

Owners and Tenants' Handbook



LAWTON HALL ESTATE

Lawton Hall Drive, Church Lawton,
Congleton.

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Introduction

This handbook has been put together by the Board of Directors of Lawton Hall Management Limited to provide owners and tenants with some general information about the Estate and the local area, to explain how the Estate is managed, and to raise awareness of the individual and collective responsibilities of owners and tenants.

If you feel it can be improved in any way please let the Board know.

A Brief History of Lawton Hall and the Lawton Family



Lawton Hall can be dated back to Adam de Lauton who lived during the reign of King John (1199-1216) and King Henry III (1216-72). Historical legend tells of a time in his life when he rescued the Earl of Chester from an attack by a wounded animal and in gratitude was granted "that amount of land around which he could walk in a day".

His walk covered a one thousand acre parcel of land that originally stretched from Congleton to Sandbach and as far as

Longport. It was this thousand-acre estate that became the Parish of Lauton.

In the late twelfth or early thirteenth century the de Lauton family built a home on land acquired from the Crown. It stood for some two hundred years until the beginning of the fifteenth century when it burned to the ground.

After this another and more substantial home was built on the same spot by Hugh Lawton and his wife Isabella Madock. This second home had solid foundations and cellars. It is also known to have had a beautiful flagstone floor. This home was apparently removed by William Lawton and his wife Mary Maxfield very near the start of the seventeenth century to make way for a third home on this spot. It is known that the second home did not fall down, nor was it burned.

This latest new home was built about the year 1600 and served the Lawton family through many generations.



By 1906 Lawton Hall was being used as a hotel. This continued until 1943 when it was requisitioned for use as a Civil Defence Reserve Camp. At some point the Lawton family had vacated the home.

Shortly after the end of World War II, in 1950, the Hall began to be used as a school. This period of usage lasted until 1986. During this time maintenance of the Hall was poor to non-existent. Following the closure of the school the Hall remained unoccupied.

In 1989 a company named Lawton Leisure Limited applied for planning permission to convert the Hall into a hotel with leisure facilities. The plans were approved by Congleton Borough Council in April 1990 but were never implemented as the Lawton family refused to sell the property, wanting only to lease it.

During July 1994 a company called Robincorp Limited felled about one hundred trees on the property until stopped by an order issued by the Congleton Borough Council.

The Forestry Authority prepared a report for possible legal action against Robincorp, but no action was taken due to questions of ownership. Robincorp submitted and withdrew various plans over the subsequent 3-4 years however no renovation took place.

Lawton Hall Estate

In 1999 Gleeson Homes took over the development and plans were approved to renovate the Hall by converting it into 5 houses and 4 apartments.



The Stables was rebuilt into 5 homes.



The Coach House was split into 7 mews properties and a detached house with the



remaining land within the walled garden being used to develop 12 detached houses.



The redevelopment of the Estate was completed in 2004/5.

Each of the properties on the Estate was designed and built to complement the period feel of the Hall and to be sympathetic to the original buildings and grounds.

Evidence of this approach can be found around the Estate and within each property, for example the use of blocked paved roads, wrought iron Cheshire railings, and traditional landscaping: internally each property has wooden sash



windows, slate roof tiles, high ceilings, elegant coving and deep skirting boards: features not often found in new housing developments.

The Estate was awarded a Gold Prize for best development in the 2004 What House awards.

Bullie the Bullfinch

A permanent memorial to Bullie the Bullfinch, the cherished pet of Marianna Percy Lawton, former lady of Lawton Hall, who was known to sing the National Anthem on request stands in front of the Hall.

The gravestone was originally engraved in 1853 with a dedicated poem written by Mrs Lawton to Bullie.



A ceremony was held, attended by borough councillors, English Heritage, local historians, and local residents to reinstate the restored gravestone following the completion of the redevelopment of the Estate.

Protecting the Overall Look of the Estate

The Estate is very distinctive and attractive and owners will have bought their properties and chosen to live here because it is such a lovely place.

