



## **Blenheim Gardens AGM**

**21<sup>st</sup> October 2008 at 7.30pm**

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

### **Apologies for absence:-**

Anton Manickam (board member)

Dave and Ann Spencer (co-opted board members)

Vincent Dmytryied (Youth worker, the Clapham Youth Centre)

### **Board Members in attendance:-**

Angela Bartley (Chair), Sue Alldis, Selena Ellis, Elsie Binder, Diana Thompson, Derek Bailey, Pat Prendergast, Maud Simmance, Joan Osborne, Janet Hayes.

### **Also in Attendance:-**

Dan Howcroft (Estate Manager), Phil Morris, Nilavra Mukerji, Alex Asara, Clara Odamo (all members URH), Cllr Steve Reed, Cllr Jeremy Clyne, Cllr Christopher Nicholson. Andy and Nick from the Brixton Hill ward Safer Neighbourhood Team. Bonnie Hewson and Vinnie O'connell, Rustam Kavarana (Lambeth) and Carly Diego-Franceskides (ground work)

### **Residents:-**

Please see attached attendance list for all residents who attended.

#### **1 Minutes of Previous AGM**

These were agreed as a true record.

#### **2 Matters Arising from Minutes of Previous AGM**

### **Roofs**

Following an update request from the floor, Danny confirmed that work to replace a number of roofs on the estate is currently underway and further work to improve the outlet specification (outlets etc) is being considered with the roof guarantors to extend the life of the roofs.

The Minutes were agreed unanimously and signed off by Angela Bartley.

#### **3 Presentation of Annual Audited Accounts**

The accounts were presented by Phil Morris (URH).

Phil referred the meeting to the report included in the handout:-

'Blenheim Gardens Resident Management Organisation Limited – Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2008'.

Page 1 – listed administrative details of the RMO

Page 2 – Is a report from the Governance board for the year and the RMO's plans for the future including the status of the allowance dispute

Page 3 – Listed the auditors report

Page 4 & 5– Listed the income and expenditure account. It was noted that the RMO made a surplus of £98,502 (£138,302 including surplus of £32,000 for the pension) for the financial year

Page 6 – Listed the balance sheet. It was noted that have capitals and reserves of £251,289 and was in a healthy financial footing.

Page 7 – Listed the accounting policies applied by the auditors

Pages 8 – 13 Listed a breakdown and notes to the financial statement.

It was unanimously agreed to approve the accounts.

#### **4 Appointment of Auditors**

It was unanimously agreed by a show of hands to re-appoint Gotham Erskine as auditors.

#### **5 Presentation of National Federation of TMO 'Good Governance Kite Mark'**

Danny Howcroft introduced this item and confirmed that the Blenheim Gardens RMO had been awarded the kite mark in recognition of the good governance practices of the RMO board. Cllr Steve Reed presented the award and certificate to the RMO chair, Angela Bartley and congratulated the RMO on being the first in Lambeth to achieve this standard and for the good work the RMO was undertaking on behalf of the council. Angela extended her appreciation to the commitment of the other board members and to the estate director.

#### **6 Election of RMO Board**

The Board resigned at this point and the meeting was handed over to Danny Howcroft, Estate Director.

It was agreed that the board would be re-appointed. Two further nominations were received:-

- Mr Vinter
- Mr Furlong

It was unanimously agreed to appoint both these nominees as board members.

Six co-opted members continue to sit on the board- these are members who have either moved away from the estate, but are retained because of their experience; or live on the Estate but do not pay a rent or service charge to Lambeth Council.

Danny confirmed the next board meeting is to be held on **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at 7.00 pm** and that he would send out a board member pack to the new members

in advance of this meeting. It was noted that the executive positions within the governance board will need to be agreed at the coming board meeting. Residents were reminded that Part A of all board meetings is open to all residents.

The Annual General Meeting was closed at 7.55 pm. This was immediately followed by a General Meeting.



## **Blenheim Gardens General Meeting**

**21<sup>st</sup> October 2008 at 7.30pm (after AGM)**

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

### **Apologies for absence:-**

Anton Manickam (board member)

Dave and Ann Spencer (co-opted board members)

Vincent Dmytryied (Youth worker, Clapham Youth Centre)

### **Board Members in attendance:-**

Angela Bartley (Chair), Sue Alldis, Selena Ellis, Elsie Binder, Diana Thompson, Derek Bailey, Pat Prendergast, Maud Simmance, Joan Osborne, Janet Hayes.

