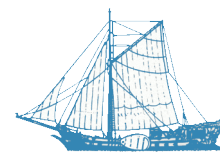


Spring 2013

# London Yard Newsletter



[www.londonyard.net](http://www.londonyard.net)



## Message from the Board

Our Christmas do in December went well with many people braving the inclement weather to chat and enjoy some festive food and drink.

In the previous newsletter we said we would hold a consultation on the 25 Year Plan in February of this year. We apologise for not being able to hold the consult meeting on the 12th due to time constraints and lack of resources and we will reschedule the consultation for August.

*The LYMC Board*

## Orienteering

The Isle of Dogs will be seeing its first orienteering event later this year. South London Orienteers are organising an event in September that will take place throughout the island, with a couple of event "markers" in London Yard. The event is open to anyone of any age and experience, and a wide variety of courses will be available. The event has previously been staged in the City of London and has

become popular with both UK orienteers, and local runners, but also orienteers from overseas. The sport has a very low profile in the UK but is popular in the Nordic countries, so you might see some brightly clad Scandinavians on the day of the event! Further details in the next newsletter and on our Facebook page.

## Drains

We have recently had some problems with drains on the estate. A garden on the Manchester Road side of the estate was flooded with foul water when a drain was blocked due to damage by tree roots and the garden and surrounding area had to be sanitised. Following a CCTV survey of the Amsterdam Road drains one of the drains was found to have a dropped joint which lead to a build up of waste and repairs have been completed to fix this. A third drain problem was discovered outside block 4 which has been attended to. Finally, a drain overflowed in Leerdam Drive and investigation showed that fat build-up was a factor in the blockage.

**Please do not pour fat down your sink, instead store in a container and dispose of in the kitchen waste.**

## Budget Pack

We have now completed our annual review of the budget and rolling maintenance plan together with a comprehensive pack detailing as much as we are able how these changes have arisen and this is included with this newsletter.

We are very pleased to report that much of our hard work in paying close attention to our costs and services is really bringing dividends. Whilst costs continue to increase and new lines having to be added to the budget, we have still managed to contain costs to a less than 1% increase excluding insurance and reserve fund contributions. This reflects overall the work that we and Parc have done in annually tendering for our utilities, more energy efficient lighting in the larger blocks with the smaller ones following shortly. In particular, employing our own caretaker to do a raft of routine maintenance jobs rather than having to employ contractors every time has really scaled back our overheads on many levels. Those jobs that our caretaker cannot undertake for us, we ensure Parc competitively tender for them so we can assure ourselves of best value. Ensuring that the common areas of the blocks are not being used inappropriately and the cycle store facility are also contributing significantly to keeping costs down.

Overall, we anticipate the 2012/13 budget has served us well and that we will come in just about even in the current financial year. To ensure even more its accuracy, Parc have

reviewed the last two years' expenditure to ensure we take into account all items we know we need to pay out on.

The survey we undertook in 2012 also showed a significant increase in shareholder satisfaction. We did note that there was some concern about our rolling maintenance plan and in a few cases the service charge was felt to be too high. We have listened, as always, and have done additional work this year in order to inform, gain support and demonstrate that we have a strong financial management system in place, both within the Board and with our agents.

### Let's Work Together

ARMA is the only body in England & Wales to focus exclusively on matters relating to the block management of leasehold properties. In an ongoing effort to improve everyone's living environment, we will be highlighting one issue per quarter from their LAN10 document.

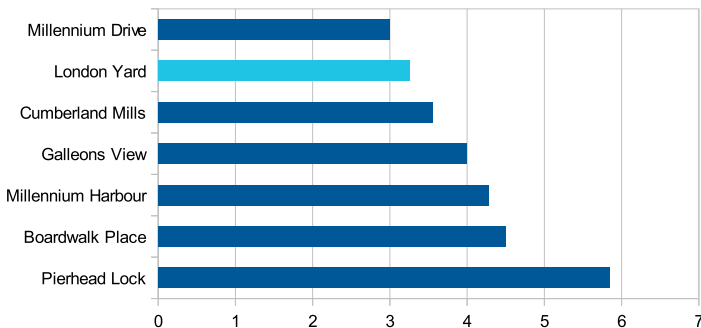
**Neighbour disputes** - if you have a problem with a neighbour over noise or other anti-social behaviour try and solve it between yourselves. Landlords have very little power to take action for anti-social behaviour. Get to know your neighbours so you have a basis to resolve things if problems do arise later. (Refer to ARMA's LAN12 Anti-Social Behaviour on [www.arma.org.uk](http://www.arma.org.uk).)



### Service Charge

Recently we approached two local estate agents to ask them for their view on London Yard overall and gain some service charge comparisons from them. Again, this shows our service charges to be very favourable when compared to our peers. Both estate agents also report excellent sales and lettings of London Yard properties and we have had similar feedback from our shareholders who rent their properties out.

The following table shows service charges in £ per sq. foot.



### Health & Safety and Fire Risk

We are having to pay ever more attention to these two items as the guidance surrounding these become increasingly onerous to comply with, in financial terms at least. You will see in your budget packs this year that we have had to add additional items of budget to cover this

expenditure but as always plan to keep this to the minimum to keep us both safe and compliant.

### Parking Update

We are now in discussion with a single parking company about looking after all the parking requirements for London Yard and we are hoping to be able to update you soon about when this will be implemented. ARMA have produced a very good document about what can be done to control parking following the government legislation which banned clamping on private land. The document can be found here: <http://www.arma.org.uk/doc/public/LAN25-Parking-Issues.pdf>

### Gardens

Our gardener, Simon, has put together a planting plan for this year covering all areas of the estate so we should be seeing further improvement in the gardens by late summer. The bulbs he planted last year should be out soon bringing some colour to the estate.

### Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

Some years ago a Neighbourhood Watch scheme was active on London Yard but this has now lapsed and we are now actively involved with re-starting a new Neighbourhood Watch scheme. As well as the benefits of keeping crime down, we also understand that this will have a positive impact on our contents insurance if we are part of a regulated Neighbourhood Watch scheme. At present the focus is on the regional scheme to be formed before we can fall under that but we will keep you updated.

### Easter Event

We are planning to hold an easter egg hunt on Monday 1st April - keep an eye out for posters and more information on our Facebook page.



### Contacts

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All other contacts can be found on the website: [www.londonyard.net](http://www.londonyard.net)