Much of the Estate's appeal relates to its

history, the overall design of the buildings and the grounds, and to the natural environment.



The Hall is a Grade II listed building as is the wall which surrounds the Gardens.



The woodlands contain ancient and semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and a site of biological importance (SBI): a number of trees are protected by tree preservation orders (TPOs) and a woodland and conservation management plan is in place.



Properties in the Hall, the Coach House and the Stables have been built on the footprints of the original buildings: the only “new” properties on the Estate are the twelve detached houses in the Gardens: an area of the Estate that would originally have been used to grow fruit, vegetables, and flowers.



Legal responsibilities

Owners’ property deeds have been written, and contain covenants, to ensure that the overall look and feel of the Estate is maintained in accordance with the way it was designed and the ongoing requirements related to the Estate’s historic importance locally and nationally.

Owners’ property deeds set out what is and is not permitted in terms of maintaining or changing the appearance of properties on the Estate, permissions needed from the landlord and other parties before certain actions or works can be undertaken, and requirements for the maintenance of properties.

Owners should check their property deeds before letting out their property; carrying out any buildings works and/or extensions; replacing windows, doors, and

external lights; repainting the exterior of the property; or keeping a pet so that owners are fully aware of, and are able to fulfil, these responsibilities, requirements, and permissions.



Some restrictions have been eased but the management company reserves the right, and has a duty, to take action in case where infringements are judged to be detrimental to the overall look and feel of the Estate. To avoid any problems owners should check before taking any action.

We're not all the same

Property owners have different rights and responsibilities, freedoms and restrictions dependant on the type and location of each property on the Estate, for example



owners of properties with their own private gardens are free to develop their gardens as they wish, providing it is in

keeping with the overall style of the Estate whereas owners of properties with communal gardens around their property may not make any changes to these gardens.

Owners of detached properties in the Gardens are responsible for maintaining and insuring the whole building, inside and outside: owners of properties in the Coach House, the Stables and the Hall are



individually responsible for the maintenance of the inside of their properties, their windows, and external doors but are collectively responsible for the maintenance, repair, and insurance of the roof and external walls.



These differences are reflected in different levels of service charge. Owners are advised to check their deeds and legal pack and to speak to their area director for clarification.

Being a Good Neighbour

Everyone can help keep the Estate a great place to live by being considerate and neighbourly at all times particularly in relation to:

Parking: there are no designated parking places on the Estate with the exception of the parking bays directly outside Nos 4 to 8 of the Coach House and the parking spaces at the rear of Nos 11-14 The Gardens, directly behind the Estate wall.

Garages should be used whenever possible.

Parking on roads around the Estate should be done in a considerate manner and with care taken not to cause obstructions or make it difficult for other vehicles to pass or turn- particularly large delivery vehicles and refuse collection vehicles.

Anyone parking on the main drive is requested to park only on the right hand side as approached from the main-gate in order to prevent any obstruction and to provide a clear line of sight.

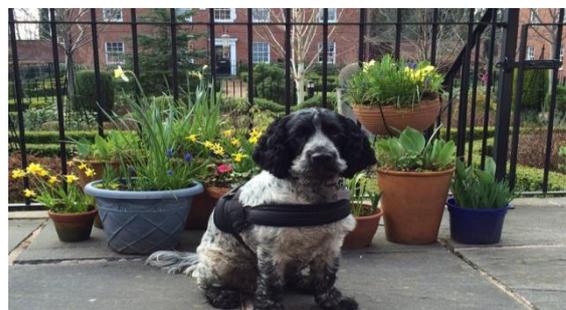
Vehicle speed: there is no “official” speed limit on the Estate but many small children live on, and/or visit, the Estate. Everyone should drive carefully and at not more than 10 miles an hour around the Estate.

Refuse collection: the scheduled collection day is Wednesday. Black bins (general waste) are collected one week with grey bins (recyclable paper, glass, tins etc.) and brown bins (garden waste) collected on the alternate weeks.



