

Goulden House Co-operative
General Meeting held via Zoom and In Person
MINUTES OF MEETING 11 May 2022

APPROVED: GM 8 December 2022

Chair: *R Hickie*

ACTION POINTS

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Attendees:

Committee Members:

Richard Hickie (Chair), Rex Wickham, David Taylor, Chris Gomez, Rosario Green, Sasha Savich, Anna Kirilov, Michael Walsh, Niamh Hennessy, Marie Krum, Rocco Tartaro

Residents/Leaseholders:

Remote: PT, MJ C, SC, CS, SA, SF, HB, MJ, WR, LD, FM

In Person: JV, AV, WR, LS, PG, JA, TP, N, JD

Annie Gleason, Estate Manager

Margaret, Estate Office Support Staff

1) Welcome to our General Meeting

The chair welcomed residents to the meeting, both in person and joining via Zoom. The meeting met the quorum requirements. The meeting started at 7pm.

1b) Apologies & Declarations of Interest

A resident (M Patti) supplied apologies as unable to attend. There were no declarations of interest.

2) Minutes of the last GM (23 March 2022) corrections and approval

The minutes were provided via the Goulden House website. First any corrections were requested. A residents asked if the statement about asbestos in the lifts could be double checked. A correction to the word "stack" in item 4, para 9, was made – the correct word is "shaft".

Then the minutes were approved as a true record with these points. There were no actions points.

Matters Arising from Minutes

The chair said there were some queries raised by a resident that were being handled by the office. He noted that due to illness and holiday these were still outstanding but were being processed.

A resident asked if there were any budget updates. The chair replied that there would be mention later in the meeting of the fire door costs [see managers report] and the block electricity costs – the co-op had asked WBC to review the allowances for electricity. The main issue he said the allowances given do not adequately cover tenant expenses. There is ongoing discussion with WBC about this.

The resident asked if a revised budget would be added to the website. The chair said that the actual budget that was approved would be on the website. However he was not sure what the best way to present any changes that needed to be made would be. It would be discussed in the committee.

3) Co-Op Manager's Report (7.14pm)

This was published on the GH website at <https://www.gouldenhouse.org/co-operative-meetings/>

The estate manager Annie (AG) noted the key points. She said she had asked the consultation officers for the two major works for any updates for this meeting. She invited questions on her report.

She gave an update on the recently completed structural survey of the entire site. She said she had just received the completed survey. She said survey took a day longer than expected (2 days total). Included in the survey was the flat roof – a cause for concern over the past 2 years due to large sections holding pooled water, and this concern was noted on the GH Risk Register. The survey found that there is 1 section that will require additional testing, but generally it was in good condition. £15k had been ringfenced in the budget for repairs to the roof. Less positive was that there were many areas across the site showing signs of spalled concrete, and balconies were also a cause of concern.

The completed survey will be sent to WBC and a copy forwarded to the committee, and then would be made available to all residents via the website or the office.

The updates received from the lift consultation officer was that the tendering process was ongoing for the lift major works. Once the tenders are in, the second stage of the consultation process would commence, with leaseholders having the chance to see the tenders and make comments.

In relation to the communal fan major works, the response was that numerous observations had been received from residents from the first consultation period which ended on 10th May. WBC will write to all residents in due course with the outcome of the initial consultation.

5) Any Other Business

The chair noted one question for AOB had been received in advance of the meeting. He invited questions from the floor. The secretary read the question about reducing the frequency of grass cutting on the inner and outer greens. A resident (LD) mentioned she had previously suggested the triangle of grass on Home Road/Bullen street was left uncut in May as part of "No Mow May", an environmental scheme. This had been discussed at the most recent committee meeting who had not decided to leave this grass long. The idea received some positive support in the meeting. A committee member said that concerns had been raised on the grass triangle suggestion about littering and anti-social behaviour although the committee had been supportive of the environmental aims. Another committee members said that the semi-public areas such as the ball court did attract litter already and leaving the area wild could just attract more.

A resident (HB) said the idea for the inner and outer green was simply about not mowing, not creating a wild area (with planting). She added the gardener could deal with some of the other issues with weeds growing on the paving and around the fencing. The chair noted we had to cut the budget for gardening and he already has a lot to manage. AG noted he has 2 visits a month in the

spring/summer. She was aware of the weeds and she would make sure they would be a priority on his second visit in May.

The chair then asked for questions about the lift major works.

A resident (SA) said she'd asked the office for the logs of when the lifts were breaking down. She was told by the office to obtain this info from WBC directly. Discussion followed – in summary WBC did have the most complete information so this was correct, but it was noted that there was a time when we kept an in-house log to make sure the WBC reports were accurate. This was used to bring pressure to bear on WBC to do emergency repairs on the lifts as there had been very frequent breakdowns. The office does receive information where there are call outs and repairs.

A resident (LD) said in her view that we should not be charged for the emergency lift repairs as the council has delayed the lift replacement when it was obvious the replacements should have been done much earlier and were way past their expected life time.

