

Blackbird Leys Redevelopment

December 2024 Community Newsletter

Welcome to the latest Blackbird Leys community update

Work is continuing to deliver 294 new affordable homes, shops, community facilities, new green spaces and improved roads and cycle routes to Blackbird Leys, in partnership with Oxford City Council and our contractor, The Hill Group.

Since the last newsletter, we have submitted a planning application to Oxford City Council for the new Blackbird Leys Community Centre.

This update gives more information about the community centre plans, what construction has taken place, and what to expect next.

As work continues, keep an eye out for updates on noticeboards and on the Blackbird Leys website at: blackbirdleys.co.uk

Construction update

We have made a lot of progress at the District Centre and on Knights Road since work started a year ago.



Significant milestones throughout 2024 have included:

District Centre	Knights Road
Early 2024	
Starting piling (creating deep foundations) for Block D (near Evenlode Tower)	Starting piling (creating deep foundations)
Demolition and preparing materials at Block A (near Windrush Tower)	Soil stripping (removing the top layers of soil)

Spring 2024

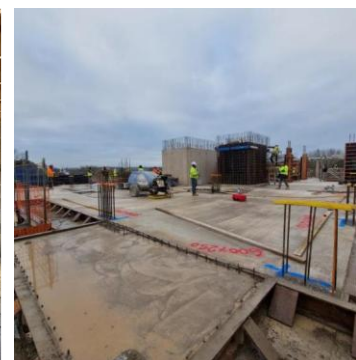
Starting to pour concrete for Block D foundations	Creating foundations for a site welfare facility for the construction team
Installing a crane base at Block D	Completing piling (creating deep foundations)
Artwork project on hoarding (temporary fencing) at Block D	Starting work on new roads and drainage


District Centre
Knights Road
Summer 2024

Completing the footpath from Evenlode Tower to the leisure centre	Setting up scaffolding to allow brickwork to begin, and building the first floors of the new homes
Completing work on the ground floor and starting to build the concrete frame for Block D	Repairing the road and footpath to Spindleberry Close

Autumn 2024

Removing the generators	Continuing with brickwork and roof work for terraced homes
Continuing progress on above ground works at Block D	Completing ground preparations for the next stage of work
Completing Thames Water diversion work at Block A	Starting work on the insides of first 28 homes



A lot more is expected for the coming months. Some of this activity includes:

District Centre	Knights Road
Continuing to construct the reinforced concrete frame structure for Block D	Continuing brickwork, roofing and work to the insides of the first 28 homes
Starting external building work at Block D, including installing windows and brickwork	Progressing second phase of homes, including the new roads, piling (creating deep foundations) and other below-ground work

Road work

Road work at the District Centre started in November following an agreement with Oxfordshire County Council. In the first phase we have been creating new foot and cycle paths.

Work will continue over the next couple of months on the central island between the shops and the Church of the Holy Family. Construction of the new cycle path along Blackbird Leys Road will also continue.

From February 2025, work will take place at the junction of Blackbird Leys Road and Cuddesdon Way. This will involve a temporary road closure, and we will need to install temporary lights. We will make sure that all updates on progress are available on the Blackbird Leys website (blackbirdleys.co.uk).



Block A update

In our last newsletter, we updated you on our application to the new Building Safety Regulator, which needs to provide approval before we can start building Block A (opposite the District Centre shops).

The Regulator has asked for some more detailed information which our contractor, Hill, will be providing. This request for additional detail will delay us starting construction.

We are now looking to start work on this block in late spring 2025. We will keep you updated on progress, and we are committed to delivering these homes and new shops. The existing shops will remain in their current location until the new shops are ready to be occupied.

Blackbird Leys Community Centre

In October, we finalised plans for the new Blackbird Leys Community Centre, which we presented to the community at our final exhibition event at Church of the Holy Family Hall.

We have now submitted a detailed planning application to Oxford City Council.

Our vision for the new community centre will:

- **Be a hub for social sustainability**, community aspiration, and civic pride
- **Improve access to community activities**, outreach services, socialising, learning and self-improvement
- **Be extremely environmentally efficient** and sustainable



Since summer 2023, we have worked with the community to shape the final designs. We held more than 40 public events over 12 months, engaging over 1,000 people – or 1 in 12 Leys residents.

Your feedback has helped to shape our plans, which feature:

- A range of community hall sizes, a shared hub, a community kitchen, bookable spaces, lettable offices, and a community garden
- Plenty of open space, landscaped public squares, a central lawn, and new tree planting
- Play areas for children of all ages
- Links to the church and Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground
- A sustainable approach – the community centre will be fossil fuel free, feature solar panels and Passive House design principles, and is targeting BREEAM “Excellent” standards.



We expect Oxford City Council’s planning committee to consider this application in early 2025.

You can find out more information at blackbirdleys.co.uk/community-centre/

You can also view and comment on the application on Oxford City Council's planning portal at www.oxford.gov.uk/planning-applications/view-comment-track-planning-applications by using the reference **24/02510/RES**

Working with the Blackbird Leys Community

Our programme includes many opportunities for upskilling, training and employment.

If you are interested in working on the Blackbird Leys redevelopment project or learning skills in construction, you can contact Hill at residents@hill.co.uk or on 0800 032 6700.

Meet one of our apprentices



Ben Gullett – trainee site manager at Knights Road



I learned about the Hill Apprenticeship Scheme at an apprenticeship fair and chose it over a university place, as I believed having 5 years of paid work experience was invaluable. The first day going to site was daunting, however the site team were very welcoming and helped me to settle in quickly.

What my day looks like can vary massively. I usually start with a perimeter check before completing any inductions that need to take place. I then head onto site for a couple of hours to keep on top of health and safety, monitor deliveries and storage spaces, and answer any questions from on-site workers. After, I head back to the site cabin to complete any office work I need to, for instance filing permits, making signs, completing material orders, or getting tanks refuelled and skips exchanged.

I really enjoy that I'm constantly learning new things in a hands-on way.

My favourite thing about Blackbird Leys is the people working here. Everyone has been very welcoming and has taught me a lot about what happens on site, from site managers to workers across the many different trades.



Club sponsorship: We are sponsoring Greater Leys U9 Football Club this season, which includes the team's new (and brightly coloured) kit.

Community kindness event

Hill, Peabody, Oxford City Council, and the Oxford Hub joined forces to celebrate acts of kindness in Blackbird Leys at our Be Kind event on 5 December.

This was held at Windale Primary School, and we welcomed families across the Leys.

Pre-loved quality clothes, shoes, toys, books, and winter essentials were distributed to those in the community who would truly benefit from them.

These items were made available to people at no cost, with a simple request for a kindness pledge in support of the local community.

Families picked out clothes and children chose toys as Christmas presents. A Christmas tree was beautifully decorated with pledges from attendees. This included promises such as to always think of others and to offer help whenever possible.

We know that many people struggle during this time of year. This initiative was a way to show that we are stronger together and that support is always available when needed. We will continue to explore more ways to collaborate with our community, listen, and provide necessary support.



Contact us

Thank you for reading this edition of the Blackbird Leys newsletter.



If you have any questions or would like more information about the Blackbird Leys redevelopment, you can contact Peabody via joanne.hoy@peabody.org.uk with 'Blackbird Leys' in the subject line.

If you have any questions about construction work, you can contact Hill at residents@hill.co.uk or on 0800 032 6700.

You can also **scan the QR code** (left) to visit the Blackbird Leys website for more information: blackbirdleys.co.uk.