

BLenheim GARDENS RMO

NOTICE OF RMOs ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ON

TUESDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2018

AT 7.00 P.M.

**IN THE COMMUNITY HUB, 23 PRAGUE PLACE,
BLenheim GARDENS ESTATE, SW2 5ED**

AGENDA

1. PANEL INTRODUCTIONS
2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM
3. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL AUDITED ACCOUNTS
4. APPOINTMENT OF FINANCIAL AUDITORS
5. ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS
6. A VOTE FOR THE RMO TO CONTINUE UNDER
THE TERMS OF ITS MANAGEMENT
AGREEMENT

**THE AGM WILL BE FOLLOWED BY A GENERAL
MEETING**

ALL RESIDENTS WELCOME

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Refreshments will be provided

Did you know?...

Parents with children under 12 years of age are able to claim expenses to cover child care whilst they attend a RMO general meeting.

The RMO will cover the costs of £9.00 per hour, per child, for the maximum of 2 hours. The child needs to be registered as living on the estate, with no other adult listed as living at the address. A receipt / invoice needs to be provided. If another adult is listed at the address and they also attend the meeting, a claim can be made.

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BLENHEIM GARDENS RMO
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON 24TH OCTOBER 2017
AT 7.00PM

Venue: The Community Hub, 23 Prague Place, Blenheim Gardens Estate, London SW2 5ED.

Please refer to attached sign in sheet

Officers in attendance: Eamon Maguire (EM RMO Chair); Danny Howcroft (DH – Estate Director), Neal Purvis (NP – Open Communities) and Charlotte Collins (CC - accountant - Kreston Reeves)

1) Introductions

EM opened the meeting and welcomed all.
EM introduced DH, NP and CC as members of the panel.

2. Minutes of previous AGM - 25/10/16

Minutes agreed as accurate.

3. Approval of annual accounts

3.1 CC led the discussion and a copy of the annual accounts were circulated. Kreston Reeves (financial auditors) signed the accounts and financial statements and so have members. It was confirmed both gave a true and fair view of organizational affairs. It was a clean audit with no exception items to report on.

3.2 Page 6 shows a surplus was achieved of £206,000 compared to £178,576 in the previous year. The surplus was due partly to a decrease in office admin expenses. It was noted that the pension costs had increased from the previous year.

3.3 General allowances received from the Council had decreased but other income such as garage management and other charges had increased along with a grant from Tesco's.

3.4 There was a DCLG grant awarded last year (to undertake a feasibility study on a stock transfer), but this was a one off contribution.

3.5 The reserves increased due to the surplus made and the RMO has a strong balance sheet with significant cash held at bank

Vote - to approve the accounts - unanimously agreed.

4. Appointment of auditors

4.1 The recommendation is to continue with Kreston Reeves as the RMOs financial auditors for the coming audit - unanimously agreed.

5. Election of Board members

5.1 NP thanked all for inviting him to the AGM. All shareholders should have been given a form; this is to elect Board members. The rules state that a third need to stand down each year, but can put themselves forward for re-election. There are 4 vacancies today.

5.2 NP felt it might be useful for all prospective Board members to give a brief introduction. Nominees for the Board are Pat Prendergast (absent), Erin Gill (absent but Eamon gave an update on Erin and the qualities she brings to the board); Greg Furlong (absent); Eamon Maguire provided an overview of his experience and the role of the board), Maud Simmance (introduced herself as the current RMO treasurer); Martin Cherry (introduced himself and has seen the changes made by the RMO having been on the estate since 1974); Gina Filose (provided reasons why she wanted to be involved and wanted to give something back to the community); and Anton Manickam (absent).

NP will collect and count ballot forms and announce 'winners' later on.

5.3. Election results

There were 4 spaces on BGRMO's Board and 8 nominations. The 4 elected Board members are.

Eamon Maguire
Martin Cherry
Maud Simmance
Gina Filose

5.4 Other nominations may be elected as co-opt members of the board which is to be determined at the first board meeting after the AGM.

6. Vote for RMO to continue under terms of the management agreement.

6.1 Unanimously agreed by show of hands.

Meeting ended at 7.40pm.

