

## **BLenheim GARDENS RESIDENT MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION LIMITED**

**Blenheim Gardens RMO General Meeting – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at 7.30 pm**

**St Saviour's Hall, Blenheim Gardens Estate, Brixton Hill, SW2**

Attendees – See list attached

### **1. Minutes of Previous General Meeting**

- The minutes of the Meeting dated 21<sup>st</sup> October 2008 were unanimously accepted.

### **2. Matters arising from minutes of previous General Meeting**

- The previous minutes referred to "Councillor Christopher Nicholson." He is not a Councillor but a 'Parliamentary' Spokesman.

### **3. Action Points from Previous Meeting**

- Liz Michaels is in attendance to discuss the options in Action Point 4.
- The play bid up date is on the agenda.
- The development of the Organic/Edible Garden on the Estate is on the agenda
- The Police surgery has been introduced and is held on 1st Thursday of every month in the estate office. Sgt Nick Head will be in attendance this evening.

### **4. Stock Options for the Future – Presentation from Liz Michaels**

- Liz Michaels is a consultant working with the TMOs. At the request of the board and following discussions from the previous General meeting, she has come to speak about possible alternative housing stock options for Blenheim Gardens.
- A handout was provided to all attendees to aid the presentation.

- Liz provided a brief explanation of the history regarding ALMO's and the position within Lambeth regarding the government requirement for the Decent Homes Standard.
- All ALMOs in order to receive their Decent Homes allowances from the government must achieve at least 2 star rating. URH of which BG are part, has a 1 star rating from a mock inspection undertaken so far.
- BG looking to the future. If URH fail the inspection scheduled for October 2009, then BG would go back into Lambeth Living a borough wide ALMO, which also may not achieve 2 star rating.

#### **BG's options for the future.**

1. Stay as we are- as part of URH and hope we have successful inspection. Similar to the exercise carried out by all Councils, only community led.
  2. To create another ALMO, not possible as no more ALMO's can be created.
  3. A. Private Finance Initiative, with the credit crunch not likely to obtain the finance from the private sector.
  4. To a stock transfer to a new landlord and negotiate the estate vision.
- The only real option for BG is to do a stock transfer to a new Landlord. BG can do it on its own or in partnership with another TMO with similar values and objectives to BG. BG would first need to get the support of Lambeth Council.
  - It is a long process, government funding available to carry out a feasibility study, which must be carried out by experts. It will determine whether there will be sufficient funds to invest to bring the Housing Stock to the Decent Homes standard. After 9 months BG would know clearly their position as to the future.
  - BG would then ask Tenants and leaseholders if they wish to proceed with the stock transfer, if so then it moves to the development stage which may take another 2 years. This process would look at the stock transfer in more detail. This would provide a clear idea of the position and if it would be worth going forward.

- If the Board agree to proceed then they would set up a new (or form part of an existing) Housing Association and the stock transfer would happen after that. The tenants and leaseholders would have a new landlord, which could be a Tenant led organisation or a subsidiary of another organisation.
- If BG pursue the Tenant led option, it has the advantage of making BG autonomous as a Housing Association it would be able to borrow against the guaranteed rental income, known as 'blue chip debt'. Another advantage is community empowerment. Five estates are already going through the process in Lambeth (LATMOS)

**Action Point.**

Danny to make contact with Lambeth Council to ascertain whether they are prepared to support BG in carrying out a feasibility study.

**5. Clapham Youth Centre – Report from Vincent Dmyriyev**

A handout was provided to aid discussions

- This is a charity separate from the Church, which had been without a youth worker for many years. The youth centre has been used by children/youths from the Estate for many years. Last year they received funding to provide a service for 14-19 year olds.
- There have been a number of activities completed by the centre for residents on the estate and we are looking forward to working with Bonnie and Jean in the coming months to develop the Blenheim Gardens organic/edible estate projects
- Members were encouraged to suggest future activities that may be undertaken by contacting the CYC or the RMO.

**Action Point:**

Vincent to continue to provide a list of activities to the estate office for circulate.

**6. Organic gardens - Presentation by Jean Kerrigan**

- Last year funding was received from Lambeth by Renton Close Estate, to create an organic garden over a 3 year period and to engage young people on the Estate

in setting it up and maintaining it. This has been established and there is sufficient funding to pay for a gardener.

- They now have the funding to proceed to a new Estate and wish to set create something similar on BG and anticipate it would be up and running early this year. It is hoped to engage adults as well as children in the hopes that they will take on permanent responsibility. Training will be provided. It is intended to plant beds at the end of February, beginning of March.

**Questions from the floor:**

1. Can rudimentary fencing be provided to prevent dogs, bikes etc using the area

A) Jean advised that there was not any money available for fencing, but there is low hedging there already however, if the area is vulnerable they will look at it again with the RMO.

2. What is going to happen to the food grown?

A) This will be decided by the children

3. Is it safe?

A) Renton Close ate and enjoyed the produce.

**Action point:**

As much support as possible is needed to make it a success, please contact Jean Kerrigan or the Estate Office if you are interested. Leaflets will be distributed nearer the time.

**7. Play Bid –An update**

- Danny provided an update regarding the plans to develop the play area. The design was submitted to Lambeth. There are still concerns regarding the wall. As requested Danny obtained a quote for the removal of the wall and now needs to take direction as to how to proceed this matter.

- Action being taken against William Hill with Lambeth Council to remove the betting shop from the estate and use this as a community facility managed by BG. The money could be used to convert it into a community facility for the estate

### **Options**

1. Option A – proceed with play area (option E is accepted by Lambeth)
2. Option B – remove wall and use area for a growing area, uniformed with the rest of the estate
3. Option C- Do nothing-keep the wall as it is and keep money in bank and await the outcome of the allowances negotiations.

### **Majority voted for option B**

### **Action Point**

Danny to notify Lambeth and make arrangements to have the Wall removed.

## **8. Any other business**

- Surgery set up last month, no-one turned up. The next surgery will be held on 5th February, between 5.00 and 7.00pm. This will be advertised on the website.
- Alarms are now available and DNA marking kits to protect personal belongings as there has been a spate of burglaries on the Estate.

**Meeting ended at 9.00 pm**