

**BULSTRODE COURT MANAGEMENT LIMITED (BCM)  
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**HELD ON MONDAY 25 JUNE 2017 AT 7:00PM**

**AT THE BULL HOTEL, OXFORD ROAD, GERRARDS CROSS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, SL9 7PA**

**ATTENDED BY:**

The Board

G Coote (GC)	Flat 48 (Director & Chairman)
V Mortimer (VM)	Flat 7 (Director)
G Satchinathanathan (GS)	Flat 11, 12, 25 (Director)
J O'Riordan (JO)	Flat 65 (Director)
P Inniss (PI)	Flat 1 (Director)
L Grimme (LG)	Flat 50 (Director)

Shareholders

M Nisbet (MN)	Flat 3
J Chambers (JC)	Flat 6
D Mortimer (DM)	Flat 7
J & J Quarren Evans (JQE)	Flat 17
C Key (CK)	Flat 30
Mrs R Danner (RD)	Flat 33
Mr Turner (RT)	Flat 35
J Wright (JW)	Flat 36
P Mullally (PM)	Flat 57, 58, 74

Proxies

J Mullally (JM)	Flat 60
-----------------	---------

Other

B Leonard (BL)	David Charles Property Consultants (DCPC) – The Managing Agents
----------------	---

**Minutes:** BL

---

**Agenda was as per points 1-6 below:**

**1. Introduction, Apologies & Proxies**

- GC welcomed all, invited all to contribute and introduced himself and the board: VM, GS, JO, PI, LG and then BL.
- GC documented the apologies as follows:
  - Flat 9 – Mr & Mrs Dibble
  - Flat 23 – Mr Grinberg
  - Flat 44 – Mr Harrison
  - Flat 60 – Mrs L Mullally

GC confirmed the proxies as follows:

- Flat 9 – Nominated 'The Chair'
- Flat 23 – Nominated Mr D Mortimer
- Flat 44 – Nominated 'The Chair'
- Flat 60 – Nominated John Mullally

## **2. Accept the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting**

- No comments.
- Accepted.

## **3. Accept the Service Charge Accounts for Year End 31 December 2017**

- No comments.
- Accepted.

## **4. Resignation & Appointment of Directors**

- GC confirmed that Lisa Mullally has resigned.
- There were no other resignations.
- GC asked if anyone present wished to join the Board & explained what the role involved.
- No-one came forward to join the Board.
- The current Board of Directors will continue to serve.

## **5. Overview of Past Year & Future Plans**

GC gave an overview of the past year as follows:

- The Directors continue to attend regular board meetings with BL to discuss matters arising and also communicate extensively via email.
- GC took this opportunity to extend a thank-you to his fellow Board members, including Lisa Mullally, for their hard work and support during the past year.

### Caretakers:

- The caretakers: John, Gary and Tony continue to be responsible for the cleaning and minor maintenance of the common parts and grounds. John's daughter also sometimes provides cover.
- The caretakers have been provided with a new (more powerful diesel) 'pressure washer' so they are periodically cleaning the entrances, pillars and garage areas.

### Changes/ General Maintenance Items of Note:

- The wall at the front that was knocked over by persons unknown was rebuilt.
- The fittings in the streetlamps were converted to LED to promote longevity and reduce costs.
- The warranty on the gate intercom unit has now expired. As a result, any changes or updates to the system will incur a charge of £30.00 to the applicable Leaseholder's account.
- The warranty on the gates has similarly expired, and an annual servicing contract will shortly be incepted.
- CCTV cameras to monitor the entrance gates has recently been installed, though is yet to be commissioned. The system that has been installed has the capacity to be expanded to cover other areas of the Estate and this will be reviewed in due course subject to available funds.
  - RT queried the memory capacity of the CCTV footage. GC & BL are unsure of the capacity at this time but they will be attending a site demonstration prior to commissioning the system at which time this question will be raised.

### Grounds

- Since their appointment in 2015, J & J Greencare continue to maintain the grounds to a good standard.
- GS 'heads up' the gardening sub-committee, working alongside VM and also with input from LG and they have done an excellent job in making improvements within the grounds.
- Some tree-works were also undertaken to remove the dead oak tree and to reduce the height of a conifer.

### Lifts:

- There is a programme of planned maintenance, as well as some unplanned break-downs; there are currently no major issues.

#### Roofs:

- The roof covering on Block A has undergone some maintenance work, with a further area to be worked on in the next month to prevent water ingress into the top floor flats.

#### Signage:

- Directional signage has been installed within Block D.

#### Televisual Equipment:

- Some equipment in Block A required an upgrade to restore service.

#### Windows in the Common Areas

- The common part windows have been replaced for upvc, making a big improvement. There has been a lot of positive feedback from the residents.
  - RT queried who was in charge of closing the windows – eg in the event of adverse weather when the caretakers are not on site. It was agreed that the only sensible option was for the person opening them to ensure they are closed again.
  - LG advised that she has received a report that one of the windows in Block B aren't closing. BL will ask the caretakers to check and advise.