**BLenheim GARDENS RMO
NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING
FOLLOWING AGM**

Tuesday 18th September 2018
7.30 – 9.00 P.M.

At
23 Prague Place
Blenheim Gardens Estate, SW2 5ED
(The Community Hub)

AGENDA

1. Minutes of previous meeting hosted on 24.4.18
2. Matters arising from minutes
3. Action points from previous meeting
4. BGRMO business plan 2018-2021 – for information
5. The estate warden service - review of service
6. Residents views are invited on the installation of electric vehicle charge points
7. Residents views are invited on the installation of security gates to estate blocks
8. Performance report – For Information
9. Any other general business

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**Blenheim Gardens
General Meeting
Held on Tuesday 24th April 2018,
7.30pm at
The Community Hub, 23 Prague Place,
Blenheim Gardens Estate, London SW2 5ED.**

Present:

RMO Board members -

Eamon Maguire – RMO Chair
Sally Hill
Sally Champion
Martin Cherry
Maureen Champion
Geresom Obinna
Colleen Scott
Gina Filose
Anton Manickam
Maud Simmance
Diana Thompson

Residents in attendance – refer to attendance list.

Also in attendance:

Danny Howcroft (DH - Estate Director), Errol Pak (EP - Lambeth Council), Neal Purvis (NP – Open Communities), Idham Ramadi (IR – Lambeth Client Team), Jack Dangerfield (JD – Repowering London).

Apologies: Lambeth council – LHS.

1. Panel introductions

EM welcomed all and introduced the panel (see 'in attendance' above)

2. Previous minutes of 24.10.17 and action points

Minutes agreed as accurate.

Actions from previous meeting:

DH noted surplus fund is on the agenda and to be discussed later.

Residents can now contact the office about aids and adaptation repairs from 1st April 2018.

3. Work of Lambeth's Fraud Investigation Team - Errol Pak (EP)

3.1 Errol Pak (EP) introduced himself; EP has been a senior investigator for 11 years, a record of successfully prosecuting sub-letters in the past. EP noted as a borough Lambeth was very densely populated. Lambeth is also one of the most deprived boroughs in the country. It is very multicultural – Yoruba and Portuguese very widely spoken in the borough. Long waiting list too, which means transfers take long (some up to 20 years).

The audit commission estimate there are on average 90,000 sublet properties nationally. About 5% of stock (i.e. tenancies) is subject to fraud. Fraud is very costly too. Housing a person in temporary accommodation can cost up to £20k per year per person. Fraud can be sub-letting, right to buy fraud, obtaining properties by deception and other things. Lambeth has 14 fraud investigators. A lot is done on internal fraud and whistle blowing. On average about 80 to 90 flats are reclaimed from sublet. Number of fraudulent single claims and council tax discount is a lot too – for instance when more than one person resides at a flat. The team also do a lot of data matching from various other councils. Currently, there's a fraud awareness campaign and posters are being circulated to estates, police, TMOs, GP surgeries and various other organisations. Today's aim is promote closer networking and identify fraudsters abusing properties. There are now more prosecutions, especially since 2013. Also, the courts are approached to reclaim back any profit gained through subletting. There is a financial investigator and 'proceeds of crime' act can be used where applicable. EP reiterated the need for estates and tenants to inform the team of any fraud. The person being reported will be asked to attend an interview – they are not under arrest then. Surveillance can be carried out where issues are serious. There is liaison with other authorities as well.

3.2 EP asked whether people knew how much was made if properties are let on the open market. EP gave some examples - two bedroom properties can be put on the market for £1200 per month. Often the fraudsters are in receipt of full housing benefit! Such crime is outrageous, given the prevailing housing problems. Rooms are let out too, some for £400 per month each. The council take tough action but do need residents help and cooperation. Residents will likely notice if anything looked suspicious. EP asked if anyone knew the indicators of subletting. Some include drawn curtains, people frequently leaving and returning to a property, tenants not seen for long durations, unkempt gardens, previously noisy flat going quiet and so on. Others include very sparsely furnished properties, windows constantly closed during hot weather, and not seeing a tenant's vehicle for a long time. Also, some sub-letters may speak English as a second language and might be subject to immigration control. Also, people who give vague answers could indicate sub-letting. EP noted that one thing in itself may not prove subletting. EP urged all to inform the team of any suspicions; cards with contact details will be left with DH. EM asked if there were any questions. One person asked if reports could be made anonymously – EP confirmed they could, with no

obligation to give a name. Also, DH could be informed and he will forward any concerns to the team.

