

Autumn 2014

# London Yard Newsletter



## Message from the Board

As we wave goodbye to a mixed summer, we are also sad to be waving goodbye to one of our Board members, Tahir, who did a great job helping us continue to run London Yard well. As with the weather, the sun often shines unexpectedly and we are delighted to say we now have a new Board member, Jenni. You will find a short bio on Jenni on our website under "Directors". If you would like to be a part of our team and help run London Yard in the most effective way, please contact us at [lymc@londonyard.net](mailto:lymc@londonyard.net).

*The LYMC Board*

## Parking

The ticketing company is gradually getting to grips with our requirements. We have seen some over-zealous ticketing when they started but we and they are sorting those issues out through their appeals process and they are working well with Parc. We are still concerned with the shoppers and commercial staff car parks and we are getting them to tighten up their patrolling in that area as we are still getting complaints about late night anti-social behaviour after the 11.30 closure of those car parks.

We have also received a further complaint from a commercial unit regarding the fairness of the policy, whether the riverside car park might not be better used for resident parking and the clarity of the signage, all of which we have dealt with. We have upgraded the signage and explained that the chosen car parking for commercial units is best placed as it's already used for commercial parking and is less suited to residential parking. The riverside car parks are considered less secure by residents overnight as we do still have antisocial behaviour from non-residents in that location. With regard to the fairness, we do believe the comparison is fair. Whether a commercial or resident property, each property takes a percentage of the costs of the block based on the square footage plus 1/310th of the costs of the general estate. There is no "front loading" for

commercial units and we therefore view all properties as being equal, which is how the policy has been worked out.

We also had some feedback from another owner regarding putting in place a permit reminder system. We do like to try and fix everything and our proposal in the past for the few that didn't remember was to issue permits that would expire when the road fund licence did. However with the withdrawal of a paper licence, this is no longer possible. We did discuss this as part of our first parking review discussion recently where we weighed up the pros and cons of putting in a reminder system for the few who do not remember and we agreed that, on balance, this was not practical for us or Parc.

## News On Your Block

### Audited Accounts and Mid Financial Year Update

Once again, the audited accounts for the General Estate and the Blocks are despatched with the September demands. The company Statutory Accounts will be despatched with the AGM papers a little later in the year. All surplus and deficits on the service charge (SC1) portion of our quarterly demands will be refunded or collected in this quarter, which is in line with our leases and deeds of covenant. You can see from the actual vs budget columns in the audited accounts which actuals have exceeded or not met budget and, if you have any queries, Parc will be happy to discuss these with you. Overall, we are within 10% of budget (9.7% to be precise!). We will also be using these audited figures combined with the last 3 years' figures together with the current financial year's unaudited figures to compile the new budget in Q1 next year. We have also reviewed the budget as we do every year at this time as we must and you will see a short note under the general estate or block which reflects these changes

### General Estate

↓ Insurance costs as we have again negotiated a good saving through our robust process.

↑ Landscaping. We reduced this significantly in this year's budget but Simon our gardener has done a fantastic job at clearing and preparing the ground for more planting than we anticipated. The many positive comments our staff on the ground have received about the gardens shows this has been money well spent.

↑ Pest control and Porters accommodation/lodge. We have already exceeded budget here hence need for small increase.

Deficit to be collected this quarter against the audited accounts is 5.2% of SC1.

Leaseholder dispute. We do have a commercial unit leaseholder who is again threatening legal action regarding subletting and has demanded we put a provision in the

budget of their estimate of damages of some £10,000. To date the service chargeable costs incurred by LYMC in this financial year in trying to deal responsibly with this are circa £2,000 (we spent some £600 in the last financial year on a different sublet from the same leaseholder). We are not yet over budget on our legal fee provision for this year so have not increased the budget. Should the leaseholder proceed to instigate legal action, our solicitor has indicated that costs would likely be in the region of some £25,000 to defend any action. In line with our current practice, at the point where a legal action is raised against us, we will increase the budget by the next service charge demand date to collect for this action.

#### Block 1 - Vermeer Court and Rembrandt Close

↓ Insurance costs.