Bins should be put out for collection the night before the collection day and should be collected as soon as possible after they have been emptied to avoid causing an obstruction.

Pets: there are many pets on the Estate. Permission is required from the landlord-Simarc Property management Ltd-if you have, or intend to have, a pet. Dog owners should ensure dogs are kept under control on communal areas and dog excrement is removed immediately.



Main Gates- the gates are opened and closed by using an electronic fob or by keying in the gate-code into the key-pads on either side of the gates.



The gate-code is changed regularly and owners will be informed of planned code changes before they are changed. Only *genuine* fobs should be used: *cloned* fobs may cause faults which need expensive repairs. Replacement / additional genuine fobs can be ordered from Chris Chadwick, the Chairman of the Board.

When exiting the Estate vehicles should stop before reaching the key pad pole as the gates open inwards and will not open if vehicles are too close.



Gates cannot be opened by force and repairs are costly when force has been used.

Danger

Motorised-gates can be deadly. All children should be made aware of the dangers and young children should never be allowed to play around the gates.

Visitors and delivery companies should be advised how to open and close the gates properly and what to do if they cannot gain access.

Path-gates

There are two path-gates on the Estate. The first path-gate is on the left just before the main-gate entrance.

This path goes behind the Coach House gardens.



The second gate is at the back of the Estate, past the front of the Hall and towards the woods.



Combination padlocks are used to lock these gates: these are unfortunately prone to being removed. The codes will be circulated to owners whenever padlocks are in use: gates should be relocked whenever they have been used.

Communal Grounds, Spaces, and Amenities

All communal grounds, spaces and benches are for the use of all residents.

Our grounds-maintenance contractor maintains the meadows, formal lawns, flower beds, the Stables courtyard, paths

and hard standing areas in line with the contract schedule and grounds-staff are



on site between one and three days a month throughout the year.

Everyone with an interest in gardening, or simply a desire to help out, is encouraged



to do so to supplement the work of the grounds maintenance contractor by doing more weeding, grass cutting, leaf picking etc. throughout the Estate.



The lovely flower beds bordering the main drive are the result of the hard work and

generosity of some of our green fingered residents.

Some residents voluntarily look after communal flower beds and communal spaces close to their properties and this is welcomed and encouraged.



The only caveat being that any upgrading or enhancement must be in keeping with the overall aesthetics of that area of the Estate. Owners should also be aware that by voluntarily maintaining such areas, they do not acquire any legal rights to any areas beyond those specified in their property deeds.

Please contact Adele MacGowan who oversees the grounds-maintenance contract before doing any voluntary gardening or grounds maintenance.

If any changes are made to **communal areas** other than what is considered to be 'fair and reasonable' the Board of Directors reserves the right, under its powers as the management company of the Estate, to undo these changes at the expense of the person who made them,

and reinstate the feature and/or facility so that it is in keeping with the Estate's overall look and feel.

The Lake

The lake is now owned by a private company. Owners and tenants have access to the lake edge within the Estate but not to the lake itself. Some owners have fishing rights included in their deeds and the Board of Directors is exploring with the lake owner options for owners and tenants to have limited access to fishing rights.



A lifebuoy is situated near to the lake edge.

Social Events

From time-to-time one or more owners and residents have organised social events. These have included a Valentine's Day dance, Easter Egg hunts, World Cup viewing al fresco, Halloween trick or treating, and visits by the Rotary Club's Father Christmas on his Sleigh to the delight of the Estate's children young and old.



Anyone wishing to organise a social event for owners and residents should contact their area-director for advice and support.

Estate Management

The freehold of the Estate is owned by Wallace Estates who operate through their agents Simarc Property Management Limited. When the Estate was first established a management company, Mainstay Ltd., was appointed as the managing agent. In recent years however the Estate has been "*self-managing*" through Lawton Hall Management Limited (LHML), a private company established to manage and maintain the Estate on behalf of all 34 property owners and the landlord.

