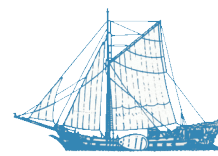


Summer 2013

London Yard Newsletter



www.londonyard.net



Message from the Board

We are busy preparing for a hectic summer, which is reflected in this quarter's bumper newsletter! As you will see, we have already been extremely busy, with positive results for us all. Happy reading!

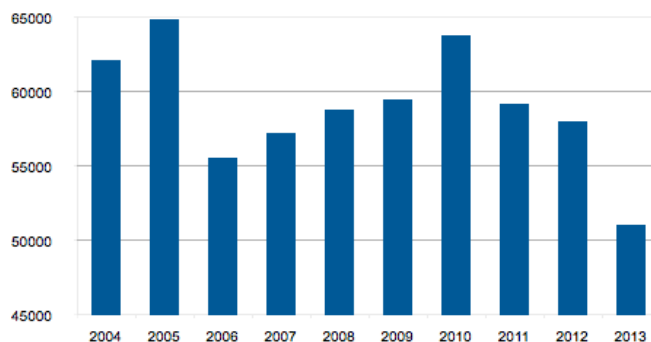
The LYMC Board

Insurance Valuation

We have now re-negotiated our buildings insurance for this year, which shows a reduction of £7k from last year. As always, three brokers were contacted and the lowest quote accepted. We achieved this on the basis that whilst we have not seen the number of claims reduce dramatically, we have had less expensive claims, which has helped our claims history. The second contributory factor is because of the process that Parc implement for us every year - it allows them to drive the price downwards through discussions with the brokers. The excess on the policy remains at £500 per claim.

To ensure we are neither under- nor over-valued and thus our premiums are neither too high or too low, we are again in the process of having the development re-valued. This was last done in 2009.

The following chart shows the insurance costs for London Yard for the past ten years.



London Yard Insurance Costs

Dealing With Debt

London Yard is looking revitalised from the ongoing planned maintenance and gardening activities that are funded through service charge payments. We now regularly receive positive feedback from estate agents and viewers to that effect - see the latest piece from a local estate agent included in this newsletter. In recent years, an emphasis has been put on reducing the amount of debt from outstanding service charge payments. After initial success in reducing the high level of debt experienced in the 2000s, the debt level stubbornly remains at c. £60k older than 6 months, which clearly shows that the current debtors' process has failed to reduce the debt to tolerable levels. With our budgets clipped to the bare minimum, this needs to be addressed.

We are happy to report that this review has been concluded. Our review had two major conclusions: first, there are a small number of leaseholders from a number of blocks that never pay their service charges until legal action is taken; second, that our debtors' process is overly long, which allows the debt to build up significantly. Our conclusion is that it has not been useful to issue four reminders or warnings before commencing legal proceedings. One reminder and one legal warning should be more cost effective. Therefore this change is being introduced immediately:

- If invoices remain unpaid after the due date, reminders will be sent out by the management company at 14 days.
- Interest will be chargeable on all debt remaining unpaid and this will be credited to the relevant block or estate accounts.
- In addition, the managing agent will add an admin fee (currently £25 plus VAT) which reflects their cost of chasing the debt.
- If after 21 days the debt remains unpaid a legal reminder is sent out, and at 30 days legal proceedings will commence.

- Owners who wish to dispute part or all of the demand must inform the management company as soon as they receive the demand, explaining the reason for non-payment.

	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr
Invoices raised by	04-Mar	03-Jun	08-Sep	04-Dec
Invoices due	25-Mar	24-Jun	29-Sep	25-Dec
Reminder 1 + admin fee & interest	08-Apr	08-Jul	13-Oct	08-Jan
Legal reminder + admin fee & interest	15-Apr	15-Jul	20-Oct	15-Jan
Legal proceedings commence	22-Apr	22-Jul	27-Oct	22-Jan

Parking Update

As we reported in recent newsletters, with the Government ban on using clamping on private land, we had to look at other ways of controlling parking on London Yard and concluded using a ticketing company would be the most effective.

We had narrowed the ticketing companies down to one and have spent a great deal of time and effort ensuring their offering met our needs. Regrettably our final review showed that they were not the company for us for a number of reasons. We must therefore continue to look for a company more suitable for us against a background where the vendors are not as mature as we would like. We have also been reviewing parking across the development to see how pressing or relevant the need for enforcement is. We found parking in Amsterdam Road again an issue, the school causing congestion and parking in our spaces again. There are a number of cars untaxed, clearly unroadworthy and obviously not moved for some time (weeds growing through the bumper is a dead give-away!), also as it was back in 2009 when we started enforcement. This shows us that parking enforcement remains a priority for us.