↑ General repairs and maintenance. Following the many repairs to the roof line and associated areas, we have already had to overspend on this line so we have increased the budget provision here to not only cover what we have already spent but also to brace ourselves for what may be another poor winter if the current conditions are anything to go by.

Deficit to be collected this quarter against the audited accounts is 18.1% of SC1.

The lifts are on target with the current schedule:

High numbers, 37 – 57. Start: Monday 22nd September 2014. Completion: Sunday 30th November 2014.

Low numbers, 1 – 36. Start: Monday 5th January 2015. Completion: Sunday 22nd March 2015.

Each lift will be out of service for the duration of this schedule. Access by lift can be made to the second and fourth floors via the connecting corridor from the adjacent block. Existing access fobs will allow access.

You will find this on the noticeboards and if anything changes to that schedule we will update this notice. Nearer the time we will door drop to let residents know what is happening so they can make suitable arrangements.



We have just agreed the finishings inside the new lifts, which we believe will complement the internals of the block and its ground floor ceramic tiling. The actual finish is lighter than the photograph shows it.

Ramp access request. We have received another request to create a ramped access to this block to allow buggies etc., easier access to the block. We were asked before to look at providing a ramp not just for those with small families but for the elderly and disabled, all of whom may have trouble accessing this block in particular. We have discussed this at our most recent Board meeting and regretfully concluded that it is neither practicable nor financially viable to install a ramp for either entrance. We were built before such accesses were mandated by the building codes and the rules surrounding the building of these type of ramps are strict and many so we are sorry but we can not retrospectively fit one on either entrance.

#### Block 2 - Van Gogh Court

↓ Insurance costs.

↑ Electrical and Security & Access systems. We are already over budget on these lines having had to make unforeseen repairs.

Deficit to be collected this quarter against the audited accounts is 14.2% of SC1.

The lifts are on target with the current schedule:

High Numbers, 22 – 42. Start: Monday 29th September 2014. Completion: Sunday 7th December 2014.

Low Numbers, 1 – 21. Start: Monday 12th January 2015. Completion: Sunday 22nd March 2015.

Each lift will be out of service for the duration of this schedule. Access by lift can be made to the second and fourth floors via the connecting corridor from the adjacent block. Existing access fobs will allow access.

You will find this on the noticeboards and if anything changes to that schedule we will update this notice. Nearer the time we will door drop to let residents know what is happening so they can make suitable arrangements. We have just agreed the finishings inside the new lifts, which we believe will complement the internals of the block and its ground floor ceramic tiling. The actual finish is lighter than the photograph (see above) shows it.

#### Block 3a - 65-85 Amsterdam Road

↓ Insurance costs.

No other changes required. Deficit to be collected this quarter against the audited accounts is 1.6% of SC1.

We are receiving increased reports of disturbances in the car park outside this block. To help us deal with this please call "101" to report the disturbance and call our security guard on **07889 161615** who will deal with it.

#### Block 3b - Frans Hals Court

↓ Insurance costs.

↑ Security & Access systems. We are already over budget on this line.

↑ Reserve fund collection increased to cover external emergency works. We will be collecting the additional funds required for Option 1 of these works over the next two quarters, September and December. We have increased the budget by £50k as this is the shortfall in funds available based on the estimate for the works so we can commence works as soon as the Section 20 process is complete.

Deficit to be collected this quarter against the audited accounts is 15.6% of SC1.

The lifts are on target with the current schedule:

Start: Monday 6th October 2014. Completion: Sunday 14th December 2014.

The lift will be out of service for the duration of this schedule. You will find this on the noticeboards and if anything changes to that schedule we will update this notice. Nearer the time we will door drop to let residents know what is happening so they can make suitable arrangements. We have just agreed the finishings inside the new lift, which we believe will complement the internals of the block and its ground floor ceramic tiling. The actual finish is lighter than the photograph (see above) shows it.

We also had a request from an owner who attended the emergency works meeting to extend their minuted comment to include the statement they also made at the meeting. We agree this omission and you will also therefore



find in your pack an amended extract which you should add to your record of the meeting.