The owner(s) of properties on the Estate are shareholders in LHML with one share being allocated for each property entitling the owner(s) to one vote per property at general and extraordinary meetings of LHML.

The Board of Directors – who’s who?

The directors of LHML are appointed by the shareholders from the cohort of shareholders: all directors are volunteers and are unpaid. There can be up to 7 directors on the Board. The current directors are:

The Board of Directors of Lawton Hall Management Ltd (LHML) - 2019.	
Walter MacGowan Chair	19 The Gardens
Ray Beecham Vice Chair	No 1 The Stables
Carl Paisley Treasurer	12 The Gardens
Quang Nguyen	14 The Gardens
Vacancy	
Vacancy	
Vacancy	

Directors can be contacted by email on:
lawtonhallmanagement@gmail.com

In addition to directors the Board has a number of other volunteers. These are:

Board Volunteers	
Mandy Hermitt 20 The Gardens	Secretary
Vivien Wall 7 The Hall	Hall Rep
Adele MacGowan 19 The Gardens	Grounds Maintenance Co-ordinator

The Board ‘s role and responsibilities

The Board is responsible for managing the Estate’s funds, which are raised through service charges, procuring goods and services for the general upkeep and maintenance of communal aspects of the Estate, preserving the look and feel of the

development, and ensuring that the actions of individuals do not inhibit the overall enjoyment of other owners and residents.

These responsibilities include maintaining in good order the communal grounds and gardens, garage areas, the visitors’ car park and owners’ parking spaces, access ways and footpaths; common structures, for example common parts of buildings and roofs, common drains, and master television aerials; and procuring insurances and utilities for common facilities on the Estate.

The Board has established a programme of planned maintenance, repairs, and improvements, for example the replacement of the red cinder paths, upgrading the main gates electronic mechanism, and the annual schedule of work for the communal grounds and gardens, to ensure the Estate’s communal areas are always well maintained.

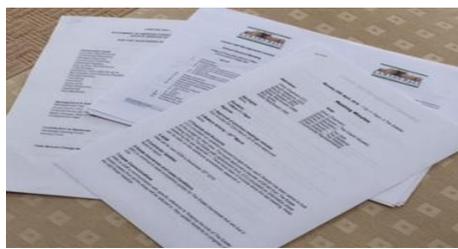


Property owners are involved in, and are consulted on, all major proposals annually at the AGM, and at other times as appropriate, for example when

retendering the grounds-maintenance contract .

Each director acts as a resource for owners and tenants in their area of the Estate - to answer general queries, provide information and/or give advice on the collective roles and responsibilities of the management company and on the individual rights and responsibilities of owners and tenants. Owners should contact the director for their area if they have any queries or would like to find out more about the Board's work.

The Board meets monthly. Agendas, reports and minutes are made available to all owners via the Estate's website. Please contact Chris Chadwick, the Chairman, if you would like an item including on the Board's agenda.



Service Charges

Service charges vary according to the type of property. The annual statement of accounts contains more detailed information. In general terms service charges are as follows:

Estates Service Charge: all shareholders contribute.



This covers the maintenance of the communal grounds, gardens and other areas of the Estate and includes grounds-maintenance services, tree inspection, maintenance of the hard landscaping and drains, communal electricity, motorised gate maintenance, boundary and fencing repairs, risks and insurance cover, accountancy, legal fees and bank charges, and an annual contribution to reserves for the communal grounds and areas.

The Stables Service Charge: paid for by owners of properties in the Stables- this covers communal maintenance, insurances, and cleaning, the master TV



aerial, and an annual contribution to reserves for the Stables building.

Hall 1 and Hall 2 Service Charges: paid for by Hall property owners- this covers

maintenance, insurances, window cleaning, the master TV aerial, cleaning of



communal areas, external redecoration costs, and an annual contribution to reserves for the Hall building.

