

# Applewood Court Residents (Swindon) Limited

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## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Applewood Court Residents (Swindon) Limited held at Stratton Park House, Wanborough Road, Swindon, SN3 4HG at 7.30pm on 20 March 2008.

### Present:

Mark Scott	3	
David Starrett	6	
John Morris (director)	9,15,16,36	- chairman
Stephen Soar	13	
Sarah Smith	19	

### Apologies

Kevin & Michelle Lennon	2	
Jayne Inch	4	
Karen Winter	10	
Andrew & Sylvia Hetherington	11	- proxy to chairman
Valarie Marquaire	17	- proxy to chairman
David Morris (director)	18, 22, 29	- proxy to chairman
John Grimwood	23	
Mark Denman	25	
Diana Morris	26, 35	- proxy to chairman
Terry Cain	30	
Stuart Morgan (director) - partner of Karen Winter	(10)	

### In attendance

Lorraine Rogers 21 tenant

### Introduction

#### Welcome

John Morris opened the meeting and thanked owners present for attending and other owners for taking the trouble to return proxies and send apologies. The combined total of owners present or represented by proxy totalled 15 out of the 36 properties.

The Director's report and Financial Statements had been previously issued to members along with details of the expenditure for the previous year and a forecast for the current year and following three years.

During the year to March 2007 maintenance work had included installing an additional street lamp in the car park, re-staining of bin store doors, a further third of the boundary picket fence was replaced with railings, and grounds replanting and refurbishing was continued.

#### Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

The meeting moved onto the formal agenda for Applewood Court Residents (Swindon) Limited.

1. To receive and consider the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2007.

The statutory accounts for the period to 31 March 2007 had previously been sent to all owners. Copies were also available at the meeting. The members present and represented by proxy unanimously agreed to receive the Financial Statements and Directors' Reports thereon for the period to 31 March 2007.

*Retirement of Directors – Under the Articles of Association the directors of the company retire by rotation every three years.*

2. J Morris retires as a director by rotation and the directors propose that he be re-elected.

The members present and represented by proxy unanimously agreed to re-elect J Morris as a director.

3. Proposal to take advantage of the new provisions of the 2006 Companies Act.

The members present and represented by proxy unanimously agreed to take advantage of the new provisions of the 2006 Companies Act to allow electronic communication of statutory documents to members.

4. Service Charges and issues.

#### **Individual items of expenditure were reviewed:**

##### **Grounds Maintenance**

Members agreed that Stratton Garden Contractors have continued to do an excellent job of looking after the grounds. The gardener has commenced refurbishment and it is planned to implement a rolling programme in following years. The gardener had reported that one of the residents had removed branches from a tree. This work had not been undertaken properly and he requested that owners be reminded that he is properly qualified and insured to undertake this type of work. It was agreed that residents should be reminded that they should not undertake any such work in the grounds.

The site ranch fencing was discussed; it had been agreed at 2006's AGM to replace this with railings as the fence posts were rotting away. A further third of the fence had been replaced with railings in the year to March 2007 making it two thirds complete. It was agreed that the final third be replaced with railings next year and that once that section was complete that railings be erected alongside the hedge by Mannington Lane.

It was noted that abandoned cars appear to have ceased to be a problem due to their higher scrap value.

The problem of rubbish being dumped on the site was discussed. Mr Starrett noted that residents of Mannington Lane continued to dump items in the bin store. It was agreed that the company would again write to the resident responsible and advise him that the bin stores were for use by residents of Applewood Court.

The bin store had been repaired in March 2007 however; the wheelie bins are in need of repair or replacement with one now lacking proper wheels. It was agreed that the Council be requested to repair or replace it.

##### **Trees**

The trees between the far two blocks had previously been reduced in height by half in the previous year have now been completely removed.

##### **Paving**

It was agreed that the paving was very uneven and should be lifted and re-laid.

##### **Communal Digital TV Reception**

The communal integrated reception service providing both Freeview, subscription and non-subscription satellite services had been upgraded three years ago. However, problems remain in that each block has a separate TV aerial and satellite dish with an amplifier powered by the electricity supply of one of the apartment owners. When this supply is interrupted the TV reception for the whole block is lost. It is also often difficult to gain access to loft spaces to maintain the amplifiers. Furthermore several residents have informed the company that the picture quality deteriorates during the summer months when the trees are in leaf. The cost of reducing the height of some of the larger trees on site would be higher than the cost of linking the blocks and obtaining a "clear" signal from the best-positioned block. It had been agreed at the previous meeting to provide a communal electricity supply to the amplifiers and that these should be moved to a more accessible position for maintenance purposes. During the year brick "cupboards" were built at the end of each block to house the amplifiers. At the same time as supplying each of these with communal power they will also be connected by digital aerial cable to overcome the reception problems by sharing the best reception. In addition computer network cable (cat5) was installed to allow for future upgrades and the

possibility of providing WiFi internet access. The members agreed that communal broadband should be installed via WiFi once the upgrade to the TV system had taken place.

### **Ground rents**

These are fixed at £25 per apartment. As previously agreed by members the company makes these payments from the Service Charge direct to the freeholder on behalf of leaseholders.

### **Lighting**

An additional lamppost was installed in the current year. The lighting had failed twice recently and in both cases this was traced to the communal supply located in one of the owner's bin store cupboards being switched off. The communal meter has now been moved to a communal cupboard and the time switch replaced by a light sensor.