4. Decent Homes and Blenheim Gardens Estate - LBL

EM gave a verbal update. After long negotiations agreement on default was reached. Testing will be done on 20% full electrical, 10% of props with rodent issues after kitchen refit. 100% of all new kitchen and bathrooms installed will be tested.

The contractor will be Mears and BGRMO office will have a level of involvement.

5. Business Plan 2018 – 2021- Neal Purvis

5.1 Neal Purvis (NP) introduced himself. NP explained how business planning looks at work undertaken and what organisations want to achieve going forward. In BGRMO's case sessions were held with staff, Board members and two focus groups convened. Outcomes include updating the vision – things are different from 4 years ago. The Board is now much stronger, and there is active partnership with other organisations. Some of this was galvanised by budget cuts, but BGRMO has taken on more responsibilities too. Having more control has been one of BGRMO's aims.

5.2 Regarding the 'values' (i.e. things at the heart of an organisation) it includes things like putting residents first and valuing their opinions. 'Objectives' looks at continuously improving services, ensuring value for money and so on. Considering how anti-social behaviour is responded to is somewhat addressed by initiatives like the proposed wardens scheme. NP noted RMOs must be proactive and the business plan has section on 'managing risks'. This aspect involves looking ahead and at how the Board makes decisions. In relation to taking on more control, things like the office handling service charge collections evidences this. Other 'opportunities' will be sought to take control. The business plan also includes finances. There is now clarity on the allowances and the plan looks at spending in upcoming years; also projections. The projections show BGRMO is financially viable for the next 4 years. There is money to replace boilers and for some of the improvements. This means the surplus does not need to be touched.

5.3 Next stage of the business plan is to produce a draft version and forward to Board members for comments. All residents will get to see the plan. NP asked if there were any questions. Pat felt things had progressed quite well. NP agreed, since it was easier to make decisions when organisations are financially stable. EM noted NP made distinctions between the allowances and surplus fund in the plan. Gina felt it would be useful to include something about BGRMO youth Board. NP confirmed such information will be in the final version, which should be published in a month's time.

6. Energy Efficiency Initiative – Jack Dangerfield Repowering London

6.1 Jack Dangerfield (JD) introduced himself. Repowering London is based in Blue Star House, Stockwell and deals with community energy. Work is done with local communities to take control of the energy they use. For example, at Roupell Park and Loughborough Estates Repowering London set up a co-operative ('Brixton Energy') and sold shares.

With the money raised solar panels were installed. The idea is that the scheme is community owned and generates clean electricity for estates. Repowering London also help individuals reduce energy used and save money. For instance, staying warmer at home during winter. The org. offers one-to-one advice, undertakes home visits and looks at people's tariffs, and so on.

6.2 JD noted a quick saving is switching to a cheaper supplier. Regarding only getting discount for 1 year; most people are transferred to a more expensive tariff after a year. It is hard to know what 'best option' is as there are so many suppliers. JD noted average savings made by switching is £200 per year. Taking regular meter readings is important when seeking a saving – this should be done every 3 months. If not, individual bills can be estimated by companies. MC asked about smart meters. JD explained these can be fitted for free. Meter readings are sent directly to suppliers, so bills are accurate. Also, the equipment and display allows consumers see how much they are using. JD urged all debt to make contact with the respective supplier. There should be consideration for alternative payment methods as well. JD noted that having prepay meters suits some people, though overall it is more expenses than getting a quarterly bill. JD talked about the warm homes discount. For those who are eligible it equates to £140 discount - for example on electric. JD advised all to contact their suppliers in around August/Sept and enquire about the warm home discount.

6.3 JD noted other things that could be done includes energy saving measures. Repowering London takes kits when going on home visits to consumers. Measures include things like LED light bulbs. Some radiators can have reflectors installed behind them. Also, doors can be draught proofed. Some windows can have film on the glass (i.e. if single pane windows). Having curtains that reach the floor helps, so does letterbox draught excluders. Keeping internal doors closed helps to retain the heat in rooms. JD urged all to contact numbers on the flyer - or BGRMO office - if interested in a home visit.