GC gave an overview of the on-going projects as follows:

#### Balconies:

- The on-going external works project to repaint the balconies is on-going and those Leaseholders whose balconies have not yet been painted will be contacted for access this summer, with the work expected to complete this year.
- Unfortunately Dan (the decorator) has recently taken on another job and is unable to continue with the balcony project. Those present expressed their sadness at this news and wished Dan well.
- GC is in the process of appointing another contractor "Dan #2" so the works will recommence soon.

GC gave an overview of the future plans as follows:

#### Block D Doors:

- The replacement of the doors to match the better quality doors installed with Block A-C is being considered and quotations have been sought.
  - PM asked when this project was likely to happen. GC confirmed that this project was subject to available funds, the replacement of the windows and render band painting already being scheduled in for the current year.
  - There was a general discussion about the aesthetics of the doors, that some Leaseholders have replaced their doors without permission and the fact that they were not fire rated. The doors would have been to the current standards at the time they were installed (Bulstrode Court has a get out policy), and with replacement 'on the agenda' there is no point in pursuing those that have altered their doors without permission.
  - PM asked if, in the meantime, an authorised colour of paint could be sanctioned for those Leaseholders willing to redecorate their doors directly to improve the appearance. GC undertook to discuss this at the next Board meeting and advise.

#### Bin-Stores:

- Planning approval for the modification of the bin-stores in order to house larger 1000 capacity euro bins is awaited.
- The project is on-going, and further advices will be communicated once the works are scheduled.
  - CK asked if we would begin using the bin store locks again. JR commented that from memory those locks were installed to deter rough sleepers. The need for locks on the bin-stores is probably obsolete owing to the gate installation, however this could be considered when the doors are changed.

- MN asked whether all of the bins would be under cover (at present at Block A some of the bins are outside of the bin store). GC confirmed that yes, the intention of the project is to house a smaller number of larger bins within the bin-stores.

#### Block Entrances – External:

- The replacement of the main entrance doors is being considered.
- The replacement of the main entrance lights is being considered.
  - In the meantime, the entrances have been jet-washed and the re-painting of the existing doors is being considered.
  - The installation of topiary at the entrances is being considered.

#### Replacement of Roof Coverings:

- It is anticipated that the roof on Block A will be replaced in 2021.
- It is anticipated that the roof on Block B will be replaced in 2023.
- In the meantime ad-hoc repairs will continue to be carried out to prevent leaks.
- GC gave an overview of the improvements he has noticed since the covering on Block C was replaced.

#### Render Bands:

- The render band around Blocks A, B, & D has been instructed to take place asap (block C was undertaken in conjunction with the roof work), the work start date will be communicated once known, however this should take place within the coming weeks.

#### Finance

- Current Account £ 64,223.85
- Reserve Account £132,578.32
  - Anticipated / Projected Reserve Fund balance at year end c.£202,580.00
- Towards the end of the year, the budget for 2019 will be agreed.

## **6. Any Other Business**

GC invited comments on any items not included within the agenda:

- PM commented that the word 'block' to describe the buildings at Bulstrode Court wasn't desirable.
  - BL confirmed that the word 'block' has been removed from the buildings, however they are still referred to as A, B, C, D to signpost contractors and visitors etc. The renaming of the blocks had been previously discussed but had been shelved as it was felt that this may become confusing. The signage in situ confirms the flat numbers within the block.
- PM commented that the internals of Block D do not compare with the other blocks or the external appearance overall. Prospective tenants have commented that it lacks light and PM feels that this is diminishing the flats' value as once inside the flats are fine and receive good feedback.
  - VM reminded all that Block D was built after the other three blocks and to a lesser standard and that those purchasing there were aware of the look of the block when they purchased.
  - VM confirmed that with all projects, the available funds are allocated by priority and it's not feasible to undertake all of the projects 'on the wish list' within one financial year and instead the Board plan for the maintenance required on an annual basis.
  - GC commented on the property values generally which have risen and RD commented that the installation for the gates had also improved the value generally.
- PM brought up the recent letter that had been distributed concerning the use of the grounds.
  - GC gave an overview of the problems being experienced and the number of complaints being made directly to the Board of: near misses in the car-park and access roads between children on bicycles and vehicles, and children riding their bicycles through the flower beds, and allowing bicycles to scuff the lawns, ball games being played with balls hitting vehicles and the noise from the children.

