

Dear Future Resident,

To enhance what gives St Michael's Hurst its character, over time Land Trust Residential Services Limited will manage and maintain all of the St Michael's Hurst development's open spaces in partnership with the local community.

The overall development will deliver 529 new homes, providing safe pedestrian and cycle access routes, play area and a country park for the community to enjoy. Management of these public open spaces will be transferred to the Land Trust on a phased basis until the development is complete. It is then intended that the Land Trust will take over the ownership of these areas.

About the Land Trust

Land Trust Residential Services Limited is a wholly owned trading subsidiary of the Land Trust, a national charity that owns and manages green public open spaces and community facilities on behalf of and in partnership with local communities.

Our vision is to improve the quality of people's lives by creating sustainable, high quality green spaces and community facilities that deliver environmental, social and economic benefits, and we are committed to ensuring that all our spaces are sustainably managed and have financial plans that safeguard them forever.

Our experience at over 80 sites, which includes major residential developments, country parks, woodlands and nature reserves has proven that by engaging closely with the community we can achieve our vision to manage, maintain and improve great places for people to live, work and play.

Our work is focused on

- Enhancing the natural environment and allowing nature and biodiversity to thrive
- Improving the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of our communities
- Bringing communities together through events and activities
- Providing spaces for educational activities, taking learning out of the classroom
- Supporting economic prosperity in the communities around our sites and protecting, and often enhancing, the investment made in your property.

We take on the responsibility of the financial, legal and health and safety liabilities associated with management. We manage land day-to-day with managing partner organisations and local contractors. For local residents we seek to facilitate on-site activities that are sustainable and enjoyable for all involved.

Land Trust Residential Services Limited will manage the public open space under service charge on behalf of residents at St Michael's Hurst, as it is transferred over for management on a phased basis.

We look forward to working with you.

Estate management at St Michael's Hurst

The cost of management and maintenance of the public open spaces will be charged to the homeowners at St Michael's Hurst through a service charge. The charge covers annual running costs, plus an amount set aside for the future replacement of capital assets.

All homeowners at St Michael's Hurst are legally obliged to contribute to the service charge in line with either your Title Deed or a Deed of Covenant signed during the homebuying process.

The total budget associated with maintaining the open public space at St Michael's Hurst will be apportioned on an equal basis per property, based on the total number of residential dwellings that have been built and sold at the end of the service charge year. At the completion of the development, each property will contribute on an equal basis based on the total number of properties on site, currently this is forecast to be 529.

The service charge will be reviewed on an annual basis to reflect the needs and requirements of residents and the extent of land that has been brought into management at that time.

What does the Land Trust provide?

The Land Trust adds value by working with the residents and the wider community to provide social, economic and environmental benefits that make great places in which to live. Our role at St Michael's Hurst is to:

- Keep the site maintained to a high standard
- Arrange and monitor the landscape maintenance contract, which covers the maintenance, inspection and replacement of trees, shrubs, plants, hedges and grasses on land we manage
- Organise a contractor to regularly pick litter and empty dog and litter waste bins
- Issue permits for the commercial or organisational use of other outdoor spaces
- Undertake site inspections and prepare annual reports covering all aspects of health and safety
- Administer services including maintaining insurance cover, accounting for site costs and billing for the service charge
- Maintain a sinking fund to be used to replace expensive items such as play equipment so that you don't face large one-off bills when these items need to be renewed
- Facilitate and encourage community-led activities and directly organise some events
- Respond to face to face enquiries, phone calls, texts and emails from residents and non-residents in relation to our services
- Engage with customers regularly to measure levels of satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

Who maintains the communal areas from the start?

Vistry is responsible for creating and building any communal areas. With apartments, the communal areas form part of the building which is being constructed by Vistry.

For a period of time, Vistry will maintain everything and only when the communal areas are complete, will they be handed over in phases to the Land Trust for management.

When Vistry are maintaining the communal areas, the residents will not be charged for the maintenance of the communal areas. However, a service charge may still be levied as there are administration costs incurred by the Managing Agent in order to ensure that insurance is in place and accounts and audits are carried out. This may be covered by the service charge collected on completion but if it continues for a long period you may be asked to pay a further service charge.

Who are the Estates Team?

The day-to-day management of St Michael's Hurst will be overseen by an Estates Team on behalf of the Land Trust. The Estates Team is under the supervision of a regional manager who has overall responsibility for the success of the site. Together, they supervise the local contractors, undertake site inspections and are available to meet with residents. Both are supported by staff based in our Head Office, near Warrington.

What must I do?

In return, you are obliged to pay to the Land Trust an annual fee referred to as a service charge. An invoice will be sent to you annually in advance of the service charge year commencing. The information sent to you will explain how you can pay, including setting up a direct debit to allow you to either pay annually or spread the cost over the year in monthly payments. If you have moved in part way through a year, you will be billed for the corresponding proportion of the year where you occupied the property.

How much will I pay?

At the beginning of the service charge year, you will be sent the budget pack that provides you with details of the planned costs for the forthcoming year and what you will need to pay.

Countryside Properties (Housebuilding) Limited has agreed to cap the maximum service charge payable by each property for the 2024 period. Any expenditure above this cap will be funded by Countryside Properties (Housebuilding) Limited. This cap will be reviewed annually.

The amount you will pay will be the lower of the apportionment of the costs incurred in managing the site and the cap.

The Cap for 2024 has been increased in line with RPI and is £390.12 plus VAT, £468.14 (2023 - £358.37 plus VAT, £430.04).

At the end of the service charge year, we will reconcile actual costs incurred and calculate the actual charge per property. A reconciliation will be sent to you along with a balancing adjustment for any differences in amount. This will be a balancing charge if the costs exceed the amounts budgeted or a balancing credit should the costs be lower than anticipated. It is important to note that a balancing credit cannot be refunded and instead will be offset against future charges. This is in line with the legal agreements for your property.

When will I need to pay?

The service charge will not be charged until such time as the first areas of public open space are practically completed and brought into management, which will occur in phases as the development progresses. The first areas of open space have been delivered and are now under management.

What happens when the development is finished?

When the developer has completed all the homes and all of the environment around the homes, the communal areas will be fully handed over to the Land Trust under freehold. Those areas must be properly completed and be in good condition, otherwise the Land Trust, acting on behalf of the residents, will refuse handover. Handover will only take place when the Land Trust estates team are happy to take those communal areas on.

If you have any questions regarding the service charge, please contact mail@thelandtrust.org.uk.

Kindest regards,

The Land Trust