

Wyvil Estate Residents' Association
Annual General Meeting 2016: Chair's Report

The main themes in the past year have been consultation, improvements around the Estate, protecting the interests of residents, and helping get good value for money.

Consultation has been within our community and with our neighbours. We have maintained a regular newsletter to all residents, delivered to all doors, at roughly six-weekly intervals. We maintain a website that is kept up to date and relevant with information on services, developments, useful phone numbers and news that gives us a steady stream of enquiries, and we email regularly to the approximately 90 residents who have given us their email address. We also held a drop-in session for consultation on the plans to landscape the area between Martin, Norman, Oliver and Peter Houses. We have an active gardening club too which everyone is invited to join.

With our neighbours we have focussed on consultation with developers: Sainsbury's, Sky Gardens, TfL/FLO constructing the new tube station and now with Grand South. Many of them have been guests at the meetings we have had for all residents during the year to tell us about developments. We have secured funding from some of them to pay for landscaping improvements on our Estate and hope to get further assistance so that we can do more.

Improvements have included the landscaped gardens between Quinton and Frank Houses and to the rear of Gilbert House. We have worked closely with the Garages team at Lambeth Council to have nearly all pram sheds brought back into use at no cost to residents and helped ensure that as many residents as possible have one to use. We monitor the lifts in Martin, Norman, Oliver and Peter House and try to keep them as usable and reliable as possible by reporting faults quickly and following-up repairs.

We have represented a number of tenants in Norman House whose flats were affected by the floods two years ago to ensure that the residual repairs and mould elimination work was carried out. This was a long and difficult task but we worked closely with residents to ensure they got what they needed. We also worked with residents in David House in relation to water pressure failures and with a number of other residents who needed support. Tenants on the Committee went to the rent setting meetings held by Lambeth Council.

We worked closely with Home Ownership at Lambeth Council to examine Service Charges going back to 2012. This is of benefit to tenants and leaseholders because it revealed that the Council had been overcharged by contractors for work that was not being done, or not being done properly. This is the root cause of the low levels of maintenance and repair on our Estate. Lambeth Council agreed to refund overpayments and we have pressed them to make sure that their contractors actually do work properly in future and only charge a reasonable amount when the work is right. We have a role here too. If a repair or maintenance is not done properly, report it, and don't sign off work that is sub-standard. Leaseholders are due a refund on Service Charge bills and there should be a similar reduced pressure on rent increases.

We are waiting for more news on the Major Works programme but there are many reports of work done badly (eg rust returning). Lambeth Council is refusing to release information on what work the Contractors should have done. The committee has done a lot of work on this agenda item to make sure that work was done properly, covering everything that needed to be done, and for a fair price but the next committee will need to continue to take this forward, building on the complex range of information we have accumulated.

My thanks to all the committee members and to all residents for your support and engagement during the year.