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**Wellington Mills Housing Co-operative
Annual General Meeting
Held on Thursday 21st September 2023 at 7:00pm, Oasis Academy**

Present: Charlotte Axelson (CA, MC Chair), Alistair Crosby (AC, MC Secretary, Minutes), Sheila Smith (SS, MC Assistant Secretary), Frances Murphy (FM, incoming MC co-chair), Richard Craig (RC, MC member), plus 24 other residents. *This exceeds the quorum of 25 members.*

In attendance: Roseline Mann (RM, Estate Director), Lucy Sudbery (LS, Lambeth TMO Liaison Officer)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Kate Thompson (MC Treasurer), Peter Lane (MC member), Olivia Kaplan (MC member), Sarah Gomez (MC member), Brad Barker, Maria Parry Burns, Margaret Pope, Jane Gelder, Ruth Sharvell, Bridget Sargesson, Penny Averill, Nick Flesher and Bridget Shield.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20th October 2022

There were no comments or corrections, and they were approved by a **VOTE** (Prop: SS, Sec: Paul Cottrell (PCI), In favour: 29, Against: 0, Abstentions: 0).

3. Election of Management Committee (MC) and Officers for 2023/4

The following members of the MC were proposed and approved by a **VOTE** (Prop: Carole Donaghy (CD), Sec: Elaine Whittock (EW), In favour: 29, Against: 0, Abstentions: 0).

- Charlotte Axelson: Co-Chair
- Frances Murphy: Co-chair
- Alistair Crosby: Secretary
- Kate Thompson: Treasurer
- Sheila Smith: Assistant Secretary
- Pam Dockerill: Member

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- Tim Prichard: Member
- Olivia Kaplan: Member
- Sarah Gomez: Member
- Peter Lane: Member
- Richard Craig: Member
- Brad Barker: Member

4. Annual report from the MC Chair and adoption of audited financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2023

CA reminded everyone of the short annual report from the MC sent out with the papers for this meeting and gave a summary of the key points and her personal reflections.

The MC were sorry that the previous Estate Director, Anthony Ogbue, had elected to leave after such a short time in post, but were delighted that RM had agreed to step into his shoes. RM brings a wealth of experience to the role, and the MC are confident that she will serve the Estate extremely well. A new Housing Officer, Adesoye Imevbore (usually shortened to Ade), has been appointed on a six-month temporary contract, which the MC hopes will become permanent. Ade brings a lot of experience with housing management and Lambeth Council and is settling in well.

The management of the Estate has authorised a number of welcome improvements over the last year. The pensioner blocks have been redecorated, broken fences have been repaired and repainted, more CCTV cameras have been added, and substantial improvements have been made to the Large Playground site.

Unfortunately, we have noticed a slight increase in incidents of anti-social behaviour this year, especially rough sleeping on the estate. CA requested that all users of the Large Playground ensure it is locked when not in use.

CA noted that we now have updated HSE guidelines that have been approved by Lambeth and our human-resources advisors at Peninsula, which RM will henceforth use to brief contractors. CA thanked PCI for his invaluable advice during the drafting process.

CA explained that the MC are considering a number of longer-term improvements to the estate. The technology in the intercom system is obsolete and increasingly unreliable and RM is making enquiries about how best to upgrade it. RM is also starting to appraise more general improvements to estate security. The MC are furthermore proposing to remove some non-load-bearing walls in the garages to enable larger cars to park there and the future installation of electric charging infrastructure. This project would also involve installing smaller storage units that could be rented at a lower cost (and with less dirt) than a whole garage. Given that around 30 garages are vacant at the moment, Lambeth are receptive to hearing our business case. Finally, the Estate's 50th anniversary is coming up in December

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2025 and the MC would like to commission a commemorative book or short film – but to do this, they need contributors and reminiscences; any volunteers would be very gratefully received.

CA then discussed ongoing problems with the last set of Major Works and with communications with Lambeth in general. Many residents continue to experience problems with their hot water pipes and HIUs; please report problems to the office as well as to Lambeth, so we can build up a picture of whether there are systematic issues. CA thanked Patricia Cryan (PCn) for setting up the Leaseholder Sub-Group, who have worked diligently to understand inconsistencies and errors in service charges and works bills over the last few years. All leaseholders have now received substantial rebates (CA's understanding is that the process of securing rebates on other estates has been much more fraught).

