend booking your table in advance. You can do this via our website or by contacting us directly at 01285 840181.

Thank you for being part of the Ballihoo community. We look forward to welcoming you soon!

Matt Siadatan

Lower Mill Estate General Manager

E: msiadatan@habitatfirstgroup.com

W: www.habitatfirstgroup.com

Thames Head Community Energy - An update from Mike McKeown

This initiative was set up with the support of the LMEHA and includes members of the Lower Mill community. We are delighted to report their recent achievements:

- Helped Somerford Keynes village hall win £10,000 grant from CDC to upgrade the village hall with two EV chargers and a new more efficient infrared heating system.
- Won £40,000 of funding from the Southwest NetZero hub to conduct a feasibility study for a community solar farm. This study is in progress, with the preferred location being nearby but not at LME!

Mike was elected to Cotswold District Council in May 2023 and is their Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Sustainability and is involved with a number of initiatives, including:

The poster is for an event titled 'drive & thrive' with the tagline 'Plug into the future.' The event is held at Cirencester Market Place & The Corn Hall on Thursday, 6th March 2025, from 10am to 4pm. The poster lists activities: Test Drive Electric Vehicles, Save Money & Find Grants, Trade Show, and Talks & Expert Panels. It includes a QR code for registration and the website cotswold.gov.uk/driveandthrive. The bottom of the poster features logos for Cotswold District Council, Cotswold District Council, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, West of England Combined Authority, South West Net Zero Hub, Make My House Green, and furbnow. The central illustration shows a house with solar panels, a green car, a bicycle, and a tree.

Discover Energy Efficiency & EV Solutions for Your Home!

drive & thrive
Plug into the future.

Cirencester Market Place & The Corn Hall
Thursday, 6th March 2025 | 10am - 4pm

- **Test Drive Electric Vehicles:** Experience the latest EVs!
- **Save Money & Find Grants:** Home energy efficiency made easy.
- **Trade Show:** Discover innovative products and expert advice.
- **Talks & Expert Panels:** Learn to save and go green.

Free Entry!
For tickets scan the code or register now at:
cotswold.gov.uk/driveandthrive

COTSWOLD
District Council

WEST OF ENGLAND
Combined Authority

South West NET ZERO HUB

Make My House Green

furbnow

Please register to attend!

Local Restaurant Recommendations

La Bobina- Tapas and Wine Bar

14, Black Jack Street
Cirencester
GL7 2AA

[La Bobina Wine | Bar | Tapas Cirencester | La Bobina Wine | Bar | Tapas](#)



The Bell at Sapperton

Nr Cirencester,
Gloucestershire GL7 6LE

In addition to amazing food, the pub caters well for wine enthusiasts with a 'Wine Wall' in the bar area, a self-serve wine shop of dozens of carefully sourced wines to take away or to drink there.



Watch their video here :<https://www.bellsapperton.co.uk/about>
01285 760298

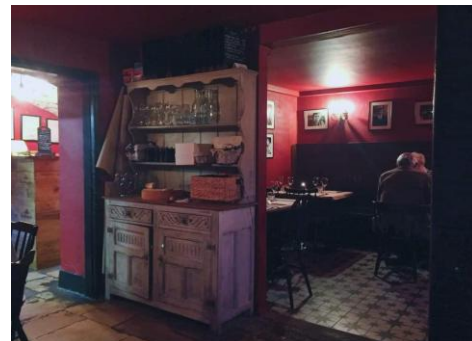


Petit Coco of Cheltenham

2 Bath St, Cheltenham GL50 1YE

[French Bistro Cheltenham | Petit Coco](#)

An absolute gem, tucked away in Cheltenham





LOCAL INFO & EVENTS

- Supporting local businesses

If you fancy some fresh organic milk or milkshake straight from the herd, head to Waterhay at SN6 6QY to...

Moos on Thames

ORGANIC FREE RANGE
MILK AND MILKSHAKES

Their story...

The farm has been in Chris's family for hundreds of years. He and his wife Jen wanted to share with everyone what fresh creamy pasteurised milk actually tasted like. Especially in a coffee, as it froths up like no other milk can.