The Coach House Service Charge: paid for by Coach House property owners- this covers maintenance, insurances, and an



annual contribution to reserves for the Coach House buildings.

The Gardens Service Charge: paid for by property owners of houses in the Gardens- this covers shared electricity in some garages.



Lawton Hall Estate Website

A website about the Estate has been set up and can be accessed at www.lawtonhallestate.co.uk

The site contains historical information about Lawton Hall, photographs over the years, and information about the local area. A dedicated area for property owners can be accessed by the password "beau" and contains the minutes of LHML Board of Directors meetings, AGM documents, Estate accounts, letters to residents, LHML memorandum and articles of association, insurance documents, a site plan/ map of the Estate, and the grounds maintenance schedule and contract information.

Map of the Estate

A scalable map/ site plan of the Estate – showing all properties, the estate boundary and all the communal areas is available on the website.

Local Amenities and Public Services

The following is a list of useful telephone numbers and/or contact details and local information. It is by no means exhaustive.

Public Footpaths: a public footpath encircles the Estate and public footpaths can be found throughout the local area. See Cheshire East Council's website for more details.

Canals: the Trent- Mersey Canal can be accessed from the public footpath to the left of All Saints' Church, on Lawton Hall Drive. The Macclesfield Canal can be accessed from Congleton Road North via Knowsley Lane.



Local Landmarks:

Little Moreton Hall, Congleton Road North, Congleton. CW12 4SD.



Mow Cop Folly, at Mow Cop just off Congleton Road North.



Astbury Mere Country park- just off Newcastle Road, Astbury, Congleton.



Rode Hall Gardens, Scholar Green, Congleton.



Churches:

- All Saints' Church, Church Lawton



- Wesley Place Methodist Church, Lawton Road, Alsager.
- Christ Church C of E Church, Church Road, Alsager.
- St Thomas C of E Church, The Avenue, Kidsgrove.
- St Gabriel's RC Church, Lawton Road, Alsager.

Markets and Farmers Markets:

- Alsager Market - Wednesday weekly, Fairview car park, town centre.
- Rode Hall Gardens- Farmers Market - held on the first Saturday in the month



- Alsager Civic Centre- Makers and Farmers markets - held on the third Saturday in the month.

- Hall Farm Shop- open daily- Alsager Hall Farm, Crewe Road, Alsager.

Post offices

- Talke, 147, Congleton Road, Talke. 01782 782343
- Alsager, 28 Lawton Road, Alsager. 01270 882015
- Kidsgrove, 11 The Avenue, Kidsgrove. 012782 782026
- Scholar Green, in the Co-op, 222, Congleton Road North. 01782 785848
- Rode Heath, 135, Sandbach Road. 01270 882130

Council Offices:

- Cheshire East Council: Info Line 0300 1235500
- Congleton Town Council: 01260 270350
- Church Lawton Parish Council 01270 883978

Libraries:

- Alsager Library, Sandbach Road North, Alsager. 01270 873552
- Congleton Library, Market Square, Congleton. 01260 375550

Health Centres:

- Cedars Medical Centre, Alsager- Tel: 01270 275606
- Kidsgrove medical Centre- Tel: 01782 831101
- Merepark Medical Centre, Alsager- Tel: 01270 275600

Hospitals

- Royal Stoke University Hospital,
Newcastle Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4
6QG. 01782 715444
- Leighton Hospital, Middlewich Road,
Crewe, CW1 4QJ. 01270 255909
- Macclesfield District General Hospital,
Victoria Road, Macclesfield. SK10 3BL.
01625 421000

Police- non emergency

- 101

Fire and Rescue Services- non emergency

- Crewe- 01270 211144
- Kidsgrove 0300 330 1000
- Alsager- 01270 879837

Taxis

- Alsager Cabs- 01270 872941/ 07831
194657
- Kidsgrove Taxis- 01782 775775
- Lifestyle private Hire- Alsager. 01270
872 255