



Dear Co-op members,

Welcome to this year's Wellington Mills Annual General Meeting. This is your chance to raise concerns about how the estate is being run. We very much hope you can attend.

This year has been a busy one for the Estate. In terms of staffing, in February we officially appointed Roseline Mann to the position of Estate Director. We were impressed with the energy, diligence, knowledge and warmth she brought to the role during her six-month probation. At the same time, we said goodbye to Adesoye Imevbore as Housing Officer after the end of his temporary contract. We then took the opportunity to slightly adjust the way the office is run: the Housing Officer role will now be part-time, and we will also train an apprentice. Doing so will help us save costs and give back to the wider community. In April, we appointed Priscilla Addy as Housing Officer, and welcomed Jai as our apprentice. Unfortunately, Priscilla left us unexpectedly in June to take up a position with Lambeth Council and Jai also moved on, so in July we appointed Desiree Tavernier-Gustave as Housing Officer, and a new apprentice (Amani-Louise Rumble) started work in mid-September. Please join us in making both Desiree and Amani feel welcome.

This year has seen several improvements to the estate. We installed additional CCTV cameras to further improve estate security. We installed a new intercom system, as the old one had become unreliable and the fixed telephone lines that supported it will become obsolete next year. We also purchased six new secure cycle storage racks for the space under the "bridge to nowhere" and refurbished one of the garages as a dedicated cycle storage space. There are still spaces available – if interested, please contact the office. We are also progressing other initiatives such as converting some of the garage space to accommodate wider vehicles and future electric charging. To mark the estate's upcoming 50th anniversary year in 2025/6, we have established an oral history group, and are planning other projects such as properly displaying the two historic millstones in the Large Playground. We are very keen to hear your thoughts on these and other ideas you might have.

Our relationship with Lambeth Council has continued to be frustrating, although the staff and Management Committee do their best to communicate constructively and establish effective working relationships. Nowhere is this lack of communication more apparent than with the Major Works: despite being told in an all-estate meeting in April 2023 that the works to the roofs, windows and cladding would be *finished* by the end of that year, Section 20 notices have still not been received. We know that this brings worry and uncertainty, especially to leaseholders as costs are likely to be large. To improve matters, this year we stood up a Major Works Sub-Group, chaired by Doug Wright, to scrutinize the proposals and oversee the works when they start. The group has already reviewed the expert survey report commissioned by Lambeth and are in the process of commissioning their own independent surveyors. We also

know that the performance of the hot water system installed during the *previous* set of major works is still not up to scratch and are considering commissioning further expert advice on how to proceed. Please, as always, make sure you report any problems with your HIU to the office.

You will see from the attached accounts that the co-operative ran at a loss of £55,417 during the last financial year, although this figure includes planned reserves expenditure of £38,083 on improvements and redecorations. Energy costs, in particular, were very high, and the allowance from Lambeth has not increased sufficiently to cover inflation. Total cash assets are approximately £540,000. Much of this accumulated money is historic and we remain committed to using it for residents' benefit; nevertheless, we must continue to seek opportunities to reduce operating costs without damaging the quality of services on the Estate. Changes to office staffing, the new cheaper-to-maintain intercom system, careful management of maintenance and redecorations, and expected reductions in electricity bills should all help us reduce expenditure over the next year.

As a TMO, we enjoy more freedom to manage our affairs than most estates. However, to use that freedom properly requires an engaged Management Committee. We are grateful to everyone who gives their time to help us, but we are also aware that we draw our members from a small pool. Please do consider joining, either at election time next July, or as a co-opted non-voting member at any time of the year (subject to the maximum size of 15 members). We have one evening meeting every month, which you can attend in person or online. No further commitments are required.

If the Management Committee is not for you, we also have several active sub-groups, which are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers. The Communications Group produced five issues of "More Welly" this last year. Members of the Gardening Group have also been busy. The winter walkaround with the gardener is planned for November, where plans for the following seasons will be discussed. On the Health and Safety side, there were four estate inspections attended by residents, which highlighted issues that the office will undertake to resolve. A list of dates for future inspections is shown on the Office notice board. Finally, the Social Group arranged a winter pizza evening and a summer party for residents, as well as weekly coffee mornings in the refurbished large playground. The dates and times are posted on the notice boards at the start of each month.

Best wishes,

The Management Committee

September 2024