A resident asked how was the proportion paid by each leaseholder was worked out. The chair said it was linked to leaseholder's service charge percentage (which is different for each leaseholder). It was mentioned that it's broadly linked to the size of each flat.

A resident said she had found out via the consultation that leaseholders had already paid for major repairs to the lifts via service charges and was not happy to pay again. She was awaiting responses from WBC. The chair explained that when Major Works are performed by the council the system is that they are one off charges to leaseholders. He noted there is a second consultation which will include quotes for the work. If there are duplications of work already carried out this should show up there, and comments can be made at that stage. He said it was expected that there would be regular maintenance costs for the lifts. Last year there had been a big repair bill but it was absolutely essential work on Lift A and B that was carried out.

The resident said she was not expecting two major works projects that would be billed at the same time [October 2023 expected].

AG responded saying she had had queries from multiple residents about the Major Works timing and where it was initiated from. She said Section 20 Major Works are down to the landlord – in this case Wandsworth Borough Council. She noted that on the lifts, the history was that WBC first entered it into their capital expenditure programme in August 2011. Formal bids for funds were made in October 2018 and approved in January 2019. For the Fans, they date back to Aug 2015 in WBC's system. She said she had made it clear via the Goulden House Risk Register that as the estate manager she was very concerned that 2 sets of Major Works would be running together and on top of the work leaseholders would have to do as a result of the flat door fire risk survey. This survey had been graded priority 1 for health and safety and is also impacting on the insurance for the block. She had asked WBC if it was feasible to do the lifts first and the fans afterwards. WBC advised they were aware of the financial implication but they cannot change the schedule as the works are on their capital expenditure programme out of necessity. She said she had looked for other possible savings. There had been a provision of nearly £300k to replace intercoms. She asked if this could be deferred as we had found an alternative system that was working well "Digicom" and WBC did say this could be deferred but the money would be ring-fenced and if the intercoms failed completely we can advise them the full system would need to be done.

A resident (LD) brought up the Major Works on the fans. She has started a petition with her concerns about the proposed remedies that is in the proposal. She asked what the committee had

been doing about the proposal. She said she wanted to see a CCTV survey done of the fan shafts done first, and secondly a different “option 2” proposal as the interior ducting proposal was widely seen as unacceptable by leaseholders.

The chair said he and the committee agreed with these aims. He said 6 committee members, acting in their capacity as leaseholders, had attended an online consultation with WBC. In this meeting, they had stressed the same points. He pointed out that the management committee legal status means it is down to leaseholders to take any actions not the committee. The management committee is the managing agent for the council.

There was some disagreement about this from residents and it was decided to request clarification of this misunderstanding in writing on the roles and the Major Works process.

AG added a few points about the section 20 major works for clarity. She said 1) Major works are solely a WBC decision. 2) The Co-op can recommend a work can be considered but the ultimate decision rests with WBC as the landlord and freeholder. 3) Prior to her 2019 appointment at GH, in previous jobs she was used to Major Works being done every 3-5 years which gave time for leaseholders to manage costs better. However at GH, the Fans are nearly 5 years overdue. The building regulations changed following the Grenfell tower disaster and a letter was sent to all residents explaining the deferral at the time. They then fell at the same year that the lifts were due to be done. 4) The 5 year plan is produced as a legal requirement for all buyers and indicates all possible expenditure and details upcoming work set by WBC. Additional Items on this plan includes 4th floor walkway and intercoms.

In relation to work done by the committee on behalf of residents, she said the management of the estate has spent 3 years working to remedy negligence that she has never seen in her professional career. Work has included the infrastructure of the site, the policies, procedures, health and safety for all residents including fire safety. She added the site had been poorly maintained (not in relation to major works) prior to her appointment. As an example she cited the communal fire doors – raised as an issue in 2016 but proper remedial action was not done. Leaseholder flat doors, raised in 2016 with letters sent to all leaseholders but no enforcement of the required work carried out. She said her view was that “these are your homes” and she fought for that principle every day. In her time she has ensured the fire safety concerns were all being addressed. This is to protect residents and to make sure the site remains insured.

A resident noted that the situation in Ukraine and Covid had caused the current cost of living crisis and it was not the council’s fault, nor the management committee. She noted we had been given the ability to pay in installments for Major Works.

The chair invited questions on any other matters.

MW raised the question of reopening of the 4th floor terraces. The manager said the structural survey had noted some problems with them but the full report had not yet been issued and we should wait for this. The chair noted that any decision to open the 4th floor terraces would require council approval. MW said they should be opened and offered for the one above his flat to be used as a trial. SS said they were closed for anti-social behaviour, noise pollution, and people used to climb up over the roof to break into properties onto the other side. Another resident said they were a cause of leaks.

Discussion moved to the ground floor garden areas that do not belong to the flats they adjoin.

A resident repeated her point about the major works and the chair repeated that the major works were the council's responsibility.

6) Date of Next Meeting

The proposed date of the next meeting is 20 July 2022. This meeting is the Annual General Meeting when the year end accounts are presented to residents. The date will be confirmed nearer the time.

The chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm.