

# Luxborough Tower Residents Association

## General Meeting Tues 21<sup>st</sup> March 6:30pm meeting room

Present: Mike Kostyn Chair, Nick Vinson Vice Chair, Andrew Hughes Secretary & Treasurer, Josephina Becci, Alison Dow, Lynne Fox, Jill Gatum, Jennifer Grimshaw, Alison Kawol, Michael Lewis, Irwin Nazareth, Duncan Palmer-Bogie, Alex Reid, Sian Reid, Anthony Styant, Sharon Tash, Zara Tempest (17 – quorum 12), Lee Daniels WCC, Leon Williams WCC. Apologies: Sara Hamilton, Denise Atkinson-Hines

Meetings – forward dates – red = changed date

Estate Inspections 10am

Comm mtg **Tues 16<sup>th</sup> May** 2023

19/05/23

AGM **Tues 4<sup>th</sup> July** 2023

18/08/23

### Updates on Wates & University building work

We have working relationships with the liaison staff for both Wates and the University. Despite which there are still occasional shocks, such as the closing of access to the block the for University works last week. NV gave a brief update on the current state of the works:

- Wates have made progress (4 weeks out of 12) with the aedicule and the path. The hedging has been tidied up and planting sites prepared. Work has started on the car gates and the entry phones will be fitted soon – will use the same fob
- University work due to finish soon (end of March?). The new boilers are fitted in the basement and the shuttering will reduce, area by area

### Update on LTRA discussions with WCC Councillors and our MP

Thanks to MK and NV and their persistence in complaining at the highest level, the Association is being given extra support:

- A WCC Advocate – Isabel Williams, a senior officer who has experience across the range of Westminster departments and services. So, all the business that doesn't get done, or goes wrong in ways we don't understand, Isabel works with our Housing Manager and contacts the right people to try to solve the problems
- Meetings with our local MP, WCC councillors and WCC Heads of Department to check progress across a range of problems
- Examples of problems, ideas being tackled:
  - Anti-social behaviour – see point below
  - moving the temporary boiler to basement – discussions with John Haydon
  - disentangling the heating budget in the Service Charges
  - insurance payments for 1 bed flats, should be charged by bed space

Also, a new network is being established across the range of Resident Associations, in Westminster to plan from the residents side what changes could be made to improve the service we receive. First meeting this week, so no update yet.

### **Consultants' report on heating options – Executive Summary**

WCC had commissioned a consultants' report on Heating Options for Luxborough Tower as part of the Major Works to come. AH had extracted the **Executive Summary** (copied at end of these minutes) and talked through the options. Option 4, independent electric heating, seemed of most interest to residents, but no vote or gauge of opinion was taken, and AH reminded the meeting that we were a long way from a decision. Masses of technical detail to be worked through. Eg. if using the roof, could the heating mix include solar panels?

### **Update on independent surveyors for Major Works**

WCC commissioned consultants to look at heating options, as described above. Another report is being commissioned, effectively in response to pressure from the LTRA and our Property Lawyer. This will be a major report, paid for by WCC, with the task of checking which works **must to be done**, as opposed to those that **could be done**. Unfortunately, as with the whole of this project, there are delays. The terms of the contract have been agreed but there is discussion between WCC and the independent surveyors about the fee level. We await progress.

### **Accounts**

AH distributed an update on the Association accounts, now separated in two:

- Account #1 small scale expenses, mostly photocopying costs. Funded by Westminster. A couple of hundred pounds in the black but WCC haven't yet paid the Annual Grant for this financial year
- Account #2 larger amounts, funded by renting our garage to various crane companies. Major use paying legal fees - see the next item

### **Payment of our Property Lawyer**

The LTRA Property Lawyer is mentioned above. AH produced a paper outlining the whole process. Put briefly:

- Offer the Association legal advice throughout the process
- Get WCC to understand the problem of these Major Works
- Get WCC to agree to a survey by 2 independent surveyors, paid for by WCC
- Agree the terms of the survey with WCC
- Contact relevant independent surveyors and set up the process
- Follow through on legal matters arising from the final report