The milk shed is self-serve and has a milk vending machine and a glass bottle vending machine.

The bottles are already sanitised ready for you to fill up with fresh milk or a milkshake.

Once you have finished with your bottle, **give it a clean and you are ready to refill.**

You can sit on one of the picnic benches with a cup of coffee while the kids play in the sand pit.



Opening Times:

Monday - 7am - 9pm

Tuesday - 7am - 9pm

Wednesday - 7am - 9pm

Thursday - Closed

Friday - 7am - 9pm

Saturday - 8am - 9pm

Sunday - 8am - 9pm



Continued...



LOCAL INFO & EVENTS

- Supporting local business – cont'd

The Moos...

are New Zealand Friesian cross Jersey. Which means they are lovely to look at but also produce super creamy milk.

They live outside for 10 months of the year. Grazing on different variations of grasses, herbs and legumes.

They move on to fresh grass twice a day at certain times so they get time to ruminate and sleep.

The Moos are only milked once a day so the rest of the time they spend chilling out in the fields.

When they come inside for the winter due to the fields being too wet. They are fed on fresh grass silage.

For more information on their products and to access their blog,
head to: [Organic Milk](#) | [Moos on Thames](#) | [Milk Vending Machine](#) | [England](#)

If you fancy a pastry to go with your coffee:



You may be familiar with their shops in Cirencester or Tetbury, but have you spotted Knead's distinctive van driving around the local area?

On weekends, it visits local villages, including Somerford Keynes and can be found in the Village Hall car park. The schedule varies, so visit their website for dates and times: [KNEAD on Wheels – KNEAD Bakery \(Click & Collect\)](#)

In addition to their shops, postal service and Knead on Wheels, they also run a Supper Club, with themed evenings, at their Elkstone location. Events run from March to October:

[Supper Club – KNEAD Bakery \(Click & Collect\)](#)





LOCAL INFO & EVENTS –

Civic Society

Cirencester Civic Society

Interested in the history of the local area? Visitors are welcome to attend talks or walks arranged by the Cirencester Civic Society.

“We welcome visitors to join our trained, volunteer Town Guides, exploring the character of our historic and friendly market town, rich in its Roman heritage combined with the later architecture of the Medieval, Georgian and Victorian eras. Monthly Talks, open to members and visitors, help us all understand more about the locality and environment in which we live – just visit our What’s On page for more information.”

Walking Tours of Cirencester:

The details of the 2025 walks are still to be confirmed but usually happen as follows:

APRIL:	EVERY SATURDAY AND SUNDAY.
MAY, JUNE AND TO JULY 23rd :	EVERY THURSDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
23RD JULY TO THE END OF SEPTEMBER:	EVERY TUESDAY, THURSDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY
OCTOBER:	EVERY THURSDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

JUST COME ALONG - NO BOOKING REQUIRED

Walks are FREE with a donation requested for the Civic Society, and last approximately 60-90 minutes

Further information on the walks and talks, listed below, is available at:

[Cirencester Civic Society](#)



LOCAL INFO & EVENTS –

Civic Society

Cirencester Civic Society

Talks:

Date	Event
17 March 2025	Lidos and open air pools: Cirencester's pool in context.
28 April 2025	Soviet maps of Gloucestershire - How and Why?
19 May 2025	The waterways of Cirencester
24 June 2025	The living and the dead - visit to the RAU herbarium
23 July 2025	Fairford History walk
15 September 2025	Arts and Crafts - Cotswold Churches
20 October 2025	Cirencester's green spaces
17 November 2025	From Corinium to the Cotswold Tradition : the first 100 years of the old Museum
15 December 2025	Cirencester's pubs: past and present

They welcome visitors to the monthly meetings and invite a donation of £3.00 per person. Alternatively, if you spend a lot of time at Lower Mill, and think you would be interested in attending a number of talks, annual membership is £15 per person/ £20 per family.



