

D'Eynsford CCTV System



Consultation Saturday 13th June
Resident Drop-In - 10am - 1pm Community Room
Skype/Zoom/Phone Call - Book via TMO Office:
020 7525 0745 or tmo@deynsford.org

There has, for a number of years now, been talk of and requests for CCTV to be installed within our estate. Until recently the idea has been out of reach for the TMO due to the substantial costs of such a project. Last year however, the TMO managed to draw together a costed proposal for a system which would be both affordable and practical for the estate. The savings the TMO has made of the past few years have contributed sufficient money to fund the project and the overall costs have been reduced by way of careful selection of equipment and undertaking the management of the system.

The TMO presented the project at the 2019 AGM as part of a list of estate improvement projects upon which residents voted. This is the first time improvement projects are being funded from the operational surplus steadily built up over the time the TMO has been running, rather than projects being grant funded. In part therefore the affordability of this project stems from the TMO's excellent record of securing grant funding for community based projects over the past few years.

The CCTV project attracted one of the highest vote counts and the board approved funding for the project as a result of that vote when they met for the 'Away Day' – it's annual planning and strategy day. The project has since been publicised in a number of newsletters and we were planning to unveil a more detailed plan for the system and indeed the actual cameras at our next general meeting, however Covid 19 came along as stop that plan in its tracks.

When will the CCTV be installed?

If not for the pandemic the CCTV project would already be well on the way to being installed by now. In light of the easing of the lockdown restrictions we are now able to press on with the installation phase and the plan is to be undertaking the installation within the next couple of months.

Have residents been consulted?

The TMO has tried to ensure that residents are aware of the project. You may have

seen it mentioned in the newsletters or been to a General Meetings where it has been discussed along with other improvement projects.

We planned to update residents at the March General Meeting however this had to be cancelled. Instead, the project leader, Mark Vowles and Estate Manager, Chay Pulger will be holding a socially distanced drop in consultation session in the TMO Community Room on Saturday 6th June between 10am and 1pm.

All necessary measures will be in place to

ensure residents can safely come and see the cameras in operation, ask questions and comment. For residents who are shielding or who would prefer to not attend in person, there is an option to request a telephone, Skype or Zoom call, please contact the TMO to request a video or telephone call on 6th June by contacting the office: 020 7525 0745 or tmo@deynsford.org.

Why is CCTV Needed?

You may be wondering why the estate needs CCTV and/or why many residents feel it is a necessary. There are a number of issues which affect our estate and which residents have consistently raised with the TMO, some examples are listed (in no particular order) below;

- Fly Tipping
- Drug Dealing/Use
- Rough Sleeping
- Prostitution
- Damage to Communal Assets
- Anti-Social Behaviour



It's fair to say that our estate is far less badly affected than others not so far away and this is thanks in part to the sense of community we have on the estate, the efforts of the TMO staff, the volunteers on the subcommittees and our the efforts in partnership with the local police.

The reality is that whilst we as an estate cannot tackle wider societal issues such as homelessness, prostitution and drug activity, what we can do is make our estate less conducive to these activities and thereby create a safer and more pleasant environment for our residents.

It is also true that for many, CCTV provides a sense of security and for many residents this will come as a source of reassurance.

What about alternatives?

Much of the guidance on CCTV mentions the need for CCTV to be used as a last resort. The TMO has a long history of trying alternatives, some of which you may be aware of. In some instances the TMO has had a degree of success and one notable case is the introduction of code locks for internal bin rooms in blocks which still have them.

In other cases the alternatives have had less impact, fly tipping in particular. In this case the TMO has tried everything from letters through to signs and even dummy CCTV. Each intervention had some limited impact however, as most residents know only too

well, things quickly returned to normal, which to be blunt is, the estate being littered with discarded household items every weekend and most evenings.

It cannot be overstated how much of an impact fly tipping in particular has, not only on how the estate looks and feels but also on the TMO staff's time. The time they spend clearing often bulky rubbish is time not spent on looking after and improving the estate.

This project will bring to an end any tolerance of fly tipping on the estate. If you have items you no longer want, it is your responsibility to dispose of them. If they are in serviceable condition you might want to consider Freecycle

as a way to give your unwanted item a new life, this is often the most environmentally considerate option. Otherwise, you should either take your refuse to the Council Recycling and Refuse Centre or use Southwark Council's bulky waste collection service:

(<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/bulky-waste-collections>)

What will the cameras be used for?