### **Also in Attendance:-**

Dan Howcroft (Estate Manager), Phil Morris, Nilavra Mukerji, Alex Asara, Clara Odamo (all members URH), Cllr Steve Reed, Cllr Jeremy Clyne, Cllr Christopher Nicholson. Andy and Nick from the Brixton Hill ward Safer Neighbourhood Team. Bonnie Hewson and Vinnie O'connell, Rustam Kavarana (Lambeth) and Carly Diego-Franceskides (ground work)

### **Residents:-**

Please see attached attendance list for all residents who attended.

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

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2008 were agreed unanimously.

#### **2 Matters Arising from Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes

#### **3 Action points from Previous Meeting**

Proposed play bid update-this item is on the evenings agenda

Motor cycles – Danny confirmed that he is in frequent contact with the Police regarding all aspects of Anti Social Behaviour, including the use of motor cycles. Danny also confirmed with residents that the safer neighbourhood team is also in attendance this evening.

Betting shop – Danny confirmed that he is to continue to work with the council in ensuring the betting shop lease is not renewed. Cllr Reed supported this. The lease on the venue is due for renewal in October 2009.

Parking enforcement – Danny confirmed that Night Hawk Security is the RMO's preferred contractors and are patrolling the estate daily.

#### **4 United Residents Housing Update**

Nilavra Mukerji introduced this item and introduced himself as the new interim chief officer of URH.

Nilavra explained that URH are working with its member organizations to deliver long term 'Major Repair Programmes' on the four estates. Some work on Blenheim Gardens Estate has already been completed and others, such as the resurfacing of areas on the estate, is due to be undertaken shortly.

Nilavra confirmed that the current allowance situation with the council was impeding progress and was impacting on discussion being made but was confident that progress is being made across the four TMO's in terms of service improvements etc.

One attendee asked when the inspection date will be, to which Nilavra replied that we needed to take into account the allowance situation before a date could be considered. Concerns were also expressed by the attendee regarding the lack of progress being made within in URH and other TMO's and for a long period BGRMO was leading the way and in many aspect still waiting for others to catch up.

Nilavra shared the concerns and frustrations of Blenheim Gardens RMO

One attendee asked if Nilavra thought we could collectively achieve 2 stars. Nilavra confirmed that there is a lot of work to be done but he was confident. The attendee replied that Nilavra was living in 'dream land'.

One attendee asked Cllr Reed that with the pending allowance cuts; it would appear that the objective to achieve a 2 star rating is now beyond reach and would he, as Cllr for the word and head of Council, support Blenheim Gardens RMO in undertaking a tenant led feasibility and development study to achieve a stock transfer to ourselves.

Cllr Steve Reed confirmed that he would support this and invited further discussions on the matter with the board.

Nilavara suggested it was sensible of the Blenheim Gardens RMO governance board to consider its longer term options or a plan B.

**Action Point:**

The RMO Governance board to invite residents to undertake a tenant led stock options appraisal.

**5 Proposed play bid-resident consultation feedback report and indicative designs. A presentation by Ground work**

This item was introduced by Carly and Rustam (Ground work and Lambeth respectively)

Carly informed the meeting that Rachel had left the company and that she was now the point of contact. Feedback from Carly on the consultations carried out with residents on the proposed options for the play area. Full details were provided for each specific option. A handout of the consultation results and designs were circulated to all attendees.

There were a lot of concern regarding the removal of the wall as it was felt that the young people would still need somewhere to hang out.

Consultation carried out on whether improvement required to the green area, favoured by some young people. Noise was a major concern for many. An alternative area for the older children is also an important point to consider.

A resident commented that the children sitting on the wall now often were a nuisance.

Cllr Steve Reed advised the meeting that when Holmewood did not provide places for the older children when they had a new lay area for the younger ones, this did cause problems. On Roupell Park they created a youth shelter for their young people. Clapham Youth Centre may be re-built in the near future so this may provide something for the children to do.