Finally, CA discussed the upcoming Major Works on the roof, windows, and cladding. At the meeting with Lambeth's assistant director of works, Andy Marshall, in April (to which all residents were invited), it was declared that the works would be complete by the end of the financial year. CA felt this was unlikely given that Section 20 notices have not yet been issued but noted that surveyors had recently been round the Estate and reports were due shortly. PCI explained that tenants had recently been asked what colour of front door they wanted. CA was aware of this, and that the MC had fed back that most colours were not compliant with the Estate's brown colour scheme. CA explained that resident involvement in scrutinising the works will be essential, and that a Major Works Sub-Group (MWSG) was being set up for this purpose. So far, the MWSG had seven members, all of whom will bring valuable skills and experience. PCI said he would like to join too, to which CA expressed her sincere thanks. The first meeting of the MWSG will be next week.

Sandra Sykas-Taylor (SST) explained that she was on the MC at the time of the last major works. Then, Lambeth were not interested in listening to residents, and even walked out of one meeting. SST was not optimistic that things would be different this time. Any influence that we do have, we should ensure we use fully. CA replied that she has a dialogue with Andy Marshall and that our local ward councillor is also applying pressure. Ultimately, the MC and MWSC can only try their best.

CD was worried about inconsistencies in service charges, reporting energy costs varying from £2000 to £4000 for similar flats in different blocks. CA explained that there is a formula based on rateable values. CD was aware of this but felt that the rateable values did not always make sense.

CA then added that in June, the MC were invited to make submissions to Lambeth's Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee. Uniquely amongst TMO attendees, all our recommendations were accepted by the Committee, which asked the director of Housing Services, Lynette Peters, to report back in 3 months.

Martin Mulloy (MM) asked if the estate had considered employing its own surveyors in advance of the upcoming works. EW noted that we did this for the previous works, paid out of the restricted surplus funds. The subsequent report did succeed in persuading Lambeth to make some beneficial changes to the works. CA replied that it was in the remit of the MWSG to recommend employment of a consultant.

Nicolette Bagnall (NB) felt that normal people on the estate were not being kept up to date and that the MC needed to communicate better. CA agreed that NB had a good point, and that maybe the MC could

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produce a short bulletin after meetings. There was a general consensus that this was a good idea. MM added that the MWSG also needed to produce regular newsletters. CA promised to look at both ideas (**ACTION**).

AC then summarised the 2022/3 audited financial statements. Although the co-operative made a loss of approximately £31,000, this includes reserves expenditure (i.e., improvements) of £34,000, and total reserves remain healthy at approximately £550,000. AC noted that the Estate used to consistently run at a profit and that the recent reduction of allowances from Lambeth, plus cost inflation, had put pressure on operating costs, which the MC needed to seek ways to reduce. However, that is a separate issue to the spending of historic reserve funds, which are intended to be spent on improvements to benefit all residents, and which have sat in a bank account for far too long. In other words, the plans to “spend less” on operating costs but “spend more” on improvements are not inconsistent. There was a question about what interest the reserve funds earned. AC replied that the rate of 3.4% was very good for a standard bank account.

After a **VOTE** (Prop: EW, Sec: CA, In favour: 28, Against: 0, Abstentions: 1), the audited financial statements were approved.

5. Resolution for Wellington Mills Housing Co-operative to continue to manage Wellington Mills properties as per the terms of the Management Agreement with Lambeth Borough Council

This motion was approved by a **VOTE** (Prop: SS, Sec: CD, In favour: 29, Against: 0, Abstentions: 0).

6. Appointment of auditors for the financial year 2022/3

CA proposed to keep our current auditors (K A Johnson chartered accountants).

The motion was approved by a **VOTE** (Prop: Simon Hayley (SH), Sec: EW, In favour: 29, Against: 0, Abstentions: 0)

7. Any other AGM business

None.

Meeting finished at 7:50 pm