#### Block 4 - 14-96 Amsterdam Road

↓ Insurance costs.

↑ General maintenance & repairs and plumbing, pumps & water storage. We are already over budget on these lines. We had to make a number of repairs to the roof line already in this financial year so we have increased the budget provision here to not only cover what we have already spent but also to brace ourselves for what may be another poor winter if the current conditions are anything to go by.

Surplus to be refunded this quarter against the audited accounts is 15.2% of SC1.

#### Block 5a - 2-12 Amsterdam Road

↓ Insurance costs.

No other changes required. Surplus to be refunded this quarter against the audited accounts is 32.8% of SC1.

#### Block 5b - 1-11 Amsterdam Road

↓ Insurance costs.

No other changes required. Surplus to be refunded this quarter against the audited accounts is 19.6% of SC1.

#### Block 11a - 15-21 Leerdam Drive

↓ Insurance costs.

↑ General maintenance and repairs.

Surplus to be refunded this quarter against the audited accounts is 18.8% of SC1.

#### Block 11b - 29-35 Leerdam Drive

↓ Insurance costs.

No other changes required. Deficit to be collected this quarter against the audited accounts is 4.0% of SC1.

#### Block 12a - 8-14 Leerdam Drive

↓ Insurance costs.

No other changes required. Surplus to be refunded this quarter is 24.4% of SC1.

#### Block 13 - 13-63 Amsterdam Road

↓ Insurance costs.

↑ Electrical.

Surplus to be refunded this quarter against the audited accounts is 22% of SC1.

### **Major works plan meeting**

Also in your service charge demand pack this quarter are the minutes from this meeting. We do not yet have a good indication of additional survey costs but it was clear that many in the audience were not keen on spending money for additional surveys when the properties would need to be surveyed again at the point of commencing the works program. We will be discussing this a little more at the AGM but, having gone through the feedback we received at the meeting in great detail with our agents, we remain confident that the major works plan is as robust as it can be.

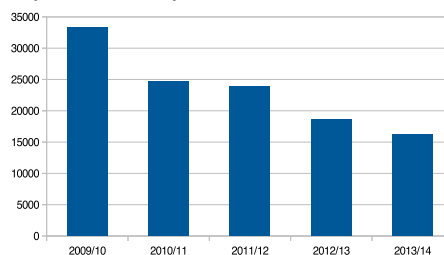
### **Security - let's keep our blocks safe!**

We are getting increased comments regarding unauthorised access to our blocks which of course adds to the threat of potential break-ins to our properties. We are seeing what

progress is being made with the relaunch of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme but it seems to be slow getting off the ground. Please be vigilant in helping us help ourselves and be very sure you know anyone who asks for access to the block.

### **Electricity down 50% since 2009!**

As you probably know, we are always looking closely at our costs and Parc proactively assist us in this. One of the things we have been doing since 2009 when Parc came on board with us has been both bringing the development back to scratch and making us as cost effective as possible. The graph below shows how successful we have been with regard to electricity costs. We have achieved this massive saving by doing three things consistently: replacing the old inefficient lighting particularly in the blocks as we have been working our way through the internal refurbishments, repairing all the daylight saving devices and timers as we have done this and being part of Parc's annual bulk review and discount process they run for all their developments.



### **New staff member**

We have been employing an additional helper, Ricki, for Richard and Simon on a zero hour contract for a while now simply because there is always so much to do to keep improving and then maintaining all of London Yard. We have now changed this to a two day a week contract as this is more effective for both us and Ricki. We have also purchased uniforms for our staff so that they may be better recognised as belonging to London Yard which in turn should mean that those using our grounds for fly-tipping (a huge problem for us) are very quickly identified. Here's a picture of all our guys in their pristine uniforms – just before they got pressed into active service!