All this is so far costed at about £8,000, with an invoice outstanding of £3,060. After a long and varied discussion the meeting voted unanimously to agree to pay the outstanding invoice, leaving about £3,000 in Account#2

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

- Having the gates to the block open for months has exacerbated the problem. The WCC Advocate has organised extra resources, with patrols 8pm – 11pm.
- Leon and Sian put in a strong plea for residents to report problems. The suggestion was that the Estate Office leaflet the block with guidance on what to do about ASB and how to report it – there are different numbers. Leon said he would take this on
- There was a discussion about ASB when the new doors and gates are fitted. NV described the process of turning people away. For example, all residents should strive not to allow tail-gating

### **AoB**

- Key safes. Currently 9 of them spreading across the wall in the north undercroft. Leon reported that they are only allowed for carers. Would the Estate Office kindly remove those not being used properly
- Contractors. Could we establish a protocol for contractors mess? Protective covering for corridor floors and lift floors are required, but they should be removed when not in use: overnight, week-ends, at the end of the job. And disposed of properly. At the moment this is all too casually required and enforced
- WCC Surveyor. Lee Daniels introduced himself to the meeting, a lead surveyor. At the moment focussed on dealing with existing problems with leaks

Appendix: Executive Summary of **Heating Options** report

# Appendix

FEASIBILITY REPORT HEATING REPLACEMENT LUXBOROUGH TOWER 5 MAR 2023

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To agree on overall strategy is difficult due to the existing heating and hot water installations at Luxborough Tower. There are currently a mixture of temporary central plant serving the original warm air system and individual systems installed by lease holders. Within this report we have selected 5 options that best suit the building:

1. Replacement of central plant but serving radiators directly in the flats.
2. As option 1 but with a heat interface unit in each flat to provide greater controllability.
3. Individual electric boilers in each flat (note that some flats already have a gas combination boiler installation).
4. Direct electric heating.
5. Heat pump installation serving radiators within the flats.

Options 1 and 2 utilise a central gas fire boiler plant, but with increased in flat comfort and controllability, respectively. Whilst there will be little change in the way the building was originally designed, they rely on gas plant and therefore not totally future proof.

Option 3 Individual electric boiler with hot water and radiators providing heat. This option omits the use of gas. All heating and hot water is provided via direct electrical central boiler located in the existing hot air cupboard with piped radiators providing heat into the rooms. The individual electric boilers option has a high energy cost and the provision for the hot water demand will be limited. The individual gas boiler option was ruled out due to increased fire risk and local carbon emissions.

Whilst option 4 is the easiest installation due to no central plant and pipework within the flats and benefit from having the lowest capital cost However, this option has major drawbacks. High energy costs and an upgraded incoming power supply due to the increased demand is by far the worst performing in terms of energy cost it may be worth considering with the planned façade upgrade. The energy used for heating will be reduced and the installation cost is minimal compared with other installations.

Option 5 omits the use of gas. Roof mounted ASHP's provide low grade heat which is distributed around the building. Each flat will have a mini WSHP which increases the temperature to provide heating and hot water similar to a conventional domestic boiler.

Option 5 has the largest capital expenditure but minimise the reliance on natural gas; it is also the most future proof installation and by far the least CO2 emission which meet's The decarbonisation potentials for the heating and hot water generation systems.

This option will also meet urgent drive to achieve Net Zero Carbon before 2050. The UK Government's Buildings & Heat Strategy aims to phase out the installation of new gas fired boilers by 2035.

Based on the findings of this report we conclude with recommending option 4 or 5 as we find both of the options viable, Option 4 has a high annual fuel cost, a high running cost and a high CO2 emission compared to option 5, but the direct electric heating is a known and tested technology.

On the other hand, we find that option 5 has the highest capital cost but the lowest CO2 emissions and provides the necessary future proofing in following the government announced decarbonisation strategies for the heating systems. Plus, the use of heat pumps is becoming more popular as the technology develops. The use of the heat pumps is the most recommended renewable heating solution according to the industry standards.