

Kilburn Square Housing Co-operative General Meeting Minutes 15th June 2017

**Kilburn Square Housing Co-operative:
General Meeting held on
15th June 2017 at 19:00
Community Hall of the Tower Block**

Actions

Present:

M Von Stoll (MVS – Chair)
J Welch (JWE – Secretary)
A Messina (AM – Treasurer)
P Fell (PF – Member)
P Hogan (PH – Member)
D Bugnacki (BD – Resident)
M Lynch (ML – Resident)
H Mahmood (HM – Resident)
C Fonceca (CF – Resident)
K Scannell (KS – Resident)
R Capaldo (RC – Resident)
R Stockwell (RS – Resident)
A Elahie (AE – Resident)
J Decruz (JD – Resident)
O Cole (OC – Resident)
C Mack (CM – Resident)
P Wade (PW – Resident)
M Coughlan (MC – Resident)
T Samsamana (TJ – Resident)
M Omari (MO – Resident)

Absent:

Z Montana (ZM – Member)
M Page (MP – Member)
J Williams (JWI – Estate Manager)
K Chads (KC – Minute taker)

1. Welcome from the Chair

MVS welcomed everyone to the second General Meeting of 2017 and thanked everyone for attending.

KC did not attend the meeting and AM volunteered to take minutes.

2. Apologies

No apologies were received prior to the General Meeting.

3. Conflict of Interest declarations

4. Minutes of the last General Meeting (16th March 2017)

a) Accuracy

Page 4, "7. External works": '*...MVS announced that cameras will be put up so that the roofs can be monitored...*' should have been '*MVS announced that cameras will be put up down the drains so that the roofs can be monitored*'.

b) Matters arising

Page 3. AM and MVS explained that a more detailed financial report will be included in MVS the Annual Report which will be discussed at the next General Meeting in September.

Page 5. JWE will draft up a document providing more details about what it entails to be a JWE Member to encourage more people to join the Board.

c) Minutes have then been agreed and signed-off.

5. Treasurer's report

AM explained that, in compliance with financial management good practice, the Co-op has now separated the bank accounts into a main account, where the MMA income fees are paid, and another account, for the Co-op social funds only.

The Co-op financial position looks very solid and all the Key Performance Indicators are positive in terms of Current Gross Rent Collection Rate (CGRCR), percentages of rent loss through void properties (there is only 1 vacant unit in the whole estate) and rent arrears of current tenants (1.6% in May and 1.7% in April, both better than the proposed target of 2.3%).

The only issue with the recent months' CGRCR is that a new rent system (v6) has been adopted by BHP/Brent Council, however suitable training has been provided to the Co-op staff only on repairs, not on rents. The estate manager JWI explained to the Board Members during the last Board Meeting which took place on Tuesday 13th June 2017 that "Christina of BHP stated that she had forgotten all about the TMOs". This has resulted in the relevant KPI on rent collection dropping to 98.6%, which is a very high value but slightly below target (99.5%). Again, AM explained that this is only due to a technical issue in the system used by the Co-op staff to record the relevant figures and will be adjusted soon.

AM also explained that the budget versus actual variance in the current income statement looks very positive, also because the MMA income per month is still the same, even though the Co-op has been notified by BHP/Brent Council that – due to the recent social cuts and austerity – there may a reduction of approximately 3% of the MMA money currently received by the TMO. It should be noted that the definitive reduction has still to be negotiated between the TMO and BHP/Brent Council and nothing has still formally been agreed by the Co-op Board. In any case any adjustment may retrospectively affect the aforementioned financial figures, hence it would be better to be prudent.

AM concluded by saying that some expenses will be soon due for works to the trees, as some of which need to be lopped for security reasons, and for replacing a damaged car park gate on Victoria Road next to Rathbone House.

