



Dear Co-op members,

Welcome to this year's Wellington Mills Annual General Meeting. As ever, there are certain formalities to get through, but ultimately the purpose of the meeting is to give you the opportunity to raise your concerns about how the estate is being run and the changes that are likely to happen in the next few months. We very much hope you can attend.

This last year has been an eventful one for Wellington Mills. After just over a year of service, our former Estate Director, Anthony Obgue, decided to take up a position elsewhere. We thank him for his many valuable contributions to the running of the estate. We appointed our former Housing Officer, Roseline Mann, to the position of Estate Director, effective 1st September. Roseline understands Wellington Mills well, having worked here since 2018, and we look forward to the energy, initiative, and expertise she will bring to the role. As of 1st September, we also welcome Adesoye Imevbore as our new Housing Officer, initially on a six-month contract. Please join us in making him feel welcome.

This year has seen several improvements to the estate. We have redecorated the pensioner blocks and improved the fencing, and we now have CCTV cameras covering all entrances and approaches to the bin rooms. The cameras have already helped us identify the perpetrators of incidents of anti-social behaviour. You will notice that the large playground site now has a water supply, extra planting, and new benches; the hope is that it will gradually become a verdant, shady space for all residents to enjoy. The summer party in July officially inaugurated the improved site and was a great success, with a children's entertainer, raffle, food, and drink. We are also progressing other initiatives such as replacing the ageing intercom system, converting some of the garages to accommodate wider vehicles and future electric charging, installing extra cycle storage, further improving estate security, and creating a book or exhibition to mark the estate's 50th anniversary year in 2026. We are very keen to hear your thoughts on these and other projects.

Our relationship with LB Lambeth has continued to be problematic, although the Management Committee and estate staff try to communicate constructively and establish effective working relationships. Many residents still experience problems with the new heating/hot water system; tenants' heating and hot water service charges have increased dramatically, and leaseholders are still struggling to receive clear, accurate justifications for the large bills they received. Please continue to report any problems you have to the office as well as to Lambeth so that we can build a picture of whether there are systemic faults to the system or maintenance programme which won't be solved by *ad hoc* repairs to individual properties. New meters are being installed now to enable charges to reflect usage more accurately. However, we have been told that the work being done now is simply to install the hardware, we do not yet have any information about how the new charging will be tested or when it will begin.

Lambeth managers held an estate meeting this April where they announced a range of works (due to begin this financial year) to renew roofs, windows, and cladding. At the time of writing, we have received no detailed work programme or timeline, and the required 'Section 20' consultation notices have not been issued to leaseholders. However, we have been assured that this information will be issued very soon: surveyors working for Lambeth have already begun inspecting the external fabric of the estate.

Those of you who were able to attend the estate meeting in April will recall Lambeth assuring us that they wanted to work with us closely to ensure the smooth running and successful outcome of the project. We are keen to engage with them on this, so are setting up a major works group to contribute residents' viewpoints to the planning and implementation of the project and to ensure effective communication with Lambeth and the project contractors. Thank you to the seven members who have already volunteered and please do let us know if you would also like to be involved.

You will see from the attached accounts that the co-operative ran at a loss of £30,657 during the last financial year, although this figure includes reserves expenditure of £34,103 on improvements such as CCTV and redecorations. Total cash assets are approximately £550,000. Much of this accumulated money is historic and we remain committed to using it for the benefit of all residents; nevertheless, we must continue to seek opportunities to reduce operating costs without damaging the quality of services on the estate.

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 very small pool. Please do consider joining, either at election time in 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, and 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 and have started in-person meetings again. Members of the Gardening Group have replanted the low-level herb bed in Mead Row and have started an initiative to remove the moss from areas across the estate. 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 a number of issues. Anthony immediately prioritised the problems and arranged remedial repairs. A list of dates for future inspections is shown on the Office notice board. Finally, the Social Group arranged a Marie Curie fund raising tea party and a summer party for residents. Weekly coffee mornings located in the refurbished large playground are currently taking place. The dates and times are posted on the notice boards at the start of each month.

Best wishes,

The Management Committee

14th September 2023