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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 and connect with your fellow residents. We very much hope you can attend.

For those of you who are unable to attend, below is a short summary of the year.

December will mark the 50th anniversary of the first residents moving into the Estate. It is a significant occasion, and a time to remember and celebrate the history of the co-operative and of the many people who have lived here. We are grateful to the 50th Anniversary Group (Charlotte Axelson, Frances Murphy, Sheila Smith and Bridget Shield) who have done a huge amount of work to mark the occasion, including organizing a well-attended exhibition at the start of July, setting up an oral history group, and writing an anniversary website that will go live this autumn. In December itself, we plan to host a party to celebrate – look out for announcements nearer the time.

In terms of office staffing, Roseline Mann has continued to do an excellent job as Estate Director. We have, however, seen more turnover than we could like of the Housing Officer position: Desiree Tavernier-Gustave left unexpectedly in October; her replacement, Paul Rickards, joined in November, but also left unexpectedly in May. Since then, Zara Begum has been working on a temporary contract whilst the Management Committee reviews the responsibilities and remuneration of the Housing Officer role. Amani Louise Rumble continues to do well in her apprenticeship and has settled in well to the office.

Regrettably, despite the best efforts of the Management and Major Works Committees, we have little more clarity about when the Major Works to the windows, roof and cladding will begin than we did when we wrote to you this time last year. As you may recall, we were told by Lambeth in an all-estate meeting in April 2023 that the works would be finished by the end of that year; however, two and a half years later, Section 20 notices have still not been issued. The latest information from Lambeth is that a small fraction of the total £3.88M funding has been approved for the 2025/6 financial year and that the works are expected to start in Spring 2026. Whether the budget is available for the remainder of the work is unclear. Nevertheless, the Major Works Sub-Group, chaired by Doug Wright, is ready to scrutinize any proposals and oversee the works when they start. The group has commissioned their own independent surveyors and are planning a pilot window refurbishment to determine whether the existing timber frames can be retained rather than replaced with aluminium or UPVC. We are also exploring whether maintenance of the cladding, which is starting to look very scruffy in places, can be taken over by the Estate with a small levy to residents to cover costs.

You will see from the attached accounts that the co-operative achieved a profit of £12,591 during the last financial year (which includes reserve expenditure). Given the high ongoing costs of energy and overall rises in contractor costs, this is a testament to the diligent efforts of the Estate Director to reduce costs. Total reserves are approximately £510,000. Much of this accumulated money is historic and we remain committed to using it for residents’ benefit; we are considering several potential projects, which we will bring to the General Meeting in due course.

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. Any resident can also attend as an observer. In terms of the committee, we welcomed Lauren Thomas as our new Treasurer and Katie Barker as a new committee member. Paul Cottrell and Brad Barker stepped down as committee members, and Kate Thompson and Richard Cunningham stepped down both as committee members and Treasurer and Co-Chair, respectively. We thank them all for their many contributions to the committee.

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 noticeboard. Finally, the Social Group arranged several well-received get-togethers for residents, as well as weekly coffee mornings in the refurbished large playground. The dates and times are posted on the noticeboards at the start of each month.

Best wishes,

The Management Committee

September 2025