- GC explained that initial reminders and polite requests were not heeded and so the new rules and regulations for the preservation of the grounds and also in the interest of health and safety were introduced.
  - VM gave an overview of the responsibility that BCM have for maintaining Bulstrode Court as a high class residential estate and this cannot be achieved if children are allowed to damage the plants, shrubs and lawns whilst playing in the grounds and if large gatherings are allowed.
  - PM commented that Bulstrode Court wasn't a retirement village. VM responded to agree that it was not, and that children are not prevented from living at Bulstrode Court, the restriction is on the use of the grounds to preserve the high standards achieved.
  - PM asked whether a designated play area would be a good idea. GC advised that this had been considered but rejected as then one side of one block would be subjected to the associated noise at all time which wouldn't be fair. GC again reiterated that he is frequently called at home by other residents complaining about the noise created.
  - LG again reiterated the danger of people pulling out of their garages (when visibility is restricted) with children riding past on their bicycles.
- MN commented that she was pleased that the request for consideration for neighbours ref: noise travelling between the flats was mentioned in the previous Newsletter and commented that she currently has an issue with a neighbour's boiler firing up but is not sure which flat it is.
  - The discussion turned to noise created by works within flats:
    - DM commented that noisy works were not always being notified to the neighbours as they should be.
    - BL confirmed that any such enquires made via DCPC result in a request that the Lessee concerned notified their neighbours that are likely to be affected and are reminded that the caretakers can assist here. Of course this does not allow for those Leaseholders who do not show this consideration.
  - JQE asked if the red Volvo has been claimed.
    - It was confirmed that the vehicle in question had now been moved.
  - The discussion turned to parking generally and JO advised that a move to formal parking enforcement, whilst not desirable, may be inevitable.
  - RT asked if any further consideration had been given to creating more parking spaces within the undercroft of Block B. GC confirmed that this would be considered in future once funds allow, it's not forgotten but is not financially viable for the foreseeable.
  - RD brought up the balcony height that is not to current standards and whether there were any plans to address this.
  - PM commented that this was perhaps a project that the Freeholders could undertake as the balconies are not demised to the Lessees.
  - GC undertook to add this project to the list of work under consideration.
  - JM asked whether it was permitted to install air conditioning units in the flats.
  - JO confirmed that he has an air conditioning unit and that it's very quiet.
  - GC confirmed that any request for works that involved altering the structure of the building (ie drilling holes for vents/ pipework) would require permission. Any requested should be made to BCM via BL along with details of the proposed works. As a rule, anything unsightly wouldn't be approved.
  - Mr Turner raised the issue of the service charges being calculated by the rateable value as he felt this was an unfair method as flats of the same size may be paying different sums and a standard charge should be introduced.
    - BL confirmed that this system is how the Leases dictated they should be calculated.
    - VM commented that this method had previously taken into account the floor that the flat was on and the view this gave and therefore the overall value, but that this is no longer applicable to council tax banding as it was at the time the Leases were drawn up.
    - BL advised that the matter had been looked into, and any change has to be based on a calculation approved by the Landlords surveyor which means recharging the service charges as each flats total area expressed as a percentage of the whole – hence a requirement to procure plans. Therefore, in

order to change the way that the service charges are apportioned will incur a cost of either £5,772.00 or £9,102.00 (£78.00/ £147.60 per flat) depending on the standard of plans required (sq. ft only plans vs Land Registry compliant plans respectively).

- GC undertook to discuss this at the next meeting and make a decision on how best to proceed.
- JM queried the number of caretakers, GC confirmed that the caretakers all cover 1 x full-time role, rather than there being more than one caretaker on site at any given time.
- JM queried the expense incurred in having caretakers and whether they were required bearing in mind the works required at the property and that the company is presently 'cost challenged'. GC confirmed that they were a real asset to the residents and that he receives a lot of positive feedback and an amenity to the estate. JM further queried whether a full time caretaker is really required. GC confirmed that at present there were no plans to change the provision, but that this was open to review.
- JM queried the caretakers' job role. LG confirmed that the caretakers do more than you might realise at first such as the cleaning, (others present also listed items): minor maintenance, testing the emergency lights, clearing the gullies on the roofs monthly, routinely checking the roof covering on Block C to preserve the warranty, managing the parking and managing on site contractors including those working within the flats. In addition to this they undertake the more routine caretaker duties such as taking in deliveries, deliver post/ circulars from BL, change bulbs, sort the rubbish bins ready for collection, litter picking, and are on hand in the event of any issues with the gates, liaise extensively with BL and generally lend a hand and act as the eyes and ears of the Estate so offer an element of security.
- PM commented that it might be useful to know what service the caretakers do offer to the residents so that this can be relayed to his tenants.
  - Post meeting note: If you are unsure if the caretakers can assist you, please just ask and they will either offer some help or point you in the right direction. The contact details are included in the tenants/ owners guide.
- In a closing word, VM reminded those present that the Board members were not professionals, they were laypersons who care about the preservation of Bulstrode Court first and foremost as residents, and who give up their time for free often without thanks. It's not as simple as planning in expensive work without due consideration of the funding of the projects by the 74 Leaseholders and any increase to the service charges is often objected to.

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8:25pm.  
GC thanked all for attending.**