

Summer 2014

London Yard Newsletter



Mother duck and ducklings nesting on balcony in Vermeer Court

[Picture courtesy of Elizabeth Burden]

Message from the Board

We have so far this year co-opted two more Board members, Nila and Claire, which brings our strength up to 11 again. Great news for all of us as the bigger the Board the more heads we have to make the best balanced decisions we can for all of us. You can find short bios on the Board members page on our website. If you want to make a contribution and help us out, please do not hesitate to get in touch so we can tell you about what we do and how much time commitment it may take. Get involved!

The LYMC Board

Parking

We have awarded the contract to UKPC, the largest and most effective of the ticketing companies currently operating and you will have seen their new signage in place.

As you may recall, we wrote out with the draft of the new parking policy in February this year, asking for comments by the end of March. We dealt positively with all those submitted to us in that time, including two from commercial unit owners. In mid April we received a petition, organised by one commercial unit owner and signed by most of the commercial unit owners, complaining of unfair treatment under the terms of the new parking policy. We do not believe such petitions work in the best interests of all and, having given ample time for responses, believe such petitions are not an appropriate way to handle issues, real or perceived.

We have a Parking Assessment Programme and, as part of that, we will be reviewing operational issues at key stages.

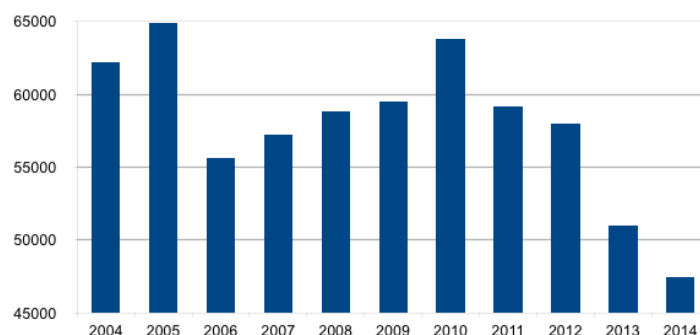
Following recent attempts to break through the barrier, we have additionally strengthened it by the addition of an arm cradle and placed speed bumps directly in front of it. We are told it is being deliberately targeted hence the excess damage but we continue to work with the SNT and the police to keep antisocial behaviour riverside under control.

Major Works Meeting

Thank you to everyone who took the time to come to this meeting, we had a good turnout (some 30 of us) and really appreciated the lively discussions and feedback through the evening. We took away some actions and will be writing out on those as soon as we can. We did not have a vote in the end as those attending felt there were too many variables to reach a consensus.

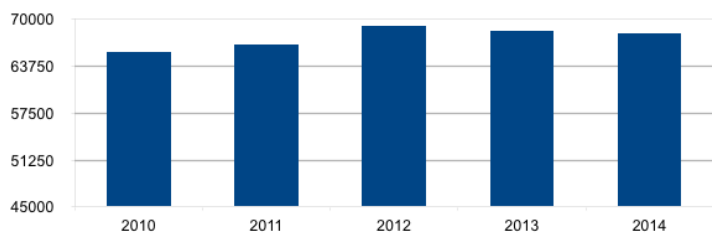
Insurance Premium

We have now renegotiated our buildings insurance for this year, which shows a reduction of £3,500 from last year. As always, three brokers were contacted and the lowest quote accepted. We achieved this on the basis that whilst we have not seen the number of claims reduce dramatically, we have had less expensive claims for the second year running, which has helped our claims history. The second contributory factor is because of the process that Parc implement for us every year it allows them to drive the price downwards through discussions with the brokers. The excess on the policy remains at £500 per claim. The following chart shows the insurance costs for London Yard since 2004:



Security Contract

This has now been awarded to the lowest tender, TLC. We have been able to achieve modest savings as part of this exercise plus be able to demonstrate to ourselves that we have the best price for the most cost effective service. Our excellent security guard is also protected through TUPE and we have kept him fully informed through all our negotiations and he too is looking forward to working with TLC.



Security Cost chart

News On Your Block

News on Your Block is a new section which reports on changes to your block and also happenings on the general estate.

Block 1 - Vermeer Court and Rembrandt Close

Our subcontractors were a little too quick off the mark on Saturday 17th May when erecting scaffolding. We had not anticipated that they would be ready to spring into action that day and had thought they would start Monday or Tuesday. Really sorry to all those that they woke up and we'll make sure it does not happen again. Fortunately the weather held and the works have now been completed but we are still dealing with the leaking overflow from a leaseholder's flat.

The lift works are also now instructed following the completion of the Section 20 Stage 2 process and our responses to the small number who raised concerns with us over the costs and necessity of the works. We will publish a schedule as soon as we can so you can anticipate when both lifts will be out of action. We plan for the high numbers lift to be completed first, then the low numbers so that there is always one lift in service. We are mindful of those of us who live in the block with small children and disabilities and have had some feedback with concerns about when and how long the lifts are likely to be out of action. We can assure you that the lifts will be out and in as fast as is safe to do so and we will continue to update on the schedule but if you are concerned in any way please do not hesitate to contact Parc or us.

Block 2 - Van Gogh Court

Please see the update in Block 1 regarding the lifts. We have also completed works in this block with no others pending at present.

Block 3a - 65-85 Amsterdam Road

No issues but see the section about the Memsahab Restaurant in the newsletter.

Block 3b - Frans Hals Court

Following the emergency works meeting, we have commenced the Section 20 Stage 1 - Notice of Intent to commence the process to undertake these works. As you will have seen, we must also commence the lift replacement program but funds are in place for this scheduled work.

Block 4 - 14-96 Amsterdam Road

Scaffolding was erected recently at the back of block 4 to repair some broken roof tiles above flats 60 and 70. The gutters in this area were also cleaned out.

