

Highland Court (Woodford) Limited

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Winter 2018-19 update

Following the AGM we would like to write to you with an update on progress made.

The minutes were sent out soon after the meeting. If you did not receive them please contact Harwood Hutton or visit the Highland Court website.

Fire Risk Lease Change

As advised at the AGM, we have now made changes to the Lease (paragraph J of the Second Schedule) to include the recommendations made following the Fire Risk Assessment, namely the fitting of self-closing devices and intumescent strips and cold smoke seals to the existing door frames.

The lease change has now been sent out and leaseholders should endeavour to make the necessary changes as soon as possible.

The Directors have recently approached two local companies;

Benstead & Sons Limited are able to supply and fit the self-closing devices at the cost of £138 (incl VAT). Their email address is bensteadglass@aol.com and their telephone number is: 020 8506 1155.

D&J Services are able to fit the devices and seals at a cost of £150 (incl VAT). Their email address is cassman40@hotmail.com and their telephone number is: 07903 246942.

Both have offered favourable rates. Their details have also been placed on the Highland Court website and Lease holders should approach them directly.

Also outlined in the Lease change is the easing of the front door policy as discussed and voted on at the AGM. Owners will now be able to purchase their own front door if they wish to replace the existing door. However,

1. The new door must meet the FD30S regulation. The initial plan was to place suggested examples on the Highland Court website but after some consideration we intend to allow owners to select one and then send to the Directors for review.
2. Full details of the proposed replacement must be sent in writing to the Directors for approval and agreed before the door is replaced.

Fire Routine Signs

These have now been installed on the ground floor of each block. Please make note of the routine and if you are renting out your property, ensure your tenants make themselves aware of it.

Emergency lighting

The Fire Safety Report of October 2018 stated that emergency lighting would be required in the communal hallways in the event of a fire in the block knocking out the general lighting. However, this was only required if the luminance levels in the stairways were below 1 Lux during the hours of darkness in accordance with the recommendations of BS 5266.

We purchased an illuminance meter to measure the light and it was indeed below 1 Lux. Consequently we have arranged for the replacing of the existing lighting so that should there be a cut in the mains power supply the battery installed to each light will activate and illuminate the hallways. This should be in place for the end of March.

Following the measures taken by the directors from the Fire Risk Report, namely:

- Lease change to accommodate the door seals and closures (along with providing details of two companies that can supply and fit these devices);
- Requirements of any door replacements and the need for approval;
- Details on the Fire Routine Signs and
- The emergency lighting;

We feel that once the lighting has been installed we would have fully complied with all the recommendations of the report.

Website revamp

The initial plan was to decommission the website in favour of the Facebook page. However, following some consideration it has been decided to use the Facebook page for social events that can be accessed by owners and tenants alike.

The website has undergone some major rework and can be used for storing documentation – the AGM minutes, Fire Risk Assessment, insurance details and contact details for Benstead & Sons Limited and D&J Services are the most recent examples.

The address has been added to the Highland Court letter-headed paper.

Gate repaired

We acknowledge that the gate was damaged for some considerable time and that the delay was unfortunate. The reasons were outlined at the AGM. It has undergone extensive repair and is now working properly.

We have been in discussions to ensure that the gate remains operable and should it be damaged, it is repaired promptly and without delay.

Further details will follow in due course.

Section 20 Letter

As part of the Phase One outlined at the AGM, the Section 20 process was initiated for the spending proposal of an extensive roof repair and a new brick wall at the front of the site.

An extensive roof repair was deemed a priority for the coming year as a number of flats had reported leaks. Though repairs were carried out by Ron Newly before his retirement, the roof needs extensive work, preferably with a guarantee.

The current wall looks of poor standing and a double skin brick wall with ironwork that will be in keeping with the gates has been proposed resembling the picture.



Three additional firms were recommended by owners when the Section 20 process was started. As part of this process the additional companies had three weeks to submit a quote from the day they visited the site.

Halo Construction visited the site on the 16th January to inspect the roof and front wall. They have provided a quote and this has been factored in to the next phase of the process.

NT Fursse & Sons visited the site on the 17th January to inspect the roof but they did not provide a quote (and haven't yet).

Mackie Roofing did not reply to our message.

Consequently, as advised in the recent letter, we are proceeding and you should have received the 'Section 20 – Paragraph B – Notice of Proposals' letter outlining the vendors and preferred choice (Short & Sons for both works).

Short & Sons have been highly recommended and have been fully engaging throughout the process. The cost of both the roof and wall is the cheapest and they offer a full guarantee for the roof works. The guarantee is for seven years, though typically we can expect a lot longer.

Additionally, Short & Sons offered a 10% discount if offered both the roof and wall jobs and having a single firm to deal with has its obvious advantages.

No additional payments are required – the current budget will cover this cost.

Wall insulation

We have approached a company, Orion Energy Solutions, about the prospect of insulating the cavity walls of Highland Court. We received a quote and to do both blocks would cost in the region of £15,000.

The average home can reduce heat loss by up to 60%. Of course, every property is different but without doubt this should both save money and improve the score for the Energy Performance Certificate.

We will raise this as an agenda item for the next AGM and we can discuss further. It would necessitate another Section 20 process if agreed. **But again, this cost could be met within the existing budget. No additional payments would be required.**

Car Parking Management

Highland Court is in the very early stages of discussion with a car park management company. They would write to all owners issuing permits. Signage would be installed and maintained.

The company in question would visit Highland Court on regular intervals to enforce permit holders only and no parking outside of a designated area. Wardens would issue a Warning Notice to any vehicle not adhering to the restrictions.

There is also an appeals process should it be needed.

They also operate a litter collection scheme.

It is self-financing and so there are no costs to Highland Court or to permit holders who operate within the rules.

Bin sheds

As you can see from the picture below a number of people are throwing their rubbish bags towards the bins and are missing their target. This results in a build-up of rubbish at the foot of the bins which then burst. This could then encourage rats because of all the spilled food. Often, the first bin closest to the shed door is left overflowing and the second and third bins are left near-empty!

In some cases the bags aren't even tied up so when they're slung towards the bin the contents are often strewn everywhere. **This is completely unacceptable.**

Furthermore, it then has to be cleaned up by our maintenance man, Jon. This is a dirty, smelly, unpleasant and, quite frankly, unnecessary job that wastes his time. It's also thoroughly disrespectful. We're sure we'd all prefer Jon to be mowing the lawn or vacuuming the stairwells instead of cleaning up food scraps and dirty nappies!

If you're an owner-occupier, or if you rent out your property, can you please ensure the bags are tied up and placed in the bins. Please reach out to your tenants and ask them to show their fellow residents and Jon some respect and ensure we keep Highland Court in good order. Notices in blocks and the bins sheds will ask the same.

It doesn't take much.



Notice boards

New notice boards have been purchased and put up in the communal stairwells. A number of handy notices have been added including:

- Important notices on recent events
- Terms of the Highland Court Lease (abridged)
- Thames Water leaflet
- Recycling information and
- LFB Home Safety Guide

People are welcome to add anything so long as the important notices are not covered and become cluttered.