As part of our parking review, external walkabouts and complaints from residents, we will be focusing on the following in the summer months:

- repainting some areas where the red lines have worn away and where we have had complaints of parking issues again
- focusing on external redecorations and repairs such as the pontoons and repainting of posts
- putting in the new barrier to stop anti-social behaviour riverside as we have complaints of late night carloads of youths holding parties in our car parks.

Residents should continue to renew and display resident's permits in line with the parking policy.

Commercial vehicles to use the car park next to Memsahab restaurant.

Gardens

Our gardener's hard work last autumn has paid off with a lovely display of bulbs this spring. He's also gradually replanting the beds that were cleared of ivy last year, and will be doing more clearing and planting over the coming year, but if there's anywhere you'd like particular attention paid to, please let us know.

Our planting scheme aims to use plants that give colour and interest year round, but gardening in London Yard is challenging because there's only one source of water - a garden tap outside the security hut. Our gardener is therefore forced to water new planting areas using watering cans rather than a hose for a lot of the beds, which is obviously very time-consuming. Because of this, new planting will mainly be done once a year in the autumn, to give the new plants time to settle in and develop good root systems to better withstand any dry spells in the summer (that's assuming we get a summer this year, of course!). Areas on this autumn's 'hit list' include planting hedging along the boundary with Manchester Road, to discourage people taking shortcuts across our lawns and help to improve the outlook for LY residents, as well as filling in bare patches.

Finally, if anyone feels inspired to volunteer to help, then please, please get in contact !

London Yard Sales Market

We asked Chesterton Humberts in Harbour Exchange Square to comment on where we stood in the property market compared to other local complexes and a Director, Cory Askew gave us this information:

London Yard is viewed in the local market as being one of the better constructed and maintained developments in the Docklands area. The variety of property on offer and the excellent value for money compared to the newer, "shiny boxes" that have sprung up locally make it a very attractive investment. In two recent sales, of a 1 bedroom apartment in Amsterdam Road (£225,000) and a 3 bedroom house in Leerdam Drive (£475,000) - both properties sold quickly and in both instances, viewers to the properties commented on how well-maintained the development appeared to be. Overall, the 2013 sales and lettings market has been ticking over very nicely. Banks have loosened their lender criteria, large multi-national companies continue to relocate to Canary Wharf and there is a genuine lack of good quality properties on the market. All of these factors have contributed to a very buoyant market, and long may it continue.

Internals

We are just about to write out again to those blocks whose internals have not yet been completed with the next stage of the S.20 process so we can get on with these delayed works. We have taken quite a time with this to ensure we have addressed the concerns and hope to move on harmoniously from this point.

Cycle Store

This seems like a good point to remind you that we do have a cycle store and we actively encourage its use. Keys can be obtained from Parc and is located under the archway in Amsterdam Road.

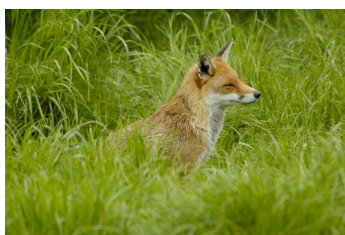
Code of Conduct

We have not reminded you of late that the Code of Conduct for London Yard is a legal requirement, based on our leases and deeds of covenant. If you rent your property out, it applies also to your tenants and we will look to you to ensure that they comply. As we are entering summer, please note the following which we have taken from the Code of Conduct as they are seasonally relevant:

No lit BBQs on balconies. We would encourage you to use our beautiful lawns and grounds as they are underused generally but please take care of the grass and be respectful of your neighbours!!

No washing to be hung on balconies or in gardens - essentially any area that can be seen from the communal areas.

Foxes in London Yard



We have had reports of foxes in London Yard. They are attracted by food waste left outside that also attracts other vermin like rats. Food waste should be stored in a container with a proper fitted lid or placed in the bin in your allocated store.

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 "LAN" documents.

Preventing fires in your flat

The best protection from fire is prevention. Your landlord and managing agent have a duty to take steps to prevent fires in common parts but you can ensure your home is as safe as possible too. Remember most fires in blocks of flats start within a flat not in the common parts.

