

Spring 2014

London Yard Newsletter



The AGM - chaired by Frances McKeith

Message from the Board

We would like to say thank you to our fellow owners for their support during the AGM. The turnout was very good and many owners who could not attend sent proxy votes so that their voices could be heard. All Directors were elected or re-elected and so we start the new financial year with a strong Board of nine Elected Directors plus another two volunteers who have come forward and whom we hope to co-opt to the board shortly. We also had some great discussion at the AGM about not just the financial year under review but also on forward-looking issues such as our parking plans, much of which is included in our budget and information pack this quarter.

The LYMC Board

Budget

We have just completed our budget review for the new financial year, which looks at both our service charges for the running of our blocks and the general estate and separately the levels of reserve fund collections required for future known works. Insurance we have estimated on indications from the insurance sector on what changes are likely plus looking at our claims history over the last 12 months. As always, the insurance premium will be collected in the March quarter end demands, tendered and paid for in April and the actual premium paid adjusted in the budget for our September demands. Overall our rate of increase this year is 0.94% excluding reserve funds and insurance and you will find the percentage level for the blocks and general estate towards the bottom right hand corner of your new budget sheet.

Parking

The parking presentation at the AGM on what the new parking policy should look like was extremely well received. We have gone back to basics and looked at what problems we need to solve and how we can fix them in a sustainable way that does not negatively impact London Yard residents or visitors. Whilst no system is ever perfect, from the mood of the meeting we believe we are moving in the right direction. You will find more on this in our draft parking policy included with your service charge demands this quarter. If you have any feedback please email us at lymc@londonyard.net and we will review your comments.

Stored or Abandoned Vehicles - Is This Yours?!

The following vehicles are sitting on our land untaxed and unmoved for some time. Please tell us if this vehicle belongs to you and what you plan to do about its removal. Any vehicle where the owner cannot be identified will be reported to the LBTH Abandoned Vehicles Unit and they will remove it.

HY51 AHP Tax out-of-date Permit = 09/1405

R657 ORU Tax out-of-date No Permit

M892 ELB No Permit

RJ53 YFA No Tax - SORN

MV02 HXB No Permit

X444 JJD No Permit - blocking garage on Rotterdam Drive

K634 NME Tax out-of-date Permit = 09/0946 (Taxi)

R264 WOO Tax out-of-date Permit = 7147

Cycle Store

Our cycle store has been so successful it is full!! We'd like your help if you store a cycle in there to let us know which one it is as we believe some of the spaces may be taken by cycles that are now abandoned as some haven't moved through the whole of our glorious (and now forgotten) summer!



We changed the door type to be more vandal proof a little while back but have had some negative feedback on the new type of lock. Whilst in the past the door was self-closing and locking, the new one has to be manually locked when you leave - this is a little more bother, but was necessary because the manual lock is far more secure. We also have our security guard check that the door is locked on an hourly basis just in case anyone forgets.

Hostile Environment Barrier

This is now installed. There was a delay regrettably because the control panel needed repairing during the installation of the barrier itself but all is now in order. A timer will be added to it shortly to accommodate the new parking policy. If you wish to use the car park behind Frans Hals Court you will need a key fob or your existing one re-programmed. Please contact Parc and they will do the necessary.

The barrier has already been driven into once and badly damaged just three days after it was installed. Fortunately a keen-eyed resident saw the incident and reported it to the police which allows us to follow up with them.

Road Fund Grant

Responding to a couple of enquiries about the history of Amsterdam Road and the fund that the LDDC passed to us when we adopted the road and the car park near the restaurant, we have lodged a copy of the original proposal approved by owners back in 1997/8 with Parc. If you would like to view a copy of this document, please make an appointment with Parc to have a look.

Gardens

During the autumn a number of areas where the ever-present ivy had overtaken the planting were cleared, noticeably around the pond. Our gardener will be replanting these areas up in the spring, once the soil warms up a bit. Some trees that had seeded here have been moved into places where others had died and some of the shrubs planted 3 years ago are ready to be thinned out and used to populate the recently cleared spaces. The pond outlet to the Thames was becoming blocked again because of the weather and its effects on the shoreline, but our ever industrious and inventive caretaker has built a defensive wall around the outlet to stop the flotsam and jetsam stopping the cover from closing as it should.



