

Minutes of the Acton Garden Residents Meeting (Phase 1&2)

Thursday 25th January 2018 at 7.00pm
Community Centre, 5-11 Hanbury Road, W3 8RG

Staff Attendees:

Shakira Henry (SH) – Chair – Property Manager for L&Q
Bijal Mehta (BM) – Property Manager for L&Q

Resident Attendees:

Janet Coker (JC)
Helen Julien (HJ)
Marta Nunes (MN)
Warren Baxter (WB)
Edna Baxter (EB)

Sachin Suchak (SS)
Joan McCleary (JM)
Cathyann Thomas (CT)
Ella Beard (EB1)
Alex Ikhelis (AI)

Mario Pardo (MP)
Benjamin Ahmed (BA)
Esther McDonnell (EM)
Andre Sbardellotto (AS)
Simone Sbardellotto (SS1)

		Action
1.0	Introduction & Apologies:	
1.1	SH introduced the new property manager for Phase 1 & 2 – Bijal Mehta.	
2.0	Minutes of the Last Meeting:	
2.1	The minutes were agreed by all. EM mentioned her name was spelt incorrectly.	
3.0	Heating & Hot Water	
3.1	SH advised that the management of the plant rooms is now being managed by the L&Q Energy department and E.ON will be the new contractor. E.ON is already managing the plant rooms on the other phases however Phase 1 & 2 will be effective from April 2018. E.ON is currently working with HSM to ensure there is a smooth transition with the transfer of management.	
3.2	SH advised that a representative of the L&Q Energy team has agreed to attend the next resident meeting and also provide more regular updates. It has been recognised that measures need to be put in place to provide a more robust and reliable service. Some of these actions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a critical spare list to enable parts to be kept on site. This will allow the contractor to provide first time fixes in a timely manner. • To carry out a full plant room health check to be completed in March 2018. • To carry out monthly water tests to ensure the quality is at 100%. This will be reviewed in February/March 2018. 	
3.3	SS states that this should allow for the service charge to be reduced. SH agreed to confirm the impact of the services charges under the new management.	SH/BM

4.0	Compensation	
4.1	SH advised that any outstanding compensation matters will now be managed by the L&Q Energy team. If residents have received letters advising they are not entitled to compensation they will need to contact the L&Q Energy team to be investigated further. SH to provide contact details for the L&Q Energy team - L&QEnergy@lqgroup.org.uk .	SH/BM
4.2	SS advised that he was yet to get any response from the L&Q Energy team. EB1 also advised they are not satisfied with their response from Mandy Bailey. SH confirmed that Mandy Bailey had been of work prior to Christmas and is unsure as to when she will return.	
5.0	Service Charges	
5.1	SH advised that there were a number of outstanding service charge queries which were being chased. Full responses for these queries have now been received and sent to the resident mail group. SH will attach these responses to the minutes (see page 4).	SH
5.2	SS advised that he was not happy with the increase relating to his parking bay service charges which had increased by 200%. Residents expressed that they generally feel they are not getting a breakdown of their service charge or any explanation for the increase. It was also requested that more regular service charge surgeries are held i.e. every quarter due to the lack of attendance to the resident meetings. SH agreed to obtain a general overview to explain the increase in service charge estimates for 2018/19.	SH
5.3	AI advised he requested his 2015/16 service charge breakdown but did not receive it. SH agreed to get it sent.	SH
6.0	Pest Control	
6.1	SH advised that very few reports had been received regarding sightings of mice following the block treatments carried out last year. SH advised that despite the few reports it will be beneficial for a rolling programme to be introduced in order to manage this more effectively. EB1 advised that they are still experiencing this issue with mice coming via the kitchen and the balcony area. Other residents stated they can also be heard within the walls.	
6.2	SH advised that costs have now been received for the rolling contract and currently being reviewed by management. Residents will be provided with an update in March 2018 regarding the costs and progress. In the interim SH will arrange for further block treatments to take place.	SH/BM
6.3	Residents expressed that the drop down seal to the flat doors which are not functioning, is also having an impact as mice can access this gap.	
7.0	Estate Improvements	
7.1	SH advised that the metal railings project has since been installed and completed. The remaining project to install restrictors to mailboxes is expected to be completed by March 2018. SH confirmed that these works will be carried out to the following blocks: Herrick Court, Beeching Court, Wyatt Court & Warton Court.	
8.0	Apartment Door Seals	
8.1	SH advised that this continues to be investigated as a latent defect due to the number of residents this has affected. Countryside have yet to confirm they will be attending to this	BM

