

Applewood Court Residents (Swindon) Limited

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Minutes of Annual General Meeting of Applewood Court Residents (Swindon) Ltd held at Stratton Park House, Wanborough Road, Swindon at 7.30pm on 15 December 2006.

Present:

John Morris - Director (chairman)
Mark Scott
Mark Denman

Owner apologies:

John Grimwood
Andrew and Sylvia Hetherington - proxy to chairman
Peter Hodrien - proxy to chairman
Ken Hooper - proxy to chairman
Kevin J Lennon
Valarie Marquaire - proxy to chairman
Diana Morris - proxy to chairman
David Morris - proxy to chairman
J Vickers
Karen Winter - proxy to chairman

Director apologies:

David Morris
Stuart Morgan

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 totalled 19 out of the 36 properties.

The Director's report and Financial Statements had been issued on 18 April 2006 to members along with details of the expenditure for the previous year and a forecast for the current year and following three years.

It had been agreed at last year's AGM that Service Charges would be set for the year following at AGM as it was felt by all concerned that owners would welcome advance notice of the Service Charge for the following year.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and agreed to be a true record.

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 directors reported that the gardener had suggested that during the previous year that some replanting should be undertaken to replace plants that were past their best or had died. The gardener has commenced this refurbishment and it is planned to implement a rolling programme in following years.

The gap in the hedge at the rear of the site had been filled again with railings as agreed at last year's AGM. So far further gaps have not been forced into the hedge.

The site fencing was discussed and it had been agreed at last year's AGM that a start should be made on replacing this in the year to 31 March 2007 as the fence posts are rotting away. The meeting agreed that railings would be more effective than fencing. Approximately one third of the fence had been replaced with railings in the year and it was agreed that an additional third be replaced next year with the balance in the year following.

Abandoned cars continue to be a problem. It takes time to remove vehicles, as steps have to be taken to ensure that residents' vehicles are not removed in error.

The problem of rubbish being dumped on the site was discussed. Mr Scott noted that residents of Mannington Lane had recently dumped items in the bin store. It was agreed that the company would write to the resident responsible and advise him that the bin stores were only for residents of Applewood Court.

Trees

It was agreed at last year's AGM that work would commence in the current year on the large trees on site. The trees between far two blocks would be reduced in height by half in the current year and after giving the ground time to adjust, the remaining half would be removed completely in the following year.

Paving

No specific expenditure allowance has been made for the forthcoming year. It was noted that some of the paving was uneven and would need to be re-laid soon.

Communal TV Reception

The communal digital/satellite aerial was upgraded two years ago. However, there continues to be problems in that each block has a separate amplifier that is run off of the electricity supply of one of the apartment owners. Should this supply be interrupted then 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 was agreed that it would be preferable to provide a communal electricity supply to the amplifiers and that these should be moved to a more accessible position for maintenance purposes. It was agreed that a brick "cupboard" be built at the end of each block to house the amplifiers. At the same time as supplying the "cupboards" with communal power they would also be connected by aerial cable to overcome the reception problems by sharing the best reception. The possibility of providing WiFi internet access was also discussed. It was agreed that when the electric and aerial cables are run between blocks that "cat 5" network cables are run at the same time. This would allow for future installation of communal WiFi should owners decide they want this.

Ground rents

These are fixed at £25 per apartment. It was previously agreed by members that the company would make these payments direct to the freeholder on behalf of the leaseholders from the Service Charge.

Electricity for Lighting

The charge for the year appeared high when compared to the previous year. This was for three reasons; a) last year's charge was net of a credit brought forward from the previous year following inaccurate estimated readings b) the installation of additional lighting c) increased electricity prices. The lighting had failed twice during the year. In both cases this was traced to the communal supply located in one of the owner's bin store cupboards being switched off. As part of the exercise to provide TV amplifier cupboards it was agreed that the communal meter and time switch would be moved to a communal cupboard.

Insurance

This had been renewed at a cost of £3,869 (against a budgeted figure of £3,800) for the year.

Lighting Maintenance

As agreed at last year's AGM three additional three lampposts had been erected on the site in the previous year and the budget allowed for the addition of one further lamppost to be installed in the current 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 the previous year.

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) had been treated in the year to 31 March 2007. It was noted that most of the ten porch pillars had gone rotten and required replacing. It was agreed that this work should be undertaken in the year to 31 March 2008.

c) window frames and front doors.

The window frames and front doors on the apartments will cost in the region of £150 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, that 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 was discussed at length. The various options were summarised as follows:

- I. The company fund the treating of doors and window frames by increasing the Service Charge in the year to 31 March 2009 by £150 for all owners and give a discount of £150 to owners who do not wish or require their window frames and door stained.
- II. The company fund the staining by increasing the Service Charge in the year to 31 March 2009 by £100 per owner and give a discount of £50 to all owners who do not wish or require their window frames and door stained.
- III. The company increase the Service Charge in the year to 31 March 2009 for all owners sufficient to pay to treat all window frames and doors of apartments not in UPVc.
- IV. The company increase the Service Charge in the year to 31 March 2009 for all owners sufficient to pay to treat all window frames and doors of apartments not in UPVc and state that this will be the last time these will be treated communally.
- V. The company do not commit owners' funds to treating window frames and doors of apartments.

It was agreed that these options be presented to owners and that owners should decide by majority at the following AGM which option should be pursued.

Roof repairs

No expenditure allowance has been made for the current year to 31 March 2007 however, the directors were aware that some expenditure would be required in future years in order to replace roofing felt close to the soffits. During the previous year one small section had been replaced following a leak.

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 £2,220 was transferred to the fund in the year to 31 March 2006 to bring the fund to £5,810. 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 £1,378 in the year to £8,442 as at 31 March 2006. This is £4,662 less than at 31 March 2003 when the general reserve stood at £13,104. The directors proposed that the company's reserves are 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 £510 each less £60 where the members had paid in full by 24 June 2006. In addition assignment fees of £500 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.

The meeting then moved to the formal agenda.

- 1. The Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2006 were duly received and approved unanimously by the meeting.*
- 2. Retirement of Directors – Under the Articles of Association the directors of the company retire by rotation every three years. Mr S Morgan retired as a director by rotation and the directors proposed that he be re-elected. He was duly re-elected by all members present and represented by proxy.*
- 3. Service Charge - Under the terms of the lease the company is required to set a Service Charge for the year to 31 March 2008 based on expenditure for the year and recommended transfer to reserves. The meeting referred to the forecast budgets for the year to 31 March 2008. 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 2008. 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 agreed to the proposed Service Charges.*

The meeting closed at 9.00pm