6. Parking

MVS said that a Veolia van was hit by a closing car park gate on Victoria Road, next to Rathbone House. This gate had been recently installed and was supposed to be a like-for-like replacement of a previous gate. It was instead replaced with a different mechanism which doesn't have loops, hence the rear of long vehicles is not detected by the back sensors once the front wheels trigger the closing movement. A new gate will be ordered soon and it will not require new fobs for its remote control.

At the previous General Meeting, which took place on 16th March 2017, a number of comments were raised about the possibility of issuing a second car permit per flat. Further to the feedback received, the Board has agreed during the Board Meeting which took place on 11th April 2017 that tenants and leaseholders of the estate can have two parking permits per flat. The cost of the first one will still be £30 per year, while the second one would cost £90, in line with the costs sustained by the residents in the previous years (when the first car permit was free though). In the future years these costs may increase in line with inflation.

It was clarified by AM that visitors permits, which used to be distributed to the residents for free until 31st March 2017, have been abandoned and have been replaced from 1st April 2017 by scratch cards, which can be bought in batches of 12 tickets for £20 in total (£1.67 each then). Only half of this income goes to the Co-op, while the other half goes to Wing who manages the system.

It was clarified by MVS that the £30 cost per annum for the first permit is valid for one vehicle only. If a new car needs to be registered for the same flat by the 31st March of the following year, then a new £30 fee is due. It was proposed that in the future the validity of each car permit should last 12 months from its issue, rather than for the fixed period 1st April – 30th March. This is to avoid that the same £30 fee is paid for 12 months (if bought in April) or for as little as 1 month (if bought in February). This may be discussed by the Board in the next Board Meetings.

Since the new car parking policy became effective, less cars and vans have been parked in the estate and MSV explained that this may be due to the abuse of the visitors permits which was perpetrated in the past, when many vehicles which were not registered to the estate residents used to be parked in the estate car park for long periods by using free visitors permits, which were supposed to be used only for 1 day instead.

MVS said that only one abandoned car is currently left in the estate. This is not registered to any of the estate residents and the Co-op will need to sustain the costs to remove it.

A question was raised about the possibility of introducing either exemptions or reductions for certain categories of residents with special needs who don't own a car but would need to purchase on a regular basis visitors permits for their carers, visiting doctors or even relatives coming over to visit their parents, grandparents, uncles, aunties, etc. Currently residents who own a car pay £30 on an annual basis (e.g. up to 365 days), while a visitors permit for residents who don't own a car would cost £20 for 12 days only. Some proposals (i.e. 75% discount for residents over 65 years, or similar) should be submitted to find a fairer solution. This may be discussed by the Board in the next Board Meetings.

Another issue was identified about the expiry date of the visitors permits. Since free visitors permits are not available anymore and since residents who don't own a car need to purchase in advance a minimum of 12 scratch cards just in case they will need to allow their visiting doctors, carers, relatives, etc. to park in the estate, it would be fairer if – once bought by a resident – these scratch cards will not expiry until they are used. This may be discussed by the Board in the next Board Meetings.

Lastly, some of the attendees wanted to report cases of wrongdoing to the Board Members at the General Meeting. AM explained that the Board cannot be involved in everyday operations and any issue should be reported to the estate manager and the Co-op staff instead.

7. External works

MVS said that the lifts in Sandby House are currently being replaced.

Wates, who was appointed by BHP for the major works which were undertaken in the low rise buildings, still haven't cleared the underground car park, haven't removed the snagging and haven't completed the landscaping on the estate. The estate manager wasn't able to communicate with the sub-contractors chosen by Wates to complete the works and the Co-op is not happy with this situation, hence no final sign-off will occur before all these issues will be sorted out.

Due to the major fire incident which happened to the Grenfell Tower on 14th June 2017, a number of queries have been raised by the residents of the Tower Block known as 11-90 Kilburn Square about the future major works proposed for the building, which may include a similar cladding to the one that caught fire at the Grenfell Tower. AM explained that he had already sent to the Interim Head of Property & Investment of BHP Mark Drury an e-mail on 18th April 2017 where he showed concerns about the necessity of installing external wall insulation in a building which only recently had been refurbished with cavity wall insulation and is already fitted with energy efficient PVC-framed double glazing.

