

The Blenheim

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

“Raising the roof”



Developing BGRMO and taking on more responsibility – update...

At the Annual General Meeting on 27th October 2015, members of the RMO took a decision not to pursue the Right to Transfer, but to try to negotiate with LB Lambeth to take on more responsibility as a 'Self Financing' Tenant Management Organisation. This would mean collecting and keeping the rent and service charge money, and being responsible for all of the work on the estate, including all major works. BGRMO have met several times with LBL to negotiate setting this up at Blenheim Gardens. While this has been happening, the government have introduced significant changes to

how Council Housing will be managed and paid for in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill and the Housing and Planning Bill. None of these changes have had a positive effect on the finances BGRMO was looking at as a Self Financing TMO. With the finance changes coming, it did not look financially viable.

As a result of this, the BGRMO took a decision on 6 July 2016 to try another route to take on more responsibility from the Council. This means BGRMO taking on responsibility to specify, tender, and manage the contractors for major

works on Blenheim Gardens, while the Council would continue to pay for the works. This would give BGRMO much more control of who the contractors would be, and the quality and way that the contractors work while in residents' homes at Blenheim Gardens. BGRMO is also trying to take on the re-servicing of empty homes before letting them, that need large amounts of work. This is done at the moment by the Council. We are at an early stage negotiating with the Council how BGRMO would take on these responsibilities in practice.

Please get in touch! If you need any advice, please call 020 7926 0158. Monday to Friday.

Blenheim Gardens Resident Management Organisation

Review of Activities:

by the RMO Chair, Eamon Maguire on behalf of the RMO board.

The year has been a challenging one for Blenheim Gardens RMO however the Governance Board feels there has been significant progress made preparing the RMO for the future and maintaining the delivery of high quality customer focused services.

The year has been focused on the many issues associated with the Lambeth Housing Standard works completed on the estate by Wates but project managed by the Council. Much of the works completed is substandard and presents a real liability to residents and the RMO in future years. This matter remains on going at year end, as does negotiations on what external work such as new roofs etc will be undertaken in the future.

During the course of the year, the RMO also completed a feasibility study which was part funding by a grant from DCLG and on the conclusion of this study, residents voted to submit a business case to the Council to become a self-financing TMO. Negotiations on this remain on going at year end and residents will be notified of the outcome as soon as possible.

Further, the RMO received a clear mandate from residents following its continuation ballot and will continue to manage the housing management services on their behalf. It is a huge honour for the RMO to do so for the next 5 years at least. The RMO is delighted that residents had chosen BGRMO to manage their estate and housing services as oppose to returning to the Council.

Some of the objectives achieved during the 2015-16 financial year included:

- Secured a successful continuation ballot
- Completed the stock option feasibility study
- Working towards satisfactory completion of the water site leakage in Ramilles Close
- Continued to renew garage doors with high security, low maintenance type
- Increased membership to the RMO and Governance board member nominations
- Submitted a business case to the Council to become a self-financing TMO
- Provided apprenticeship opportunities
- Reviewed our staffing arrangement in preparation of the allowance review and in anticipation of the Housing Bill 2015
- Supported local groups such as the Clapham Youth Centre, the Holmewood play and stay group, Friend of the Windmill Gardens, Progress, Build It – Lambeth, CEFL Lyncx and the Good News Food Project

Blenheim Gardens RMO remains one of the top quartile performing organisations in Lambeth with year on year improvements in many service areas. Blenheim Gardens Estate residents continue to report high levels of satisfaction with the services being provided when compared with other TMOs and the Council.

Future plans:

During the 2016/17 financial year the RMO will endeavour to:

- Ensure the completion of the Lambeth Housing Standard works to an acceptable standard to reduce risk to the RMO and residents in the future
- Continue to discuss the possibility of becoming a self-financing TMO
- Introduce an enhanced mutual exchange scheme to reduce levels of void properties becoming available
- Negotiate a new allowance covering the period of 2017 - 2020
- Continue with the estate painting programme
- Reintroduce an edible garden area
- Increase CCTV coverage on the estate
- Retain our NFTMO Good Governance status
- Review its business plan and service improvement plans to ensure value for money is achieved throughout the RMO
- Review its contract providers including repairs and maintenance
- Continue to reshape service provisions to meet future local needs of the communities we serve
- Continue to offer assistance, advice and support to other RMOs in its role as a NFTMO Guide TMO
- Negotiate future capital works for the estate
- Continue to increase membership to the RMO and Governance board member nominations
- Assess the impact the welfare benefit reform and the introduction of Universal Credits will have on estate residents and ensure the necessary support is put in place to assist residents
- Review business opportunities beyond the estate

Finally, the RMO would like to thank my fellow board members for their dedication and commitment to the role of the board. The RMO employees for the good work and level of services provided and finally all the estate residents who have assisted us during the year. Without the involvement of estate residents and in particular, board members, the RMO would simply cease to exist.

Please get in touch! If you need any advice, please call 020 7926 0158. Monday to Friday.

Blenheim Gardens Resident Management Organisation

The RMO performance was steady during the year with the RMO achieving all but one of its targets as measured by the Council.