LOCAL INFO & EVENTS- Theatre

BARN

theatre

THE BARN THEATRE
5 Beeches Road
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 1BN

BOX OFFICE

Tel: [01285 648255](tel:01285648255)

Email: boxoffice@barntheatre.org.uk

30 January 2025 - 15 March 2025



A Role to Die For: Deborah's responsible for casting the world's most famous spy, it's no laughing matter, especially when the actor chosen suddenly withdraws 1 day before shooting. What does she do? A Role to Die For is a rip-roaring, wickedly funny comedy.

28 March 2025 - 10 May 2025



In the Mouth of the Wolf: Based on a true story about Sir Michael Morpurgo's uncles during World War II, Francis is a fierce pacifist, and Pieter is a man who believes that peace can only be achieved by action. The tragic event that happens changes the course of Francis' life.

16 May 2025- 28 June 2025



Educating Rita: Willy Russell's timeless British classic brings together Rita, a working-class hairdresser who dreams of breaking free from her mundane life together with Frank a middle aged disillusioned academic.

14 July 2025 - 23 August 2025



FRIENDS! The Musical Parody – The One Where They Sing!: FRIENDS the musical Parody is a show-stopping, original musical that brings Ross, Chandler, Monica, Phoebe, Joey, & Rachel back into your life in a whole new way, reminding us why we can't get enough of their wacky misadventures in 1990's Manhattan.

1 September 2025 - 11 October 2025



HAYWIRE: Haywire is a heartwarming and riotously funny new play, commissioned by the Barn and licensed by the BBC, to be performed ahead of the 75th anniversary year of The Archers.



LOCAL INFO & EVENTS -

Cotswold Sculpture Park, Somerford Keynes



Wander around this lovely site and perhaps leave with a sculpture!

We are delighted to announce that the Cotswold Sculpture Park will reopen its doors for our 2025 exhibition on April 1st. The show will feature new artists alongside some familiar faces.

Also open will be our art gallery and sales office space. And, of course, the **Poppin Tea Room** will be open, offering fantastic food and drinks.

Opening Times:

- Open to the public from 1st of April to 30th September.
- From Thursday to Monday (closed Tuesday and Wednesday).
- 10:30 am to 4:30 pm (last admission at 4pm).

**The Paddocks
Somerford Keynes
Gloucestershire GL7 6FE**

[Home - Cotswold Sculpture Park Ltd](#)

07706 012724



Purchasing Sculptures or other Art:

Sales Manager Tadd is available to talk at the park, and has an office near the tearoom and gallery areas.

Admission: Card payments only.
£9 per admission. Children are £5 per admission. Sorry, no dogs!



LOCAL INFO & EVENTS-

The Tap Room, Somerford Keynes

Cotswold Lakes Brew Co. Taproom

Cotswold Lakes Brew Co. is proud to be one of the few B Corp certified breweries in the UK, demonstrating the highest standards of social and environmental performance, transparency, and accountability.

Based on the edge of Somerford Keynes, within walking distance of the Lower Mill Estate, the team at CLB offers a warm welcome and invites you to join them for a great night out at a fantastic local venue.

Their taproom is the ideal spot for a family friendly night out.

Offering the full line-up of their award winning beers, with the occasional 'taproom exclusive' alongside locally-sourced wines and spirits and a range of non-alcoholic drinks.

The taproom is open Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights from Easter through until October, and hosts a range of regular events. From quiz nights, local club and hobbyist meets to food and drink festivals and monthly live entertainment, the taproom is a vibrant, local community space. Looking for a venue to host your own event or just want somewhere to meet? Then the taproom is available to hire, too.

For more information and to see the what's going on at the Farm in 2025 visit:

www.cotswoldlakesbrew.co.uk/taproom/

Here's a taster for the first event this month

[Gurt Wings and Off Grid Gaming!](#)

06 Thu Mar @ 5:00pm



It's the first Thursday of the month and once again we welcome back our good friends from Gurt Wings bringing their world famous chicken to the Farm. They've got wings, strips, cheese stix, and tater tots - this is food heaven. Come on down and grab yourself some incredible street food, all washed down with a pint of CLB. Get down here before they run out..!

Not only that but it's also our "Off Grid Gaming and Lego" night. Bring your own board games, puzzles, or Lego to share or pick up some of ours from the brewery shelves. Fun for everyone with just a hint of competition...