**Ricki, Simon and Richard**

### **Skip enclosure**

Whilst our staff keep a sharp eye out for fly-tippers, they also keep a sharp eye out for our guys! As you are probably aware,

the penalties for those caught fly-tipping is high so they whizz in and out very quickly leaving us to clean up after them! Even when we don't have a skip on site, we still have to store the dumped items. Our proposed solution is to build a wooden enclosure to both close off the end of the

composting heap where a lot of items are routinely dumped and to discretely house a semi-permanent skip. It would be closed wooden panels, much like the cycle store so would not look out of place and indeed a great deal less unsightly than a standard skip. It would of course take up two parking spaces permanently but we would turn the disabled parking bay by the electricity sub-station into a standard parking space to help. We have never seen this space used and we still have three other disabled bays around the development.

### Hyperoptic Fast Broadband

As we reported last quarter, we have been approached again by this company which offers free installation. It has been well received on other developments in the area but sadly their survey showed that our age and construction does not lend itself to their installation so we and they can not progress this.

### Riverside restaurant within development.

We are again receiving more complaints about this restaurant, which we must deal with, particularly as they have again erected a gazebo outside the premises without permission. All we want is for them to be good tenants and neighbours and comply with the terms of the lease and by-laws. Please help us help them comply by reporting any issues firstly to the "101" number and secondly to our security guard "07889 161615" so that they can help control the situation

### Improvements? What would you like to see?

We are always looking for feedback on how we could add value to our ownership and have a track record of delivering value-add to our development. As well as the skip enclosure we have mentioned, we are also looking at an additional cycle store given the success of the one "under the arches". We look at gating every couple of years but we always get a mixed response - some would like to see it here but others moved here because it felt less like a prison than some other gated developments. We also looked recently at whether we could provide a concierge style service for collecting and storing parcels for us but unfortunately it proved impractical with the small number of staff we have and the significant amount of work they already do for us, all of which involves being out and about on the development. Get in touch via our email if you have something positive to add to these conversations!

### Use of our outdoor space.

We do have a small stash of outdoor furniture, gazebo and BBQ we use for the LY events but we are happy to share with residents! If you would like to borrow any of these items and use our gardens for a quiet do on our grounds, please contact Parc who will make the arrangements with you.

Big Bertha, our BBQ that we understand has been faithfully trotted out for the last 12 years at various LY events has finally given out! Missing a wheel or two and riddled with rust, we have had to replace her! BB2 will be in service at our next event, below! Please come - it would be good for us all to meet and share our experiences of living on LY - and indeed make some more experiences!

## Community News

At the Association of Island Communities meeting recently the police reported that anti-social behaviour and crime are both down in our area and there is a third less reported crime in this neighbourhood compared to the rest of the Tower Hamlets borough. We will ensure more focus is put on helping us keep antisocial behaviour to a minimum.

Brian Miller bench. We have had to again remove this bench as a group of youths were using it as a meeting place from which to harass our security guard and cause trouble in our development. It's in store for the moment.

Dog fouling. Its on the up again so please help us to keep it down. If you keep a dog on our development (which you do need permission to keep) please make sure you clean up after them. We will do what we can to keep this under control - we have many families with young children here and dog fouling is a potential hazard for them.

## Events

**London Yard (Social Club)**  
**Big Bertha's Retirement Summer BBQ**

**Come and raise toast to the new  
London Yard BBQ**

**Big Bertha, (the London Yard BBQ) has cooked her last burger,  
taking her into retirement after 12 years of heating up LY parties!**  
**This BBQ we're introducing her daughter—**  
**Bubbly Betty**

  
**PARTY!!!**

**Friends of London Yard (Social Club) would like to invite  
you and your families to the Annual End of Summer BBQ**

**Bring food and drink of your choice,  
Meet your neighbours!**  
**All other accoutrements being supplied (FoC)**  
**London Yard Gardens—In front of Van Gogh Court**

**Saturday 20th September, 2014  
2pm onwards**



## Contacts

Mark Plunkett at Parc Properties: **020 7515 3553**  
or email: [docklands@parcproperties.co.uk](mailto:docklands@parcproperties.co.uk)  
London Yard Board: [lymc@londonyard.net](mailto:lymc@londonyard.net)  
Parc 24 hour emergency: **020 7537 9394**

All other contacts can be found on the website:  
[www.londonyard.net](http://www.londonyard.net)