	however the L&Q Aftercare team are currently reviewing the building manuals for further advice. Residents will continue to be updated on this matter.	
9.0	Lighting (Phase 2)	
9.1	SH provided a brief overview regarding the ongoing external lighting matter for the benefit of the new PM. SH advised that Countryside have confirmed that works will commence the following week (29/01/18) to a sample area (Shanklin Court). Providing the works carried out go well, a full works programme will be determined. It is expected to take 4 weeks to complete the project.	
9.2	EM advised that lights still remain on constantly throughout the daytime. SH advised this will be picked up when carrying out the works.	
10.0	Any Other Business	
10.1	AI advised that the light fittings installed within the apartments are becoming out of date and the light bulbs are difficult to source. Also when the light bulbs are found they are expensive. SH advised that this has been discussed with management however Countryside has yet to agree to pick this matter up as a latent defect. Residents will continue to be updated with any further developments on this matter. SH agreed to send details of possible light bulb suppliers:	SH
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&Q • Edmunsons – 59-61 Park Royal Road, NW10 7JJ – Tel: 0208 965 8799 • WF Electrical – 36a Cumberland Avenue, NW10 7RF – Tel: 0208 965 8799 • Newey & Eyre – Abbey Road, NW10 7SA – Tel: 0208 955 6450 	SH/BM
	Please note that the light bulb can be a different manufacturer to the JCC one you may have in your home, but you need to ask for a 11watt CFL GU10 down light lamp.	
10.2	JC advised that people within the block are spitting in the lift and has requested a letter is sent to the block.	SH
10.3	JC asked on behalf of another resident why the replacement door to Drummond Court was taking so long to replace. SH advised that the supplier had let the L&Q maintenance team down extremely. A door had been received but had the wrong measurements and has therefore had to place a new order. Currently waiting for the new door to be received.	SH/BM
10.4	WB advised that they are still unable to see their visitors via their television screen. SH agreed to chase this.	SH
10.5	A request was made for clearer signage to be provided within the bin stores to ensure residents dispose of the recycling correctly.	
10.6	EM asked if the roof gardens were being maintained. SH advised there is no contract currently in place however this is being looked into.	
10.7	AS advised that they were not happy with the communal cleaning service and does not feel it is up to standard. However an improvement had been noted from the last 10 days and they would like this kept up. SH advised that more regular inspections have been taken and issue have been noted and discussed with the caretaker. This will continue to be closely monitored.	SH SH
10.8	It was requested that any dead trees within the communal garden are replaced. SH advised quotes have been received and being reviewed.	
10.9	CT requested that when the grounds maintenance team are clearing the leaves that they are not blown in to their private garden. SH will ensure this information is fed back.	

10.10	AS advised that a delivery company was witnessed using a fire drop key to access the building following no response from the intercom system. It has been requested that this access is changed or further secured to prevent unauthorised persons accessing this. SH agreed to look into whether there were any other options.	
10.11	Post Meeting Note: Resident requested an update on any crimes/ASB relating to bike or mail thefts. No recent reports of mail theft have been received. Last report of stolen bikes was in November 2017. This was reported to the Police and CCTV footage provided and any necessary repairs have been scheduled.	

Please also find below responses to a number of outstanding queries received from residents relating to Service Charges