Carly said a lot of people are concerned about the park. Rumours about the play development and whether there is any intention to improve/refurbish equipment at the park next to the play proposal were also discussed.

Cllr Steve Reed informed the meeting that the park and equipment was managed by Lambeth and they are responsible for the management of the park and the maintenance of the equipment. The windmill gardens have made an application for lottery funding for this purpose, however, attendees were informed that the application has been rejected although they will reapply.

Cllr Steve Reed mentioned the proposed redevelopment of Livity School could provide for an opportunity for development of youth facilities for the estate.

In relation to the RMO's play bid, attendees were advised Lottery funding runs out at the end of March money must be spent or committed by then. Full planning approval is required before construction begins which will be for a period of three months.

#### **Action Point:**

Please provide comments to Danny and a decision will be given to Groundwork/Lambeth by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

Thank were expressed to Groundwork and Lambeth for their presentation and assistance with the project.

#### **6 Any Other Business**

A presentation by Bonnie Hewson and Vinnie O'connell on Blenheim Gardens (Edible) Estate. A handout to accompany the presentation was distributed to all attendees.

#### **Bonnie's ideas:**

Start a gardening club, mixing those with knowledge with the experience.  
mixing those with gardens with those in flats.

Use some of the bare patches, turn them into raised beds.

Funding available to create rose beds and garden plots.

Rosa Blunkett intends to provide 2012 new growing spaces by 2012 and want 50 projects to be started by March.  
Some money will be available.

Does anyone have any ideas, and would anyone be interested in this?

Vinnie O'Connell from Southwark Youth Offending Service, dealing with Edible Estates. The whole Estate now has a growing effect. Big project on the Tulse Hill Estate, Channel 4 are involved filming. Vinnie discussed the existing projects in detail and how to move them on.

The plan to redevelop the play area, and the meadow could include growing areas for the Estate. It is important to try and involve the young people in this project.

Jean Kerrigan has funding for 3 children's organic garden possibility of developing one on this Estate.

Bonnie will carry out a consultation of people on the estate and has made her details available.

A vote on whether or not the exposed land should be used for this purpose.

The majority agreement.

**Action Point:**

Bonnie to provide information to Danny for circulation on the estate by the end of the month

**Allowance reductions by the Council**

Danny Howcroft introduced this item and confirmed that the Council will be imposing cuts on Blenheim Gardens RMO, and all other TMO's in the borough. Blenheim Gardens is expected to receive a reduction in the allowance of 20% over the next 18 months. A paper on the Housing Revenue Account and the reduction to BGRMO authored by Phil Morris (URH) was circulated to all attendees.

Phil Morris discussed his paper. A reduction in allowances was agreed at cabinet level by the sum of £4.5 million, on the assumption the information would be received and calculate by a particular date to try and achieve this, Lib Peck undertook to supervise this information personally.

Problems have arisen in the way the allowances have been calculated in the Council. In some cases the TMO's have only received 50% of what the Tenants actually paid in, problems with heating and hot water.

Cllr Reed states that the problem has been there for years. The housing revenue account has balanced once in six years there needs to be a long term solution to this. He will be seeing Margaret Beckett to see if it is possible to obtain a retrospective grant of £5 Million pounds. There will be accountability in the financial departments for any mistakes made by a reduction in staffing levels. The Cllrs have said no to rent increases in December and April, deal with reductions by competencies in staff. TMO's appear to be punished for operating more efficiently than the Council.

Nilavra stated that the principle of 'parity' is not something anything any of the TMO's have a problem with as long as there is transparency in the way the figures are calculated. Nilavra welcomed a discussion with Cllr Reed to see how this can be resolved, but emphasized a 30% reduction could not be achieved by March 2009.

Cllr Steve Reed commented that there were no risks to well run TMO's like BG. The risks are to those not operating efficiently. The problem is not to be resolved by rent increases but by staff reductions in the council and cutting TMO allowances.

### **Safer Neighbourhood Team**

Following on from the previous meeting with the RMO governance board, PC Nick Head confirmed will be confirming his arrangements for an estate surgery shortly. Nick is to discuss with Danny the location and the time.

#### **Action Point:**

SNT is to introduce a police surgery on the estate.

Meeting finished at 9.30 pm and all attendees were thanked for their attendance