The table shows how the RMO has performed against the set targets and how we have performed compared to the Council.

The only area of concern at year end was our service charge collection rate. The RMO has since improved in this area post year end.

The RMO aims to exceed all set targets during this year.

KPI Description	Lambeth Outturn	2015/16 Target	TMO Outturn	TMO Target met?	Outperformed Lambeth?
Rent collected in year	99.50%	99.50%	100.20%		Yes
Percentage of rents and arrears collected	95.95%	94%	98.54%		Yes
% of service charges collected	106%	100.50%	99.00%		No
Average relet Void time	21.7 days	25 days	14.9 days		Yes
% Gas services completed in 12 mths	100%	100%	100%		Equal
% Repairs Satisfaction	N/A	95%	100%		Yes
% Repairs completed on time	95.30%	97%	97.70%		Yes
% Complaints responded to on time	95%	90%	100%		Yes
% Tenancy checks completed	10%	10%	56.80%		Yes
Number of Estate Inspections completed	N/A	4	12		Yes
Committee meetings	N/A	6	10		Yes

**During
Apr 2015 to
March 2016
The RMO
resolved
7 Anti-social
behaviour cases
and refurbished
6 empty
properties**

Financial performance:-

The organisation achieved an overall surplus in the year of £175,200 in the year compared to a surplus of £74,400 in the previous year.

The increase of £100,800 is in regard to an increase in income and a reduction on costs. The RMOs balance sheet is £1,042,000 of funds in the bank.

Employment costs, Direct estate costs, Office administration expenses and Committee and Communication expenses were all very similar to the previous financial year.

Staff cost will reduce this financial year following the retirement of John Potter, repairs manager, and Gary Hooper, repairs operative, relocating. The RMO is to consider its staffing structure in the new financial year to match its strategic objectives. Generating a healthy surplus and expanding business opportunities will cushion the RMO from future allowance cuts.





**Thank you! The RMO's Annual Fun Day
celebrating 15 years of Resident Management**



The RMO would like to thank all estate residents who participated in the RMO's annual fun day which took place on Sunday 24th July 2016 to celebrate 15 years of Resident Management. The day was well attended and a lot of fun was had by all. We hope to see you all next year!

Lots more photos to see online.

Visit this link;

<https://goo.gl/photos/hqYM4QxBCjR7SKhJA>





Did you know and are you ready – welfare benefit changes?

The cap on welfare benefit is intended to be reduced this Autumn which will mean less income for people and families in receipt of benefit. Our guide is below:

Benefit cap amounts now

The current cap is:

1. £500 per week (£26,000 per year) if you're in a couple, whether your children live with you or not
2. £500 per week (£26,000 per year) if you're single and your children live with you
3. £350 per week (£18,200 per year) if you're single and you don't have children, or your children don't live with you

Caps from autumn 2016:

From autumn 2016 the cap will depend on where you live in the UK.

Inside Greater London

If you live in a Greater London borough, the cap will be:

1. £442.31 per week (£23,000 a year) if you're in a couple, whether your children live with you or not
2. £442.31 per week (£23,000 a year) if you're single and your children live with you
3. £296.35 per week (£15,410 a year) if you're single and you don't have children, or your children don't live with you

AGM Meetings

Residents are reminded that the RMO AGM will take place at 7 pm on Tuesday 25th October 2016 in the Community Hub, 23 Prague Place, SW2 5ED. The AGM is where the annual accounts are approved and board members are nominated. The AGM will be followed by a general meeting. All residents are welcome to attend.

End of year Lambeth Council's TMO Client Team Comments...

'BGRMO continues to be a high performing TMO. With the exception of service charge collection, which dipped in the last quarter, it is hitting all its indicators.

At the same time it is clear that BGRMO is committed to engaging with its residents – there is large Board that works very effectively. All complaints are addressed within a few days. BGRMO also hosts a number of local volunteer groups. A number of initiatives that other TMOs have taken up e.g. the after school club, were originally piloted at BGRMO.

It is clear when you talk to any member of staff or Board member that they fully understand their role in the TMO'.

Keep up the good work BGRMO...

Age UK Lambeth
Celebrating Age Festival

2016

Lambeth
ageUK



Celebrating Age Festival 1st – 31st October 2016

70+ events for Lambeth residents aged over 55!

Age UK Lambeth's 18th annual Celebrating Age Festival begins on the United Nations International Day of Older Persons on 1st October 2016.

The Festival promotes the richness and diversity of Lambeth communities, and our events will be attractive to people of different interests, whether you are looking to indulge in familiar activities or discover something entirely new. The programme includes film screenings, concerts, dances, trips and exhibitions, so there is something for everyone to enjoy.

How to contact Age UK Lambeth

Tel: 020 7346 6800

Fax: 020 7346 6814

Email: info@ageuklambeth.org.uk



Blenheim Gardens opens its Community Edible Garden



The RMO is pleased to confirm that with funding secured from Tesco's 'bags of help' scheme and in association with Groundwork UK, we have managed, in Partnership with Progress UK, CEF Lynx and Build It Lambeth, to reintroduce a community growing area on the estate.

