



Wimbledon Park Co-operative Ltd Annual Report 2014

A message from the Chair

Dear Wimbledon Park Co-operative Ltd members,

I am delighted to present WPC's first-ever Annual Report, which contains highlights from our 2013-2014 financial year and outlines some of our plans for the coming year. The Board is required to provide WPC members with this report each year, so this will be the first of many.

This has been a very successful year, especially considering that last summer the Board was recommending returning management of the estate to Wandsworth Council due to the lack of Board members. However, seven of you stepped up and joined the Board, and we have been able to accomplish quite a lot this year.

We have two very exciting announcements:

1. The long-awaited window replacement project, which will see all the windows on the estate replaced with double glazing, was approved in January 2014 by the Council and is now pencilled in for the 2015-2016 financial year. We have been informed that the work will most likely take place in early 2016. All Council tenants and leaseholders will be contacted regarding the project before it is finalised, and as soon as we have an estimate on costs to leaseholders we will let you know.
2. The Wandsworth Council community payback scheme approved our application to have our railings repainted, at no cost for labour or materials! This will include all our external railings, and other items within the estate such as hand rails and bin chamber doors. This is a huge savings, as we had budgeted £10,000 this year to repaint the railings. If this project is a success we will look to apply to the scheme for further no-cost improvements on our estate. Many thanks to Chay Pulger, the Estate Manager, who was instrumental in our successful application, and to a former Board member who first suggested this approach. Work should start in autumn.

We had very good results from our first-ever resident satisfaction survey in March. Our satisfaction levels were significantly higher in almost all cases compared to the average of the twelve RMOs/TMOs in Wandsworth Council. We have also just received a very good annual monitoring report from the Council, which noted significant improvement since last year. Since the last AGM we also added 23 new members of WPC—welcome!

To all of you, we invite you to join us on the Board. We are residents and leaseholders just like you, and can use your help! Please see the last page for more information about becoming a Board member.

We look forward to working with all residents, leaseholders, employees and partners in the coming year to make Wimbledon Park an even more pleasant place for us all to live and work.

Thank you,

Bernard Koudjo, Chair



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Financial report and budget

Financial Year 2013-2014

For 2013-2014 the budget anticipated various improvement works as well as an increase in the gardening cost due to our new gardening contract, and therefore included a higher level of expenditure than the previous year.

What we didn't anticipate was that last winter would have some of the worst weather recorded for over 250 years, which had a major impact on our expenses. We were required to spend £3,416 on roof repairs for Verebank and the two blocks of Wimbledon Park Court, and £7,592 on blocked drains, and flooding, and rising damp issues.

We also had three voids (when a Council tenant moves out and the flat requires redecorating), and we were required as part of the Decent Homes Standard to upgrade the kitchens and bathrooms of four Council flats that hadn't been touched for more than 40 years. These cost £15,862.

As a result of these factors, our expenditures were about £50,000 higher than in the previous financial year. Nevertheless, we remained within our budget and even managed a higher-than-expected surplus of £3,963.

Financial Year 2014-2015

We received an increase of 1.77% in the management allowance from Wandsworth Council for 2014-2015. In our budget we included an increase in expenditure on various items, including long-overdue tree work at £3,500. The budget anticipates a net surplus of £13,745 for the coming year.

Due to the welfare reform and in particular the so-called 'bedroom tax', we anticipate that some Council tenants will want to downsize, increasing the number of voids, for which we budgeted £10,000. We also budgeted £10,000 for the work to paint the exterior railings, but since approving the budget we have arranged to have this work carried out for free (see first page). We will continue to monitor our expenditures monthly to ensure we remain within our budget.

Surplus funds

Surplus funds accumulated will be re-invested in the estate as improvement projects. We are currently working on a business plan, but WPC members, Council tenants and leaseholders will be consulted before any significant work is done.

WPC membership

Membership in Wimbledon Park Co-operative Ltd is open to any leaseholder or resident aged 18 years or over, and costs £1. There is no limit on the number of members in each residence, but votes are limited to one per flat. To join, please contact the office.

Accomplishments

The Board has spent the last year tackling a large backlog of work that was not addressed by previous Boards. We have met monthly and our Committees and working groups have been meeting frequently outside the Board meetings. Seven of the ten Board members joined at the last AGM, but were quick to get up to speed and contribute. Much of our work this year consisted of things the Board has never done before, and took more time than we anticipated; however, repeat projects such as the residents' survey will be easier in future, as we can build on our experience.

The following pages list the plans laid out at the last AGM, and a status update of what we have accomplished so far.

Accomplishments (continued)

Complete the new Modular Management Agreement (MMA) by October.

- This turned out to require much more work than anticipated at the last AGM, as more than 50 schedules (supporting documents) still remained to be written or revised. The MMA working group has been meeting weekly for months, and seven of the nine chapters and their schedules have been completed and submitted to the Board; the other two should be submitted by the end of August, if not before. Once the Board has approved the entire MMA, we will submit it to you members for approval. We anticipate that will happen in time for the September 2014 General Meeting.

Re-tender for financial services (consultant, accountant, payroll, auditor).

- We have done quite a bit of research on re-tendering, including attending a procurement conference put on by Wandsworth Council for several RMOs, at which we learned that our higher-value contracts may fall under certain EU regulations that dictate how we may advertise for tenders, etc. We have not made as much progress as we had planned so far, due to other more urgent work and because we have had no previous experience to guide us. However, we anticipate that the payroll re-tendering will take place very shortly, followed by the accountant and financial consultant re-tendering in the next few months. We will aim to re-tender for the auditor by the end of the year.

Write a business plan, which has never been done before.

- The Board's business plan task force has been meeting on Saturday mornings and anticipates it will be completed by mid-July.

