

Sweet Briar Court Management Limited

15 Windsor Road, Swindon SN3 1JP
Tel 0330 606 1402 Email: admin@farriersclose.rmcweb.site
www.farriersclose.rmcweb.site

Annual General Meeting minutes held at Tesco Community Room, Ocotal Way, Swindon SN1 2EH on 16th August 2018 at 6pm

Present:

C Bailey - proxy for A Baily & R Wilkinson
C Bellinger - director
P Curphy
E Fusco
M Symes
J Morris - Managing Agent and Company Secretary
D Morris - Managing Agent

Attending:

L Curphy
S Hedges

1. Welcome and Introduction

John Morris chaired the meeting and welcomed those attending confirming that the meeting was quorate as there were at least two members present and introduced everyone.

Apologies:

C Coombes
L Crane
J Hawkins
S Panja

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The last available minutes of an AGM are for 11th May 2005. These are available on the company website. A member offered to look through their paperwork to determine if they had minutes for any more recent meetings.

3. Formal Resolutions

- a) Resolution 1 - To re-appoint Janet Hawkins as director
- b) Resolution 2 – To re-appoint Carl Bellinger as director

These formal resolutions were both separately unanimously agreed by those attending.

It was noted that Michael Griffin has recently sold his flat and the new owner took his place as a member on 10th August 2018. Mike therefore automatically retired as a director. The members present expressed their appreciation to him for his service and his role in appointing new managing agents.

3. Accounts

The accounts for the financial year to 31st March 2018 were previously made available on the company website and further copies made available at the meeting. John Morris provided an overview of the accounts, commenting on some of the previous year's costs, highlighting window cleaning as an example. The cost in 2015/16 prior to the new management company taking over, was £3,219.62, compared with the cost in 2017/18 of £240.00.

It is considered good practice to maintain company reserves at a level of approximately two years' worth of service charge income to cover unforeseen costs. The current level of reserves for Sweet Briar Court Management Limited is £16,000. The level of reserves based on current service charges would be just under £88,000. It was agreed that the service charge reserves should be increased gradually over several years to a more appropriate level.

4. Service Charge Arrears

Other than members who are up-to-date with instalments the following members are in arrears with their service charge payments:-

1	House	£340.00
11	Flat	£1,260.00
23	Flat	£1,008.00
35	Flat	£1,365.00
63	Flat	£1,260.00
67	Flat	£1,155.00
81	Flat	£756.00

6. Maintenance Issues

Site

a) External Lighting

In March 2017 when the new management company commenced there were no street lights working on the site. An electrician was engaged who discovered this was due to corroded control mechanisms in each of the lampposts. One of the lampposts showed signs that its internal mechanism had been on fire and was so badly damaged it had to be replaced. In addition the day/night sensors were all located in deep undergrowth. Repairs were made and the bulbs in the lampposts were also changed to LED's which are brighter and more energy efficient. Members commented that the new bulbs illuminate the area well.

b) Electricity

The electricity supplier has been changed from the commercial contract with British Gas to Green Energy UK. The price per unit used is slightly higher but there is a significant benefit as there is no standing charge for each of the five meters.

c) Grounds

The previous gardeners had not maintained the site to a good standard and therefore a new gardening contractor was appointed who has had a considerable task to bring the site back up to a reasonable standard. Comments were made by members that they would prefer that the gardener did not leave grass and hedging cuttings on the site. The management company was requested to speak to the gardener and ask for a revised quote to include for removal of the garden waste.

d) Fly-tipping

This has been a huge problem. Large furniture items, car parts, cardboard boxes, etc., are fly-tipped in the area between flats 61-71 and flats 75-85 and also in the bin store area of flats 11-23.

After the new agents commenced they inspected the site and found that the understairs electricity cupboards in each block were full of items some of which were highly flammable, including petrol. All residents had been informed that they should remove any personal items as the cupboards were not to be used for storage. The cupboards were then emptied by a waste removal company. A member advised that they leave notes on items of rubbish discard in communal areas of block 25-35, and on some occasions these items are then removed, however, in most cases the waste removal company have to be paid to take them away.

e) CCTV

Following the above item, members discussed whether the site should install CCTV cameras as a deterrent to fly tippers. There are several systems available. The cheaper off-the-shelf 4 camera system including installation would cost about £400.00. For a more flexible PC based system the initial cost would be higher. It was agreed that initially cameras should be installed over the areas that are currently experiencing a problem with rubbish. The system would then be extended to gradually cover all the bin store areas and entrances on the site.