All the Tower Block residents (11 out of 11 present) confirmed that their flats are very warm during the winter season and that they would definitely prefer to maintain the current brickwork appearance. PW said that when the building was constructed in the late 1960s it was one of the first steel and concrete tower buildings in Brent and was built according to the best practice standards.

MVS said that she is only aware of a single case of water infiltration in one of the Tower Block flats. AM said that the only work required would be the replacement of the black seal around the openable windows, which would eliminate any draughts during the winter season.

All the Tower Block residents have shown concern about the potential decision of changing the current building envelope and AM will keep them updated about the BHP/Brent Council plans, which are still vague even though the major works were scheduled for mid-2017. No detailed scope of works, intended programme, access arrangements timescale and associated costs have been communicated yet to the residents, nor to the Board Members.

All the residents asked for smoke alarms being installed in the communal areas of the estate and for an ad-hoc General Meeting to be organised just to discuss with the residents about fire risk management. HM proposed to start a campaign to raise awareness among the residents with regard to the matter i.e. which actions and behaviours should be undertaken or avoided to mitigate risk, if people are aware of what they are supposed to do in case of smoke or fire, etc. Other proposed measures were: to undertake a façade spread of fire review to ensure that the buildings are safe; evaluate feasibility to install sprinklers in each flat; introduce policies about the use of second-hand appliances in the flats or changing/cleaning the kitchen extract filters, ovens, etc.

AM said that the estate manager JWI circulated a letter among the residents to confirm that BHP has undertaken a fire risk assessment on the Tower Block and the building is 100% compliant. In the letter it was recommended to carry out a number of things to

ensure safety such as: having a working smoke alarm in the homes; keep balconies free from clutter; don't obstruct escape routes and communal areas with rubbish or bikes; don't smoke in the communal areas including lifts; etc.

8. Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

MVS said that ASB has slightly improved since last General Meeting, even though a number of young people, not resident in the estate, still keep visiting the premises.

JWE believes that calls to 111 by various residents have made a difference. For some reason loiterers seem to concentrate on Rathbone House, even though also the maisonettes and the playground are targeted, with non-residents climbing gates and railings, smoking drugs, etc.

9. Management and Maintenance Agreement (MMA)

This subject was partially covered by AM (see Agenda Issue No.5). MVS added that the original document with all relevant track changes was requested by BHP and is due by 23rd June 2017.

10. New Board Members required

MVS has invited all the attendees to join the Board and be more actively involved in the activities undertaken by the Co-op. The TMO needs workers who will be able to assist in carrying out the various tasks required to manage the Co-op and comply with the governance requirements.

Some of the residents are interested however they feel that they may need training to fill some gaps and get the skills required to become a Board Member.

MVS explained that training is offered to all Board Members who ask for it and is looking forward to new applications.

11. 25th year of being a TMO celebration (volunteers required)

MVS reminded everyone that the Co-op was founded on 18th March 1992, before the MMA was signed, and that this year is its 25th anniversary. An event should be celebrated similarly to what happened for the 10th and 20th anniversary.

A number of options were proposed such as a BBQ, a party, etc.

12. Co-op Members attendance raffle (x3 prizes of £50)

The first winner is KS of Varley House (Ticket 95)

The second winner is PF of Rathbone House (Ticket 94)

The third winner is PW of Kilburn Square (Ticket 103)

13. Any other business (AOB)

It was notified that no CCTV cameras have been installed in Rathbone House at Ground Floor.

Meeting adjourned at 21:00

Minutes agreed by:

Agreed Patricia Hogan
_____ (1)

Agreed P. Fell
_____ (2)

Chair's
Signature Maeve Jackson

Date 14th December 2017