The tree surgeons should be working on the trees that require pruning in early March, weather permitting.

Internal Refurbishments

The programme of internal works to all the smaller blocks and the commercial units block on Amsterdam Road are completing on time and to budget and we have already had positive feedback on the difference it is making to these blocks!

News On Your Block

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

Lifts.

As part of the Health and Safety requirements, it was necessary to have asbestos surveys carried out on all the lift areas prior to works starting. All came back clear and Stage 2 of the Section 20 notices will be despatched shortly to those blocks with lifts (Vermeer, Van Gogh and Frans Hals). The lift works will be a long project with the lifts out of action for approximately 12 weeks each. We will give everyone as much notice as possible and work with you over the period to minimise the inconvenience and disruption these works will undoubtedly cause.

Block B1 – Vermeer Court and Rembrandt Close.

There have been quite a few reports of water ingress over the last few months as the weather continues to hammer all blocks - and indeed the rest of the country! We have had a cherry picker and our surveyors on site inspecting the roof and the brickwork looking for the causes of the ingress and remedial works are now in progress. Complaints about the rubbish chutes and smells emanating from them have been rectified by our having had both chutes professionally cleaned. The lift at the low numbers end was badly damaged by tenants who forced the doors open when they moved out; the damage was fairly extensive and required replacement door hangers and rollers. Following another Health and Safety inspection, the emergency lights needed remedial works carried out and this has been done.

Block B2 - Van Gogh Court.

As with Block 1, some water ingress in this block is also under investigation and small works on the emergency lighting are being taken care of.

Water ingress has been reported at roof level at the front of units 1-21 and at the rear of units 22-42 and remedial works are ongoing.

Block B3a – 65-85 Amsterdam Road.

As with Block 1, small works on the emergency lighting are in hand.

Block B3b – Frans Hals Court.

Now that the thermal imaging scan of the building has been completed which bears out what our surveyors considered to be the main issues, the Stage 2 of the Section 20 process

for the out of plan external works will be sent out shortly. We continue to receive reports of water ingress here and are progressing remedial repairs. We have had to build an additional hatch into the loft space below the plantagenet portion of the roof (the metal bit!) as we will need more access and the existing hatch is in a leaseholder flat. Remedial works here also on emergency lighting.

Block B4 – 14-96 Amsterdam Road.

Though not riverside, this block also reports water ingress and one flat in particular is badly affected. We had a cherry picker and our surveyors here also and remedial works are being carried out, some of which will require scaffolding towers to be erected. The rain has saturated the brickwork on the gable ends in particular and we are discussing with our surveyors what can be done to protect our brickwork in future.

Block B5a - 2-12 Amsterdam Road.

Internal works complete, no major issues.

Block B5b - 1-11 Amsterdam Road.

Internal works complete, no major issues.

Block B11a - 15-21 Leerdam Drive.

Internal works complete, no major issues.

Water ingress has been reported at roof level and remedial works are ongoing.

Block B11b - 29-35 Leerdam Drive.

Internal works complete, no major issues.

Block B12a - 8-14 Leerdam Drive.

Internal works complete, no major issues.

Block B13 - 13-63 Amsterdam Road.

Internal works complete, no major issues. We do have water ingress issues here also which have been investigated and remedial works are almost complete.

General Estate

We have recently approved two works here: one is for the repair of the wall on Amsterdam Road, outside No. 13. The second follows a complaint from a commercial owner that the area outside the commercial units is too dark and represents a potential risk to them when they and clients leave late. As we are both always mindful of personal safety on our development and relocating the parking for commercial units away from the main thoroughfare, we are going to improve the lighting in this area. We will add directional lighting to existing street lamps in the area, assess whether that in itself suffices and if it does not, we will increase the luminosity from the current walkway lighting.



Security Report

Our security guard keeps a note of problems and issues that he sees when he is patrolling the estate and this section highlights some of the more important issues that he has raised.