Block 5a - 2-12 Amsterdam Road

We are stepping up the pest control here following complaints of mice. This will exceed the budget line we have for this but we will look in August to see if we need to adjust the budget line mid year to reflect this unplanned cost.

Block 5b - 1-11 Amsterdam Road

No issues.

Block 11a - 15-21 Leerdam Drive

No issues.

Block 11b - 29-35 Leerdam Drive

No issues.

Block 12a - 8-14 Leerdam Drive

No issues.

Block 13 - 13-63 Amsterdam Road

No issues.

General Estate

We will shortly start addressing the potholes and dips in the roads as part of our planned works. We will prioritise the severest of them first, as we updated in the budget pack in February.

One of the large trees on Amsterdam Road, opposite the dentist, has caused significant damage to a telecoms pit. We are going to have to fell the tree and remove the roots, which will require digging up a bit of road to get them out. We are working with BT to rebuild the pit once this has been done.



Code of Conduct

This time of year is always a good time to remind both owners and residents of this Code, which is based on the leases. Whether you live or rent out your property, it is your responsibility to ensure you or your tenants abide by the code. Topics of particular note:

Satellite dishes: Satellite dishes may not be affixed to the external surfaces of the buildings. Any dish erected on the building will be immediately removed and disposed of at the Leaseholders cost.

BBQs: No lit BBQs on balconies. We would encourage you to use our beautiful lawns and grounds as they are underused generally but please take care of the grass and be respectful of your neighbours!!

Balconies and common areas: Washing, clothes, bicycles, barbecues, children's toys and other large items should not be kept on the balconies or anywhere in public view from the communal area. Personal items may not be left in communal areas e.g. corridors, stairwells or riser cupboards. This may present a Health & Safety risk and invalidate the building insurance. Any items left in communal areas will be immediately removed and disposed of at the Leaseholders cost.

Noise: Please keep noise to a minimum, particularly between the hours of 11pm and 8am by refraining from playing musical instruments or loud audio equipment and from shouting outside.

Loft Insulation

We have been approached by a leaseholder regarding this and whether we would agree given the loft spaces are demised to the freehold company. We understand this would be government funded almost completely but understand it is quite complex to achieve. We will keep you updated on how this progresses.

Pond News

We have cordoned off some of the pontoons on the pond after a review of their condition. We are working on replacing the supports on the affected pontoons and will continue to work through them as fast as we can. Our caretaker, Richard, is doing the work with help from Rick. The boards on top of the pontoons are still in good shape so they are sanding them and then applying two coats of sealant. The supports below the top boards are being replaced with treated wood. Please take care in this area.

We have a community of terrapins living in the pond and the larger ones stir up the mud and silt on the bottom making the pond murky. We have removed the five largest and rehomed them elsewhere which leaves us with five smaller terrapins still resident.



Mice - on the up!

We are receiving reports again of mice despite the increased presence of baiting in the common areas.



We have a handy "Mice Deterrent Guide" on the Residents/ Owners page on our website - please have a look and help us keep the freeloaders off The Yard!

Cycle Store

Following last quarter's newsletter article, we had only one person claim their cycle - and more added!! We plan to start removing the cycles that have not moved in quite a while to make more space and we will follow up with owners directly from our records. We will be looking for another site on the development where we might create a new cycle store to add to this facility but this is a longer term goal, not short term as it will cost more to build than the current one did and we need to agree how to fund it.

Gardens

The tree surgeon has been busy recently on the estate and we have kept the wood chippings from his work to mulch the garden beds with.

Our gardener has been busy with new plantings and the gardens are really looking good now. The previous newsletter showed the cleared area near the pond ready for planting. The planting has now been done and things look a lot better:



Security Report

A vehicle has again run into the barrier, just days after the last repair. Police called to a disturbance at the Memsahab restaurant.

Security stopped two attempted thefts of bicycles chained to railing and outside house.

Memsahab Restaurant

We are still having noise problems from the restaurant late at night and early hours of the morning. It would help us all if people who are disturbed by the noise would call the police on **101** and lodge a complaint. You can also call the Tower Hamlets Council - their out of hours noise problem number is: **020 7364 5007** and is open until 3:30am. Residents affected by problems from Memsahab should also keep a log, recording date, time and nature of incident.

We will raise this again at the Ward Panel meeting to let the police and Tower Hamlet's councillors know that there are still problems.

Brian Miller Memorial Bench

Brian's bench has been cleaned up and moved to the back of the cycle store where it gives a good view of the pond. Brian Miller was our caretaker a number of years ago and sadly died of cancer.

Fast Broadband Connection

We have again been approached by Hyperoptic, a company offering connection for flats free of charge for installation to the block and the leaseholder. This has gone down well on other local developments so we are working with them to see what they can offer us. They are conducting a survey of our blocks to see if we are suitable candidates. It does look doubtful due to our age and construction but we will keep you updated.

Amphibious Tours

We have been approached again by the company planning to run these tours through London Yard. They do not now plan to go into service until 2016 but are keen to know whether we will allow London Yard to be part of the route or not. We shared with them the feedback we had received, both for and against, and they have agreed that they will prepare a document for us which we can present at the next AGM to formally vote on.

Summer Event

The London Yard Community Events are saved!! Geoff, who has been a stalwart of these events over the last couple of months is now joined by Claire, our newest Board member. They are now busy planning the next one, as you will see from the flyer below! You don't have to be a Board member to do this and, if you would like to help us with this fun task, please email us.

LYMC Events

Invites you to their

Summer BBQ

Join us on Van Gogh Lawns
on

Saturday 19th July 2014, 2pm onwards

Bring your own food & drink
Everything else provided

Contacts

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

All other contacts can be found on the website:
www.londonyard.net