

# Grove End Gardens Residents Association

## Minutes of Annual General Meeting 30-Jun-2015 at Arnold House School

Members of the General Committee present were:-

David Burr (DB) – Chair  
Maureen Deeley (MD)  
Judy Hame (JH) – Vice Chair  
Niraj Shah (NS) – Treasurer  
Linda Diamond (LD) – Secretary

Invited guests present were:

Gary Medazoumian (GM) – Executive Director, Grove End Housing Limited (GEHL)  
Julian Butcher (JB) – Property Manager from Rendall & Rittner  
Alistair Fyfe (AF) – Estate Manager from Rendall & Rittner

Apologies for absence were received from:

Suja Eltringham (SE), Jacky Erwtaman (JE), Peter Jenks (PJ), Frank Lennox-Hennessy (FL-H) and Clare Usher (CU)

**DB** formally opened the meeting at 19.35 and thanked all for coming. He thanked and introduced the guests: Gary Medazoumian, Executive Director of GEHL (the freeholder) and also one of the two Maintenance Trustees responsible for the service charge. Julian Butcher – our property manager from Rendall & Rittner, and Alistair Fyfe – our Estate Manager from Rendall & Rittner who has his office at the Abbey Road side of the building. **DB** also thanked Arnold House School for once again allowing us to use their facilities at no cost.

### **1) Chairman's report**

**DB** expressed his pleasure at our change of Managing agents. R&R are a vast improvement on our previous agents. They have inherited a block that needs to catch up in regards to various key infrastructure which cannot be done overnight. **DB** expressed his particular thanks to **JB** whom he enjoys working with and appreciates his straightforward approach to gaining the best outcomes for the block.

Since the fire last year, R&R have introduced various key changes to improve safety. Deficient communal fire doors on the first and sixth floors have been improved. Our fire alarm system has been modernised and they are now looking at what can best be done in terms of replacing the front doors of all flats.

GEGRA have been heavily involved in the penthouse project and **DB** attends monthly liaison meetings with all involved parties.

Key challenges over the next year are likely to be the communal pipework replacement project and the completion of the penthouses and all that they entail, in particular with regard to service charge arrangements.

With regard to the plumbing – the block has been advised by various consultants that our communal pipework infrastructure is at the end of its life. There have been many meetings to discuss the various proposals for how the infrastructure should be replaced with the least possible impact on residents. **DB** thought GEGRA had represented residents' interests very well and felt that the involvement of real residents gave an essential perspective that the consultants don't necessary have.

We seem to be getting nearer to a conclusion. Unfortunately whatever is decided it is likely to result in a significant cost and that is why GEGRA support the annual collection of half a million pounds to build up a reserve fund.

Finally the Chairman stressed the need for GEGRA to retain high levels of membership and attract a constant flow of new people willing to join the committee. He thanked the members present for their support and urged everyone to ease administration by renewing membership promptly ideally by using bank transfer.

**DB** publically thanked GEGRA's committee as a whole because GEGRA is very much a group effort.

## **2) Treasurer's report including resolution to approve GEGRA accounts**

**NS** reported the accounts were in good order with an increased balance over last year of £5,460.59. The increase can be attributed to:

- The bringing forward of some membership income due to members prepaying.
- Donation income.
- Clawing back money from HSBC who had charged us incorrectly.
- Lower expenditure because we didn't have a garden party or purchase a printer as we had in the previous year.

A resolution to approve GEGRA accounts was proposed by **NS** and seconded by **DB**. No one voted against and so they were approved.

**DB** thanked **NS** for all his past work. Having served two years **NS** now wishes to resign from his post as Treasurer but will remain on GEGRA's General Committee. **DB** called for anyone interested in serving as Treasurer to contact him.

## **3) Election for General Committee**

Since existing committee members had expressed their wish to stand again and as no new names have yet come forward, there was no election.

**DB** once again asked for volunteers to come forward for the committee promising those that volunteered would gain a huge feeling of satisfaction from the work.

## **4) Penthouse development project**

**DB** explained that work had begun in mid-January 2014 and had been planned to take 18 months and so should have been finishing in two weeks. However as you can see there is still much to do.

GEGRA had expected works to overrun, and had agreed with GEHL that the compensation would be paid for the life of the construction phase. This turned out to be a wise decision.

We have been told all work will be completed by October/November but looking at what still needs to be done we're not entirely confident. Our expectation is that the Abbey Road forecourt and reception will be last to be finished and may well extend beyond those dates. We have asked for parts of the garden to be handed back ASAP and we've been told this will happen in around August.

Once we know more we will share the information on our website and we will update the notice boards.

**MB (Flat 293)** reported a whistling noise above his bedroom very late at night – could it be air conditioning system. He also reported cracks had appeared at the entrance to his flat. **JB** said he would investigate.

**MD (Flat 125)** asked if residents would have an opportunity of seeing the penthouse flats once they were finished? **DB** suggested that interested residents should contact the site office in the arcade.

**ND (Flat 285)** asked that given all the dust and dirt from the building works, would a free window cleaning service be offered. **DB** to raise with Dekra at their monthly meeting.

**JLG (Flat 22)** complained that the penthouse project's closure of much of the Abbey Road forecourt has forced pedestrians to walk past her windows causing much disturbance at night. **AF** will arrange for clear signs to go up asking for people to be quiet in the area.

**MB (Flat 293)** said he thought that Dekra were causing noise before the permitted 8am on some mornings. **AF** said that if this happened he should be called and he will deal with any complaints.