QUERY	RESPONSE										
<p>Residents requested a full breakdown of all costs and a detailed explanation of the costs ahead of the next Service Charge session.</p>	<p>On the 6th June 2017 a detailed breakdown for the communal areas across the scheme for Phase 1 was provided to the resident group mailbox. This detailed the costs that all residents would contribute to, however this would not detail the individual blocks costs as they would differ and can only be provided to residents who live in the requested block. A number of queries were received following receipt of the breakdown which are addressed below.</p> <p>A resident drop in surgery event was scheduled for the 12th October where multi departments were available to discuss individual matters with residents, however the Service Charge representative was unable to attend at the last minute. Due to this a separate Service Charge surgery was arranged on the 2nd of November. Both events were advertised to all resident via text message, leaflets and notices.</p> <p>As per the Summary of tenants' rights and obligations, 10. You have the right, within 6 months of receiving a written summary of costs, to require the landlord to provide you with reasonable facilities to inspect the accounts, receipts and other documents supporting the summary and for taking copies or extracts from them.</p> <p>If specific invoices are requested we are happy to provide residents with the facilities to inspect the accounts in your local office between the hours of 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. This service is free of charge. However if residents prefer you have the information sent by post, please see below relevant admin charges;</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="571 1570 1182 1861"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="571 1570 879 1653">Number of Pages</th> <th data-bbox="879 1570 1182 1653">Printed and Sent in Post/Email</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1653 879 1693">1-10</td> <td data-bbox="879 1653 1182 1693">30p per sheet</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1693 879 1733">11-49</td> <td data-bbox="879 1693 1182 1733">40p per sheet</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1733 879 1774">50+</td> <td data-bbox="879 1733 1182 1774">60p per sheet</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="571 1774 879 1861">Recorded Delivery (essential)</td> <td data-bbox="879 1774 1182 1861">Additional £6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Number of Pages	Printed and Sent in Post/Email	1-10	30p per sheet	11-49	40p per sheet	50+	60p per sheet	Recorded Delivery (essential)	Additional £6
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<p>What is the accumulative contribution by resident's payments and where are they spent exactly? Where is the money of the sinking funds spent exactly?</p>	<p>The purpose of a sinking fund is to enable homeowners to spread the cost of major works e.g. cyclical decorations, roof replacement, etc., over a number of years. We set sinking fund contributions with the aim that there is little or no shortfall in the balance when a major works invoice needs to be settled. This means that we avoid billing our residents for large amounts after works have been completed. If a sinking fund is not set up, payment for any major works are due from a</p>										

	<p>home owner on completion. This could result in a bill of several thousand pounds per property.</p> <p>L&Q's aim is to avoid there being a shortfall in the sinking fund when works are required, however, the unexpected can happen. In this case, homeowners would receive formal confirmation of the final amount of works and any likely shortfall. Payment options are generally interest free and available for periods up to 3 years.</p>
	<p>Contributions are normally calculated when a property is built. The builder provides a cost list of all component parts of the building (such as windows, roof, door entry system, fire safety system etc.) and approximate life expectancies for these. L&Q work out contributions by dividing the total replacement cost of each item by its life expectancy. Other factors such as independent condition surveys and inflation may be taken into account. We also look at our existing stock to see what the costs are on a similar scheme.</p> <p>Contributions are specific to a scheme/block and are based on the items in the scheme/block which will need to be replaced at some point in the future. The standard items are normally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roof Windows Communal Entrance Doors Cyclical Internal Decorations Cyclical External Decorations Lift (if the block has one) Door Entry System Communal Internal Electrics/Lighting Communal Flooring Fire Protection System Landscaping External Lighting <p>All contributions are held by L&Q in a central bank account and accounted for separately. Interest is earned on the monies that are held and is added to the sinking fund balance every year. Therefore, if L&Q were to financially collapse, the sinking fund monies held for each scheme would be easily traceable and passed on to the new freeholders. Please be aware this is not likely to occur but you know that there is a safety net in place for your funds.</p>
<p>It is difficult to see where the contributions are made on the current schedule.</p>	<p>Services are provided by third parties. When residents receive their final statements it will only show their own individual final cost, we do not provide other residents with anyone else's costs. However, I can confirm that residents who are benefiting from any specific service will contribute a proportion.</p>
<p>Service Charge and Parking Fee increases are over the normal expected RPI/CPI and it has been unclear as to what services residents are paying for.</p>	<p>Service charges are estimated based on the most recent invoices received over the closest 12 month period, we also work with the teams within L&Q i.e. Mechanical & Engineering Team to work out costs for services such as Lift Maintenance/Service, Fire Protection etc. When estimates are set an RPI inflationary uplift is also included. However when final reconciliation is undertaken residents are only charged for the invoices paid within the specified financial year.</p>