The introduction of CCTV brings with it huge responsibilities because for every positive there are potential negatives. It's probably best to begin with what the cameras will not be used for and top of that list is 'spying on residents'.

Nobody wants to feel that they are being tracked, watched or monitored and you can be assured that the camera system is not being installed for this purpose and the policy governing its use specifically rules out this type of misuse. You can read the full CCTV policy here:

<http://www.deynsford.org/cctv>

The cameras will primarily be used as a deterrent and as an effective means to identify those engaged in activities not conducive to the well being of the estate. The system's technical specification and operational procedures will ensure that it operates with the integrity and clarity necessary for the footage to be used in support of criminal prosecutions where appropriate.

This initial phase of the system will see the installation of predominantly highly overt cameras which will cover large areas of the estate and essentially make it impossible to enter or leave the estate unseen. Thus these cameras will provide 24/7 coverage capturing those moving on/off and around the estate. The camera locations have been carefully chosen to allow them to monitor open areas, areas known to be misused by those engaged in anti-social behaviour and fly tipping whilst

also covering all entrances and exits.

The TMO will hand footage over to both Southwark Council and the Police for the purposes of prosecution and or to assist with investigations as set out in the CCTV policy. Southwark Council has considerable powers to

prosecute fly tipping with court fines of £1000 in addition to their powers in relation to lease and tenancy forfeiture.

There are other situations in which the footage can be used, for example, the TMO can supply insurance companies with footage to support motor vehicle claims. The policy stipulates that footage will only be shared responsibly to protect the privacy of residents.

The purpose of the cameras is to deter in the first instance and

thereafter catch those who act in ways which negatively impact on the estate and resident's experience of the estate.

How will the effectiveness of the system be monitored?

As with any investment of this scale, the effectiveness of the system will be very closely monitored. The system has been designed to be highly adaptable and extensible. This means that if the effect of the cameras is to solve issues in one location only to see them move to others, additional cameras can and will be rapidly deployed to ensure issues are eradicated once and for all.

Once cameras are installed as part of such an extension, it is highly likely they will remain, even



if the problem they were installed to solve ceases.

This initial phase is designed to be a minimal system, the smallest possible number of cameras in the most strategic locations providing the widest visual coverage. There is no desire to cover every inch of the estate with cameras however there is the ability and determination to do just that if necessary to combat persistent issues.

The TMO recognises that there is a balance to be struck with CCTV, nobody wants to feel that they are being watch at every turn however issues need to be tackled. Careful thought will be used when extending the system to stick this balance and of course the views of residents will always be considered.

Where will the cameras be positioned and how good are they?

For obvious reasons we won't be publicising details of the system design but once installed most of the cameras will be fairly obvious. Many of the units are automated pan, tilt & zoom cameras. These are fairly large in size with a rotating camera under a dome. The cameras we have purchased are able to zoom in on targets at significant distances (much greater than the length of the estate!) as well as rotate to view 360 degrees horizontally and view at angles from directly downwards to above the horizontal.

The installation height has been chosen to avoid the typical 'birds eye view' so that facial recognition will be possible.

The cameras also have intelligent image processing on-board which allows them to autonomously identify people and to then follow them as they move within the area of coverage of the camera. Although we are not planning to deploy this feature initially, that decision will be held under review. I can say with confidence, having tested the feature myself, that it is a strange feeling to have the camera actively following your every move!

These cameras can efficiently cover large areas, can rapidly alter their view angle to catch out anyone who thinks they can sneak past them and the installation plan sees them aligned in teams of units to ensure consistent coverage. They are equipped with powerful infra-red night vision lamps to provide clear images night and day and unlike cheaper cameras, there's no glow so the cameras can see you clearly when you cannot see them!

In some locations fixed cameras will also be used to provide static views. In these cases we have obtained high resolution cameras again with night vision to ensure that we have the image quality necessary to identify people as well as their actions.

Interference with the CCTV.

The TMO has previously deployed dummy cameras, sadly some of these have been tampered with. It is therefore worth reminding residents that the TMO will take a zero tolerance approach to any interference with any part of the CCTV system. The investment of estate funds is significant and the TMO will act to protect this valuable asset.

If you have any questions, concerns, comments or would like to see the cameras up close please visit the Community Room 10am-1pm Saturday June 13th or book a call with the office.