Flats

a) Cleaning

New cleaners have been appointed and are providing a much better service.

b) Lighting

Most of the internal lighting was not functioning when the new managing agents started. During the last year all the internal lights have been replaced with motion activated LED lights. All the internal vacuum switches have been disconnected or removed. This has resulted in a reduction of electricity usage and a more reliable illumination of the communal areas.

c) Electrics

Communal electric installations in blocks of flats should be tested by a qualified electrician every 5 years and an Electrical Installation Condition Report provided. No evidence of any previous tests existed and therefore an electrician was engaged to certify the communal electrics in all five blocks. When the inspection was undertaken a number of areas were highlighted and these have been attended to where necessary.

d) Insurance

The freeholder previously insured the buildings through a related sister company. Last year the managing agents on the director's instruction insured the building with an unconnected company to substantially reduce the cost. Long protracted disagreements with the freeholder and their solicitor ensued. However, the cost saving was considerable as previously the insurance cost was £8,781.41 as opposed to £2,763.83 now. If the freeholder and its solicitors continue to apply pressure to insure the building with their agents an option would be to exercise "Right to Manage" for each block in order to give the right to place the insurance policy wherever leaseholders wish. All leaseholders will be advised in due course of any changes that will be proposed to assist in this matter.

e) Communal Doors

Following numerous site inspections and consultations with the directors it was decided that owing to the poor condition of the communal doors that the worst three doors should be replaced with mild steel communal

entrance doors. These have now been ordered and are scheduled to be installed towards the end of September. It is intended that the two remaining front communal doors will be replaced at a later stage as funds permit.

f) Communal Windows

Site inspections have highlighted concerns that the communal windows on the first floor of each block are in a poor condition. The cost of replacement of the windows is approximately £400.00 each and the meeting agreed to proceed with this work.

g) Door Access

Work commenced last year on installing a more secure Paxton door access control security system on the communal doors. Residents and leaseholders are issued with two fobs per flat and additional fobs can be obtained by paying a £20.00 refundable security deposit and £2.00 postage and programming fee. It was agreed that this system will be installed on the remaining three blocks at the same time as the replacement communal door installation.

h) Wi-Fi

In order to operate the door access control system an internet connection was installed on the site. This is via a 4G connection that is currently working well. As a benefit of the connection being available it was decided to introduce a residents' free Wi-Fi service that will be operated with password access security. This system is already in operation in flats 49-59 and flats 61-71, where the door access control system is already installed. Over the next couple of months the Wi-Fi will be extended to cover the rest of the site flats.

i) Health & Safety

- a) Over the last year the communal electrical system has been tested, maintained and certified as safe.
- b) Internal LED sensor activated lighting has been installed. This incorporates emergency lighting and a far safer activation system to ensure that the communal areas are well lit and lights do not switch off when residents may be half way up a flight of stairs.
- c) The electric cupboards under the stairs have all been emptied and numerous hazardous and potentially flammable were removed.
- d) Following the Grenfell fire there has been a lot of discussion relating to fire safety. During the purchasing process, the managing agent has for a number of years, asked each new purchaser to sign a Health and Safety and Insurance Warranty form. This warrants, for example, that for their property they obtain an EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) and provide a fire blanket in the kitchen, a fire extinguisher and two smoke detectors. That no portable gas cylinder/canister or paraffin heaters will be taken into the property and that if residents might have a particular problem with mobility that the management is notified as this could be helpful in case of evacuation in an emergency. The meeting agreed that the provision of this Warranty by a purchaser should be formally adopted as a rule as allowed under the terms of the lease.

j) Re-decoration

It was agreed that this will be deferred until other work has been completed.

k) Bin Stores

This presents a continual problem and members hoped that the installation of the CCTV system and signage will act as a suitable deterrent.

l) Fascias & Soffits

Although these are in a deteriorating condition it was decided that the other work agreed should be completed prior to beginning the work on the fascias and soffits.

m) Flooring

Although the flooring in the communal areas is past its best it was agreed that the building should be made secure prior to this work being undertaken.

n) **Vandalism**

There is a long list of items that have been vandalised over the last year. Mainly entrance door locks and doors, much of the signage has been removed and persons have tampered with and sabotaged the understairs electric cupboard locks.

7. Budget & Service Charge for 2019/20

The budget and service charges for the coming financial were discussed in detail and the members present agreed to leave the service charge for 2019/20 the same as for the current year which is £340.00 for the common areas (i.e. the grounds) paid by all members and £920.00 for the common parts (i.e. buildings costs) paid in addition for the flats.

8. Management Charge

It was proposed that the managing agent fee is increased to £5,200.00 for the year commencing 1st April 2019. This compares to £10,084.18 charged by G.E.M., the previous management company. This was agreed by all members present.

9. Any Other Business

i) **Policy regarding replacing individual flat doors**

A member asked about the policy relating to replacing the individual flat entrance doors. He was advised that the doors should match the existing doors and be fire safe to the same standard as the current doors. A fire safety certificate should be sent to the management company to hold on file if the front door is replaced.

ii) **Trees**

Unfortunately some of the larger and more established trees on the site had to be removed in November 2017. The advice from the arborologist was that they were too large and close to the buildings for the safety of the residents and buildings. A tree survey was carried out and will be repeated every two years to ensure that the trees stay in a manageable condition.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.47pm.