- Parking is becoming a problem since the end of clamping. Tenants in B4 are complaining about lack of spaces.
- Complaints about noise from the Memsahab restaurant are continuing. Some tenants are reporting the problem to the police by calling 101.
- Disposal of rubbish. Some tenants are still disposing of rubbish in the wrong bins, i.e. Putting food waste in the recycling bins.
- Concern has been expressed about some tenants letting people into their block without knowing who they are. There have been reports to the police recently about bogus charity people trying to gain access to properties. Please ensure you know the person before opening the outside door of the block.
- Residents on Manchester Road and Rotterdam Road who take their rubbish bins out several days before collection are causing a nuisance as foxes are attracted to the bins and drag the rubbish out causing a mess.
- Some tenants are keeping their bikes on the balcony which is prohibited. This could be because the cycle store is full so we are trying to find out which cycles in the store have been abandoned.

Foxes

Foxes are being seen more often around the estate especially in the evening and early morning. Last month three foxes caused a disturbance on Amsterdam Road near the cycle store at about 4:30am one morning. They also create a mess if they find any rubbish bags or bins which aren't properly secured.

As foxes are classed as wild animals, not pests, the council cannot do anything about getting rid of them. It is up to residents to make sure they do not leave any rubbish in bags or containers that foxes can access.

Foxes are also attracted by the wildlife around the pond and have been seen taking ducklings which stray onto the bank on the north end of the pond.

Newsletter Feedback

Thank you to all who provided feedback to us on the two items we raised in the last newsletter. All the feedback on plans for a take-away from one of the commercial units were not in favour and we are pleased to report we have heard nothing further about this from the leaseholder since the publication of the last Newsletter. On the prospect of an amphibious tour coming through London Yard, we had a mixed response. This tells us that we must consult closely with our fellow owners if the company approach us again before we commit either way. We also had some feedback on the News On Your Block section - one of our fellow owners was full of praise for the content of our newsletters but said that most of us do not know which block number we live in but we do know our addresses! Quite right we thought, so we are now including both! Please keep your feedback coming, it helps us to update what we do and so inform you better. Another leaseholder said they would like more pictures and less text so we have a picture on each page here that is relevant to the text around it. We can only do this to even up the pages or illustrate so making the text required shorter but we agree it does make the newsletter more visually accessible. We were also asked who writes the Quarterly Newsletter and the answer is that it is written by the London Yard Board of Directors. We compile it from events and issues that have come up over the quarter or are going to come up over the next quarter and we like that it does provide us with a way of updating everyone on events here. Another boost to communication is our email address that is direct to us owners who are on the board and allows us to have a two-way conversation with fellow owners.

Communications

As you may know, London Yard has had two websites in the past, the second run by an owner at their own cost. This second website provided a more resident focused viewpoint with information about the local area, history of London Yard and many other useful documents and contacts but they have now decided to hang up their editorial hat. We have been working with them and they have graciously gifted us all of their content so we can expand the londonyard.net website to include a lot of that valuable content. Plus they will be releasing the important londonyard.co.uk and londonyard.com domain names to us so searches point to us. We get a lot of great feedback on our website, not least from new owners who say that our content provides people looking at buying here with a high degree of comfort that our development is well run and with a high degree of scrutiny on our costs.

Community Matters

A member of the LYMC board attends local community meetings each month and raises any issues affecting London Yard.

Issues raised at the Blackwall Ward Panel meeting in January that affect London Yard are:

- Parents dropping off and collecting pupils from Cubbitt Town School are parking on the double yellow lines and also within London Yard which is causing a nuisance. The Tower Hamlets council has a CCTV van which will be deployed in the area to monitor and record cars causing problems. The SNT (Safer Neighbourhood Team) will speak to the Head Teacher and will see about putting a note in the school newsletter reminding parents not to park within London Yard or on double yellow lines.
- Bogus Callers. There has been an increase in people claiming they are collecting money for charities. Do not allow anyone you don't know into your block.

Issues raised at the AICVC (Association of Island Communities Voluntary Council) meeting in February that are of interest to London Yard residents:

- The cafe at Mudchute Farm has reopened with a new lady running it and prices have been lowered. Now open from Thursday through Saturday each week.

At the end of last year we had the very first Christmas Tree set up in Island Gardens park. The official lighting of the tree was held on the 12th December 2013 at 6:30pm with local dignitaries in attendance. Many local people turned up for the event and hopefully some of the London Yard residents managed to attend.



Christmas Tree Lighting Event

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