The Blenheim Gardens Community Garden is situated between Ramilles Close and Blenheim Gardens area of the estate. The new planters are available for local residents to grow fruit and vegetables.

If you are interested in leasing a planter, please contact the estate office on 020 7926 0158 or Simon on 0753 307 6334



Football - a letter to parents



Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers ,

Football Training Sessions in the Windmill Gardens – advisory notice

I am writing to inform you that Blenheim Gardens RMO has selected CEF Lyncx as our preferred Partner to provide football training sessions for residents on this estate. The football sessions are provided each Saturday in the Windmill Gardens between 9.30am to 11.30 am or as advised by CEF Lyncx.

CEF Lyncx is fully authorised to undertake these sessions on behalf of the RMO and stringent checks have been undertaken to ensure their service is delivered to a quality standard and that they have the necessary qualifications, policies, procedures and insurances in place to safeguard your children at all times.

It has come to the RMOs attention however, that football sessions are also being offered by an estate resident who also trains in the Windmill Gardens; this notice is to confirm that this person is not approved by the RMO and is unlikely to have the relevant qualifications, policies, procedures and insurances in place to safeguard your children. It is suggested that in order to safeguard your child, you only participant in the sessions being delivered by CEF Lyncx in Partnership with the RMO.

The RMO is aware of and concerned about potential Child Protection and Safeguarding children issues concerning the alternative program being offered and we are obliged to inform parents about the possible risks posed if the above advice is not followed.

Parents who continue to be involved in activities not being delivered by CEF Lyncx, do so at their own risk.

Should you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact the estate office on 020 7926 0158.

Local Work Experience Opportunities...

**Work
experience!**

- 1 day working in Brixton Market helping set up stalls
- 1 day working with a local electrician
- Half of a day working with F Monday cafe on Brixton Hill
- Half of a day working with Parissi Cafe learning to be a Barista, Atlantic Rd
- 1 day working in Diverse Gift shop, Coldharbour Lane
- 1 week learning how to bake with Old Post Office Bakery

Requirements:

There is no age limit but all applicants need to be 16 years and over.

A CV is required. For more information on these opportunities, please contact Magdalen at rubalcava@btinternet.com



Table Tennis in the Hub..

The RMO is pleased to confirm that Table Tennis sessions are available in the **Community Hub, 23 Prague Place, SW2 5ED** each 2nd , 3rd and 4th **Tuesday of the month from 7 pm**

All levels and abilities are welcome. Just turn up and play!

The activity is being delivered by Charles Felix and is open to all residents

Blenheim Gardens Resident Management Organisation



- **Tues 25th Oct between 7 – 9 pm – RMOs AGM general meeting**
- **Each Weds between 9.30 – 11 am – LHS drop in session with Helen Lawrence from Lambeth Council**
- **Each Mon between 11 – 1 pm – Mature residents coffee morning in the Hub**
- **RMO board meeting – 1st Weds of each month between 7 – 9 pm. Part A of the meeting is open to all residents**
- **Each Mon and Tues 4.45 – 7.00 pm – children's study support group (term times only)**
- **Each Sat from 9.30 am – football training sessions in the Windmill Gardens**
- **Fri 28th Oct – Inter TMO football tournament – 12 – 5 pm**
- **Weds 5th Oct visit to Dulwich Park @ 11 am***
- **Weds 2nd Nov shopping trip to Wandsworth @ 11 am***
- **Weds 14th Dec Christmas dinner at the Toby Carvey, Mitcham***
- **Weds 21st December – RMOs annual mature residents Christmas lunch from 12 pm.**

* These events are for mature residents only and are delivered in Partnership with the Clapham Youth Centre

Skylight replacements

The RMO is pleased to confirm that Lambeth Council has agreed to continue to finance the estate roof light program for this year. The RMO is in the process of identifying new lights to be replaced. If you have an issue with the skylight in your home, please let us know.

**BGRMO achieve the
NFTMO Good
Governance
standard for
the 3rd time!!!**



Following a reassessment of the RMO governance the National Federation of TMOs have confirmed that BGRMO continues to meet its Good Governance Standard.

'Congratulations to you all on a very well managed TMO with great staff, board members and community' says Nick Reynolds, Chair of NFTMO following the assessment. Thank you Nick!

Diversity and accessibility

If you would like this information in large print, in Braille, or in another format or language, please contact us on 020 7926 0158.

Español: Si desea esta información en otro idioma, rogamos nos llame al 020 7926 0158.

Français: Si vous souhaitez ces informations dans une autre langue veuillez nous contacter au 020 7926 0158.

Português: Se desejar esta informação noutra idioma é favor telefonar para 020 7926 0158

Twi: Se wope saa nkaeboy yi wo kasa foforo mu a fre 020 7926 0158.

Yoruba: Ti ẹ ba fẹ imoràn yí, ní èdè Òmíràn, ẹjọ, ẹ kàn wà l'ágogo 020 7926 0158.

Please get in touch! If you need any advice, please call 020 7926 0158. Monday to Friday.