7. Future use of RMO surplus fund – results and next steps – Eamon Maguire

Eamon Maguire (EM) introduced this item. EM noted only 50 out of 450 surveys were returned. Priorities include installing additional CCTV, upgrade and improve communal lighting, erect estate boundaries – possibly gates/railings to improve security. Installing solar panels and decorating blocks were also priorities (latter not from the surplus fund). It was noted that many of the suggestions were security related and an temporary measure is to be discussed under AOB this evening.

EM asked if all agree with the findings – no objection noted. Sum of £10k will be put aside from the surplus fund to look at feasibility of these suggestions (no objection). There will be another general meeting in the future.

8. Performance Report

DH noted an error with the date – it should be 2018. BGRMO outperformed Lambeth in all key performance areas. EM asked if there were any questions – none noted.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Trial – estate warden service – Eamon Maguire

Eamon Maguire (EM) led the discussion on this item. In response to the feedback from residents in regard to the use of the RMOs surplus fund and when considering the concerns raised regarding estate security generally, there is a proposal to trial an estate warden service over the weekend period for 3 months. The proposal had been discussed by the RMO board and the board wished to ascertain the views of wider residents before being agreed.

It was noted that the wardens will not have powers of arrest and some may see it as intrusive. Anton felt if there were no powers of arrest then such a scheme was pointless. EM noted the wardens could provide evidence and deter low level antisocial behaviour. Some wondered if the wardens would have cameras; it was confirmed that they would. One person relayed how they saw two people come down the stairs; one person looked dangerous and kept trying to speak to her. Often people congregate on the second floor flats during night and daytime. Another resident relayed how a sex act was openly performed in the day - at 9am.

It was noted that the costs of the trial will be paid for from the RMOs revenue budget and the costs will not have any impact on the RMOs surplus fund. The trial will be subsidised from other service areas and it was noted that the RMO received an increase in its allowances. If the trial is agreed, it will be for a 3 months period, covering weekends, and then the outcomes reviewed by the board.

One resident disagreed with the proposal.

EM confirmed the topic will return to Board for further discussion in May.

9.2. Friends of the windmill Gardens update Jean Karrigan

Jean thanked BGRMO for their continued support. Building of the new education centre starts next month. It will be a good local facility and could be hired by local groups. FOWG is a voluntary organisation; a grant will allow recruitment of a part time administrative worker. However, around £29k needs to be raised for fitting out the building. It is hoped to there will be a pop up café and other facilities. Jean noted that the windmill sails will be

taken away, repaired and painted. With regards to building work, this is likely to start end of May or early June. Lambeth expect it to be finished by December. This year, FOWG in preparation for the changes will have less events. 'Beer and bread festival' is on 1.5.18 and Ta chi classes will continue. It is also hoped that released prisoners can be trained in painting & decorating; possibly they will redecorate the children's play area. Regarding the grant FOWG secured, a job advert will go in Brixton Bugle this weekend. The position is part time 2 days per week. Ideally the person recruited will reside locally. Jean again thanked BGRMO for its continued support of FOWG.

9.3 EM informed all that the fun day this year is 14th July 2018.

9.4 EM introduced Janet Baker – who is a local candidate of the Women's Equality Party. Janet informed attendees that she will be standing for local election. Janet was keen to see at how estates are managed. BGRMO seems a great example of an estate that is well managed. Janet noted also wanting to see how the estate works with Lambeth Council, and hear about any examples of problems or successes.

9.5 One resident asked about smoke alarm batteries – DH confirmed David is coordinating the training however there were delays due to the commencement of the LHS inspections. It was noted that CO detectors should be placed near boilers, or gas cookers. EM asked the resident to see DH in person.

9.6 One resident queried the existing policy of issuing only one permit for visitors parking. It can be difficult when households have more than one adult. EM recalled Board had made the decision. It came to light that some unscrupulous persons sold their permits to others. If there is a particular case to be made – for instance having several adults in the home – then please submit details to DH or EM.

EM closed the meeting at 9pm