

The Grange Freeholders Ltd
AGM 22nd March 2022 6pm
Held electronically

Members

Freda and John Tindale
Fiona Nouri
Paul Zukiewicz

In attendance

Renate Zukiewicz
Martin Tindale (supporting Freda and John)
Andy Smith

Managing Agents

John Morris
Diana Morris

Apologies

Russell Stevens

Welcome

John introduced himself and all other members attending the meeting.

Debtors

As of 18th March 2022. No monies are outstanding.

Maintenance

Roof

1st Section 20 notice issued, but we were unable to progress due to insufficient funds as two service charge payers had not paid. As this is now paid, we will obtain estimates to carry out the work. The work will include installing a "Tin Hat" on the property as a protection against bad weather. The cost of the next stage of repairs will be approximately £50,000.

Gutters

Have been cleared and will be maintained on an annual basis. Previously have been attending to gutters on roof but maintenance will also now include the downpipes as well. Member had commented that they were blocked and looked as though they hadn't been maintained for 10 years.

Cellar

Issues highlighted by the Fire Risk Assessment and Asbestos Survey. There is a door in the cellar that was previously used to access the boiler room. It has an asbestos sheet behind it and should be removed. However, there are a large number of items obstructing its removal. Two members present agreed to remove their items and remaining members will be contacted to remove their items as well. A suggestion was made that the management company should arrange for a skip for

members to use. A member commented that there are a large number of items strewn in an untidy manner on the floor both from current and historic residents and it was questioned how these items would be identified. It was suggested that items are ticketed to identify items to be kept and all unticketed items will be removed. A member suggested that it would be more cost effective to undertake "tip runs" and not pay out for a skip hires. Members questioned if they would be reimbursed for the cost of petrol if they take the items to the tip. A quote will be obtained for a skip or alternatively a waste contractor. It was discussed that 4 current residents do not have items in the cellar. So only 2 residents are using the area for storage, apart from historically left items. The attendees commented that a waste contractor may be able to identify any items which may be of value and may offset this against removal costs.

John advised that once members identified the items that are to be kept then the clearance can be commenced and directors will be updated. A member proposed to new owners pay a deposit of £100.00, for example, for the use of the cellar, which would then be returned to them when they leave, and all items are removed. This was discussed but decided that this would not be a workable solution. It was suggested that the cellar be divided into specific areas, this was drawn out previously but not adhered to. A member commented that a light could be installed as a safety measure and rules introduced as to what can and cannot be stored in the cellar, e.g., propane canisters, or pets. A member asked if the FRA commented on lack of lighting in the cellar area. A member asked if a light should be installed above the exit door, however as there is only one exit door residents would know to use that door and the emergency lights would be on anyway. TGFL will come up with some rules and distribute to attendees for their comments and additions.

Other

Fire Risk Assessment raised a number of points: -

1. Residents are storing items in communal areas, all those residents involved have been contacted to request removal by the end of the month.
2. Lawnmower in electric cupboard – which has now been removed.
3. Disabled residents – unknown but new owners are asked to disclose if they might have difficulty evacuating the building to ensure that the emergency services are aware.
4. Flat entrance doors – Following Grenfell, a Fire Safety Act will be introduced to cover the fire safety of the flat entrance doors. It is anticipated that the responsibility will be shared between owners and management company. It is anticipated that a third party will have to be engaged to certify the fire safety of the flat entrance doors. A member suggested that possibly this could be carried out now. However, as the bill is not yet introduced guidelines are not currently available.
5. Meter Cupboard Door – This was Identified as not a fire door and has now been replaced.
6. Smoke Seals - The communal door to flats 2 and 3 on the ground floor has been identified as requiring smoke seals these have now been installed.
7. Interlinked Smoke Detectors – As the building is a conversion it cannot be confirmed that works have been undertaken to ensure modern standard fire safety measures and therefore it is recommended that in the event of a fire all residents should leave the building. It was suggested that we liaise with all owners to enable a contractor to carry out an inspection and test of the whole system. Two owners identified that they have battery smoke alarms, and one was hard wired. As one of the members is a qualified electrician, they agreed to review the fire risk assessment report.
8. Fire Extinguisher Removal – FRA requested its removal from the communal area which has been done.

Window Redecoration

Section 20 1st Notice and 2nd Notice including the estimates. This work has not yet been completed due to a lack of funds. As the quotes were provided a couple of years ago. A member commented that the Supremes three separate quotes did not include the galvanised downpipes or the entrance door.