### **Insurance**

The premium had been negotiated down to £2,579 for the year to 31 March 2008 compared with £3,869 for the previous year.

### **Timber treatment**

The three areas are:-

a) fascias and soffits.

Work on replacing all the fascias, soffits, guttering and down pipes with brown UPVc had completed in previous years.

b) woodwork other than window frames and front doors (bin store doors, at ground floor level).

As agreed at the previous AGM all woodwork at ground floor level including bin store door (external side only) was treated in the year to 31 March 2007. It was noted that several of the ten porch pillars had gone rotten and required replacing. This work was undertaken in October 2007.

c) window frames and front doors.

The window frames and front doors on the apartments will cost in the region of £180 per apartment to treat and paint. The majority of owners have replaced window and doorframes in brown UPVC as permitted by the freeholder and the company and these will not need treatment. Several owners (not present at the AGM) had questioned why, after they had gone to the expense of replacing doors and windows with UPVc, they should be asked to contribute to the maintenance of those owners who had not. Two owners had installed white UPVC external doors one had since replaced it with a brown UPVc door, the remaining owner is liable for the cost of restoring the original door or replacing it with brown UPVc.

The treating of the windows and doors of apartments without UPVc doors had been discussed at length at the previous AGM when it was agreed that owners should be consulted on this matter in order that a broad consensus obtained. (The cost of both painting a front door and staining a set of windows is thought to be between £150 and £200). Various options were identified as follows and put to owners prior to the meeting:

a) The company use funds contributed by all owners as part of the normal Service Charge to maintain the remaining wooden windows and doors and continue to do so.

b) The company use funds contributed by all owners, as part of the normal Service Charge to maintain the remaining wooden windows and doors and advise owners that the company will thereafter cease to maintain them and that owners should undertake future maintenance.

c) The company increase all Service Charges in the year to 31 March 2010 by an amount sufficient to pay for maintaining windows and doors for a single flat (say £180) and undertake the work but refund this money (£180) to owners whose properties do not require the work done.

d) The company increase all Service Charges in the year to 31 March 2010 by an amount sufficient to pay for maintaining those windows and doors that require maintenance (say £90) and undertake the work.

e) The company should not use owners' funds to maintain windows and doors.

f) The company defer maintaining windows and doors for another year.

It was unanimously agreed that option c) be adopted and that owners assume responsibility for maintaining their windows in following years.

### **Anti-Social behaviour**

Several members raised issues of alleged anti-social behaviour by the tenants of number 12 and 30. This included threatening behaviour, noise and frequent police visits. It was agreed that owners should not take any action that would place themselves at risk of harm and should note and report any future problems via the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator once the scheme was established. Noise problems should be reported to Swindon Council as it has a legal duty to assist residents with noise nuisance issues. Very serious problems should be reported direct to the police and problems that involve a breach of lease terms to the management company in order for it to liaise with the owners of the property concerned.

### **Roof repairs**

No expenditure allowance has been made for the current year to 31 March 2008 however, the directors were aware that some expenditure would be required in future years in order to replace roofing felt close to the soffits.

### **Parking**

No expenditure allowance has been made in respect of future repairs to the surface of the car park

### **Window Cleaning**

It is a condition of the lease that the company organise regular window cleaning – No expenditure allowance has been made for this.

### **Sinking Fund/Designated Reserve**

The company has a Sinking Fund established in order to pay for the collective purchase of the Freehold of Applewood Court. A total of £2,940 was transferred to the fund in the year to 31 March 2007 to bring the fund to £8,750. The directors proposed that the transfer remain at £2,000 plus money received in respect of transfers/assignments and instalment fees. This was agreed by the meeting.

### **General Reserves**

The company's general reserves increased by £1,458 in the year to £9,900 as at 31 March 2007. This is £3,203 less than at 31 March 2003 when the general reserve stood at £13,104. The directors proposed that the company's reserves continue to be gradually increased over future years to a sum equal to the equivalent of one year's Service Charge income in order to meet unforeseen expenditure. This was agreed by the meeting.

### **Income**

Income consisted of 36 flats with Service Charges of £530 each less £60 where the members had paid in full by 24 June 2007. In addition assignment fees of £400 were received following the sale of apartments during the year. The directors proposed that the £100 charged to reply to specific solicitors' questions at time of sale and the £100 assignment fee be left at the same level in the coming year. All income from this source is used to increase the freehold fund. All members agreed this proposal.

### **Debtors**

It was noted with satisfaction that all owners had paid their Service Charges and there were no amounts outstanding at the year-end.

### **Service Charge**

Under the terms of the lease the company is required to set a Service Charge for the year to 31 March 2009 based on expenditure for the year and recommended transfer to reserves. The meeting referred to the forecast budgets for the year to 31 March 2009. It was proposed that the Service Charge be set at £560.00 including the ground rent of £25.00

for the year to 31 March 2009. As previous years, where full payment is received by 24 June a reduction of £60.00 would be available. Members preferring to pay by instalment may pay by ten equal instalments on the 24th of each month from 24th June. Members unanimously agreed the proposed Service Charges.

**Proposed Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.**

Lorraine Rogers introduced herself to the meeting and advised that she had previously been involved in a similar scheme in Swindon. The benefits of the scheme were outlined and packs distributed. It was agreed that a scheme be set up and that Lorraine should be the scheme co-coordinator. It was agreed that the company would contribute funds towards signage.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.