*The GEGRA AGM was then adjourned for the question and answer session with Julian Butcher representing Rendall & Rittner.*

#### **a) Estate Management and Porterage**

**JB** reported that all staff were now employed by R&R and that promoting Mathew to Head Porter had worked out very well.

**MB (Flat 293)** asked what happens if the fire alarm goes off at night when porter is on his break. **JB** explained that the alarm now sounds in the staff room and rings through to Alistair's and Mathew's phones.

**JLG (Flat 22)** asked whether it was possible to have a system where outstanding issues could be tracked. **JB** explained this could be done via their R&R Online website. **JLG** wasn't aware this existed and asked that **JB** send out a reminder to all residents which he agreed to do. **DB** will also update GEGRA's website with details of R&R Online.

#### **b) Lifts**

**JB** explained that Dekra had replaced Lift 1 (at Abbey Road) and the Service Lift (by the pond) as part of the penthouse project at their cost. They are in the process of replacing Lift 2 (at Abbey Road) at their cost. Finally, they are going to build a new lift on the garden elevation which will provide step free access to the lawn from the upper ground floor as well as to the new underground car park and the penthouse level.

#### **c) Noise disturbance**

**LT (Flat 91)** complained that students were renting flats in the block and they were very noisy. **JB** advised that noise issues should be reported to the porter who will take

action and report to **AF**. If noise continues the landlord will be asked to deal with offending tenants. **AF** will explain how easily noise travels in his next newsletter.

**MB (Flat 293)** complained that he was frequently disturbed by young kids running down communal corridor. **JB** advised him to inform porters who will speak to the parents concerned.

#### **d) Outside spaces**

**DB** had received a written question from someone complaining that use of the leaf blower in the garden was excessive. The general view from members attending was that there was an issue. **AF** explained that using the leaf blower had created a saving in the cost of clearing pathways. He would try to have the usage reduced and for it not to occur prior to 10am.

Many at the meeting mentioned the dead plant outside the front entrance. GEGRA had been complaining about it for some time. **AF** said he had it in hand.

**JLG (Flat 22)** complained about the trench outside her side windows which she said had been there for months. **JB** explained that there had been delays because the works had turned out to be more complicated than was at first thought and that unfortunately the contractor had let them down.

**JLG (Flat 22)** complained that the Abbey Road forecourt looked very poor. There had been no gardening since it had become Dekra's site, the signage had faded and it had become untidy. **AF** will liaise with Dekra to see what can be done to refresh the area.

#### **e) Plumbing (incl. heating, hot and cold water, drainage)**

**JB** stated that call outs for drainage blockages were down so we were saving money. He explained that the pipework replacement project will be a major job but that they were prioritising the minimisation of inconvenience in their planning.

**JC (Flat 100)** understands that pipes in Germany are in a "tree" format with smaller gauge on top and larger at the bottom and this was apparently a better system and she felt was worth exploring.

#### **f) Refurbishments of common parts**

**JB** explained that corridor refurbishments will be undertaken after the pipework replacement works in due course.

**MD (Flat 125)** was concerned about the Grove End Road forecourt renovation. She asked that considering a great deal of money was obviously spent, why the materials used were of such poor quality that they did not have a lasting finish? She felt that the stone steps and walkway were now a disgrace and went on to say that the low canopy had been damaged because it was too low and that the GEG sign had not been illuminated properly. She felt that the choice of purple painted walls did not match the rest of the block. She hoped that lessons would be learnt and that the Abbey Road reception forecourt will be a first class job. **DB** confirmed that GEGRA had asked for an assurance from GEHL that all repairs required will not be charged to service charge.

**SH (Flat 40)** explained that his mother had been caused enormous difficulty and ill-health by the Grove End Road forecourt and reception project. He didn't want anyone

to suffer similarly from the Abbey Road project. He thanked **JB** and R&R for looking after his mother once they became managing agents.

It was felt that the noticeboard monitor at the Grove End Road reception had been a great success in keeping people informed of what was happening. **DB** to confirm that a monitor will be fitted at the Abbey Road reception too and that they will be kept in sync.

#### **g) Rubbish collection and recycling**

**VD (Flat 240)** said that the blue bags were only to be used for recycling and not general rubbish. She felt that new residents were using the blue bags as a cheap way of disposing of their household rubbish and a notice should be sent round about this.

#### **h) Security (incl. CCTV, Entry fobs, Intercom)**

**JB** explained that security cameras had been improved around the building.

GEGRA continue to think the intercom system is antiquated.

**JLG (Flat 22)** reminded people not to admit tailgaters. She asked for a sign to be fitted to the door reminding people not to let strangers into the block.

#### **i) Service charge accounts**

**MD (Flat 125)** complained that the service charge had gone up too much even after accounting for the pipework replacement reserve fund collection.

**JB** said that GREGRA will be provided with the service charge's quarterly accounts so they can be more involved in monitoring the situation.

**LT (Flat 91)** asked if the service charges will remain at this high level following the penthouse project. **JB** responded that the overall service charge payable collectively by the existing flats will be reduced. **DB** said that from his standpoint, whilst nothing could be guaranteed it seemed clear that a lot more money would need to be raised to fund the pipework replacement and the consequential corridor refurbishments and that the corridor lighting was also in need of modernisation. GEGRA eagerly await GEHL's proposals for penthouse service charges and how they will impact the proportions paid by existing leaseholders.

#### **j) Other business**

**JC (Flat 100)** asked where residents could go to get replacement parts for their new windows. **JB** will investigate.

**JC (Flat 100)** complained that some flats had packed moving boxes in the communal corridors. **JB** confirmed this was not allowed and any breaches should be reported to the porters.

#### **5) Other Association business**

None.

**DB** closed the meeting at 21:16.