Update the years-old risk review and write a contingency plan.

- We have not had time to do this yet due to other work.

Carry out a resident satisfaction survey.

- Our first-ever Resident Satisfaction Survey was carried out in March 2014 and reported in the April-June 2014 *Gazette* newsletter. Questionnaires were sent to all 279 flats and to 99 absentee leaseholders. We did not have a very high response rate (55 surveys were completed), but, as mentioned on the first page, the responses we received expressed significantly higher satisfaction overall than residents on the other resident- or tenant-managed estates in Wandsworth. Your comments indicated that the top areas of concern are fly tipping and litter, security, anti-social behaviour, and window replacement.

Survey results are used by the Council to monitor WPC's management of the estate and by the Board to inform our future work. Thank you to all who responded, and we encourage everyone to respond to the future surveys, which will be carried out annually. The data and analysis from this survey will be available on our website shortly.

Set up reviews and development/training plans for the staff; this has never been done.

- A Board member is now the line manager for the Estate Manager and has set up reviews and development/training plans for all the staff.

Carry out a salary review for staff positions; this has also never been done.

- The salary review for the Estate Manager is in progress, and a review of the caretakers' salaries will be done this year.

Continue to look for cost savings, e.g., looking into auto shutoff for office lights.

- We have negotiated better rates for telephone, broadband, and water.

Potentially arrange a social event for residents such as a party or trip.

- We have created a survey to consult you on what sort of events you would like to see. This survey will be sent out in June, and the results will help us develop future social events.

Accomplishments (continued)

RB has suggested that the Board consider changing the gardens to a lower-maintenance plan, as gardening costs will continue to rise. It may be possible to get a gardening student to consult, or we may hire an expert.

- We have not had time to do this yet due to other work. We have two years yet to run on our gardening contract, so will aim to have this completed before it expires.

Spend some of £57k surplus; half should be kept for unexpected expenses (e.g., a large number of voids), which leaves about £28k. The Board will consult residents on how to spend it, but there seems to be interest in painting the railings and fences, which can be done this year rather than as part of cyclical redecorations with the window replacement in 2015. The Board will ask CP to look into estimates.

- Our railings will be painted at no cost! (See the first page.) We are considering other projects as part of the business plan.

Look into grant money to spend on other proposals; ideas include:

- *Additional cycling barriers on pathways.*
- *Removing bricks along pathways and replacing them with grass or other edging.*
- *Enclosing unsightly rubbish and recycling bins at south end of Allenswood.*
- *Installing grills on stairwells of Wimbledon Park Court.*
- *Removing the red bench between Fernwood and the library; this will require consultation with the Council, which installed it.*
Affected residents will be consulted prior any of these projects being done.

- We have accomplished the following:

- New bin enclosure to Allenswood [*Installed*]
- New bin enclosure to Wimbledon Park Court [*Installed*]
- New enclosed bike shelter [*Installed*]
- Oil recycling bin [*Installed*]
- New bin enclosure to 1-19 Wimbledon Park Court [*Approved and awaiting installation*]
- New step lighting to external steps beside Allenswood [*Approved and awaiting installation*]
- New enclosed bike shelter for 1-19 Wimbledon Park Court [*Application in process*]
- The Board confirmed that the red bench could be removed by WPC, but decided not to remove it due to objections from some residents who use it. No further complaints have been received.

During the last year we have also begun a series of 'Meet the Board' sessions, to provide an informal way for residents and leaseholders to ask questions or make suggestions to Board members. We schedule these for different times and days, and welcome more residents to drop by.

Plans for the coming year

In addition to completing the unfinished work listed above, we plan to:

- Replace the map sign by the Southfields library
- Replace the block name signs on all buildings
- Consider what security measures should be undertaken on the estate
- Carry out the overdue tree work (the long-delayed tree survey was completed in May 2014)
- Update the Residents' Handbook
- Look into ways to improve communication with residents, including updating the website content
- Investigate installing solar panels on the roofs of some or all blocks, as a possible source of revenue
- Create a succession/contingency plan to ensure loss of key employees does not affect provision of services
- Ensure the Board and staff are trained in Health & Safety issues (a requirement in the new MMA)
- Increase WPC membership

The Board wants YOU!

If you would like to affect the way Wimbledon Park is run, we invite you to join us on the Board. We are a friendly group of volunteers who are contributing our time and efforts to make Wimbledon Park a better place to live and work. We meet every month, and have specialised Committees that meet at other times convenient to their members.

Here is an insight to what the role entails:

The duties of a Board member working, with other members of the Board are to:

- Ensure WPC complies with its governing documents, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensure WPC pursues its objects as defined in its Rules.
- Ensure WPC uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
- Contribute actively to the Board's work in giving strategic direction to WPC, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- Safeguard the good name and values of WPC.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of WPC.
- Ensure the financial stability of WPC.
- Protect and manage WPC's property ensure the proper investment of WPC's funds.
- Ensure that the Estate Director is appointed and his or her performance is monitored and appraised.
- Ensure that WPC consults its members, residents, leaseholders, and other key stakeholders as and when appropriate.
- Ensure that WPC complies with the terms of its management agreement (MMA) with Wandsworth Council.

Board members are expected to take a full and active role and to use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board reach sound decisions. This will include:

- Scrutinising Board papers before meetings
- Attending Board meetings regularly
- Taking an active role in discussions
- Focusing on key issues and helping the Board to make decisions
- Taking part in working groups and Committees
- Attending two or three training courses per year
- Complying with WPC's Code of Conduct

We have ongoing training available to help us do our work, so don't let lack of experience stop you from joining us! New Board members are nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting. If you are interested but would like to know more before committing, please contact the office and one of us will be happy to discuss it with you!