- Have you got smoke detectors? These are the most effective way of preventing fires and also give vital early warning and extra time to escape. Mains wired detectors are the safest.
- Install smoke detectors, test them weekly and change them every 10 years.
- If not mains wired, change the battery every year or when you need to (unless it is a ten year alarm)
- Are the doors in your flat in good condition and do they shut properly? Never remove internal doors or wedge them open.
- If you are planning alterations to doors and the internal layout of your flat, do think about the implications for fire safety. Contact your landlord or agent first.
- Close internal doors at night.
- Make sure everyone knows where you keep the keys for the main door.

Local Planning Application

We have been alerted by local developments of a planning application that concerns them and which may concern us similarly. We have been in touch with local councillors also and, as we know some of us make use of the local parks and green space, wanted to bring this to your attention so you can review and decide whether you similarly object.

Details are:

An unspecified community group has applied to place a portacabin on Island Gardens to be open daily between 10am and 10pm. This is a grade II listed park, overlooking a world heritage site and has been made available to the public for over one hundred years. Objections need to be lodged with owen.whalley@towerhamlets.gov.uk by June 6th. So far the council has not stated to whom the land has been sold or leased or by what process this was undertaken. It is a matter of public record for the past 160 years that this is Island Gardens, which was acquired from William Cubitt in 1850 by the (Greenwich) Hospital Commissioners expressly to preserve the view of Greenwich Hospital. It is also a matter of public record that Island Gardens is a Grade II listed Park and that Greenwich Palace is a World Heritage Site. Indeed, Pevsner's Guide to East London describes this view as "breathtaking". Your local councillors, Tim Archer, Peter Golds and Gloria Thienel are working with residents' groups across the Island to stop this



and support from London Yard to preserve Island Gardens as a green community facility is much appreciated.

Our neighbours in two other local developments are setting up an online petition and they invite us also to join this if we are concerned. The link for this is <http://tinyurl.com/islandgardenspetition>.

Orienteering Event

Just a reminder about the orienteering event which is taking place within the Isle of Dogs on the morning of Sunday 22 September. The event is based at the sports hall at George Green's School on Manchester Road, but participants will orienteer throughout the island, including as far as Limehouse and the Canary Wharf complex and some will pass through London Yard near the end of their course. Most people will start in Limehouse or on West India Quay, with juniors starting in Millwall Park. All are welcome, from complete beginners to seasoned athletes. Course categories vary from the under 12s to the over 60s and there is a specific "Newcomers" course which has been designed to be as easy as possible to navigate - London Yard residents and other islanders will also have the advantage of local knowledge. Entries are now open at <http://cityrace.org/>. The event is organised by South London Orienteers, a community amateur sports club.

Fire Doors

If you replace the front door of your flat, the replacement door must conform to the fire door standards - it must be fire-resisting and self-closing.

If your front door has been replaced at any time in the past please ensure it is up to the fire door standards and make sure that the self-closing device is still attached and working.

New Local Restaurant

As you may be aware, The Pier Tavern closed for refurbishment recently after giving a long and good service to the local community. It has now re-opened as a Maltese restaurant, **Mourinho's**, to add to the growing selection of new and relatively new restaurants opening in our area. You may have already received a flyer from Mourinho's offering a 20% discount on production of this flyer. Mourinho's are keen to integrate themselves into their new community and are working with us and other local developments and businesses to forge links, make new friends and support local communities and charities. Given our close proximity to Mourinho's, they are offering London Yard residents only, a massive discount:

50% off food when ordering a minimum of two courses with one being a main. Includes VAT, excludes service charge. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Valid until the end of August 2013. Please bring a copy of the London Yard newsletter with you for the offer to be honoured.



Reservations:

Email: enquiries@mourinhos.com

Phone: 020 7515 9528

Summer Event

Our summer event is planned for the 20th July on Van Gogh lawns - come along and meet your neighbours!

LYMC Events
invites you to their
Summer Irish-Rainbow BBQ

*this is the last Lymc BBQ of our social events co-ordinator, Róisín Mills.
therefore we are doing it Irish style!
see if you can find any Leprechauns at the end of the rainbows!*

**COME DRESSED IN GREEN, WHITE & ORANGE
OR RAINBOW COLOURS!!**

Saturday 20th July 2013, 2pm onwards

Van Gogh Lawns

All ages welcome!
Bring your own food & drink!
Everything else provided

Contacts

Mark Plunkett at Parc Properties: **020 7515 3553**

or email: docklands@parcproperties.co.uk

London Yard Board: lymc@londonyard.net

Parc 24 hour emergency: **020 7537 9394**

All other contacts can be found on the website: www.londonyard.net