It was agreed that the windows, galvanised downpipes, and front door will all be painted at the same time and then re-painted after approximately 5 years.

It was suggested that both contractors re-quote on the same specification and then re-issue a 2nd Section 20 notice with the updated estimates.

Grounds

A member had sent an email highlighting some areas of concern. However, these are the responsibility of the estate management company to whom estate fees are paid.

1. Path - loose and slippery when wet.
2. Tree Roots – lifting the paving slabs.

A member was concerned that in the event of an accident that The Grange Freeholders Ltd would be sued. John commented that Countrywide is responsible for the grounds and the pathway. Two members advised that issues had previously been reported to Countrywide but no action was taken. A member commented that The Grange Freeholders should pay for these works and issue an invoice to Countrywide. If they do not pay, the individual members could reduce the service charges paid to Countrywide for estate maintenance. A member advised that they had approached Countrywide who had confirmed that it is responsible for the tree and the paving, however, there were insufficient funds available to undertake these works. A member also commented that products are available to treat the algae and moss and could be carried out by the residents themselves. John advised that if any residents or the management company treat the footpath the responsibility will rest with them. The member stressed that if Countrywide decide that this will not be undertaken the appearance of the building will be affected. Fiona requested that TGFL formally request that action is taken immediately. A member commented that the Countrywide Accounts for the estate states that £3,000 is available. John agreed that he would contact the Estate Resident's company. John mentioned that the matter could be raised at the next Estate members' meeting, however, the attendees all stated that they were not invited and have not attended.

3. Rail above cellar, paintwork and meter boxes – A member commented that the post boxes and service boxes let the site down and should be painted to improve the look of the building. The meter boxes are individually owned and are the leaseholder's responsibility. However, if all leaseholders agree then a painter could be organised. Agreed.
4. Items stored in cellar area – This item has been covered, please see above.

5. Director not engaging – A member commented that he had become aware that not all directors were fully engaging in their responsibility for the site. Fortunately, there are 3 directors and decisions have to be made by the majority of the directors. All directors are contacted concerning decisions on the site. Not all respond. A member asked if there were grounds to insist that the non-active director resigns. It was commented that out of the 6 leaseholders only 5 are members of the company as flat 4 did not participate in the freehold purchase and so still pays ground rent. It was suggested that flat 4 is invited to become a member of the freehold company. There are two options for no. 4 to become a member: -

- A) Buy a lease extension and ground rent ceases to be payable.
- B) Other members invite No. 4 to become a member but ground rent is payable.

A member asked how much a lease extension would cost. It was advised that this would be £2,100 (Ground Rent currently £125.00 per annum will then cease).

If No. 4 becomes a member of the company, they could become a director and have more say in the running of the company.

It was also suggested that No. 4 could become a full member of the company and pay if off at the rate of £125.00 per year towards to lease extension. Flat 4 agreed to consider the options.

A member commented that as part of the purchase process additional information should be provided to prospective buyers with an indication of the worst-case scenario regarding maintenance costs for the building. The budget provided to solicitors shows the proposed expenditure for the next 5 years. Obviously, this does not take into account any unanticipated costs.

The Grange leaseholders have historically kept the service charges low and as a result due to the amount of roof maintenance necessary the last two years annual service charges have had to be raised significantly to cover this expenditure. John commented that the service charge accounts will illustrate this point.

Russell's Items

Russell Stevens asked that the following items be considered: -

1. Wanted to know which solicitor the company was going to use to instruct proceedings.
2. Wants the service charge issued for the current year to be withdrawn due to the cost of living and the Ukraine war.
3. Does not believe the roof needs to be repaired as during the recent storms the roof didn't leak.
4. The current level of service charges deters prospective buyers to keep the building in a good state of repair.
5. This nation is in crisis, and we need reduce the cost demand significantly to try and keep the owners safe that are in a serious economic struggle.

All attendees discussed these points and disagreed as the building must be maintained to a good standard to protect leaseholders' investment.

Accounts

The accounts were review and explained. Agreed service charges at £5,000. The roof maintenance expenditure was £16,000 with £50,000 roof expenditure to be spent next year. Also £3,500 for external re-decoration (which may be more like £5,000 due to the additional areas required) and £1,500 for internal re-decoration next year. Internal maintenance expenditure this year covered the works to the fire doors.

Internal cleaning

The contractors have not increased their charges for 4 years but are seeking to increase in the next year. The attendees commented that they are not happy with the quality of the cleaning at The Grange. The attendees commented that they would be pleased to pay more for a more thorough service. In particular the parquet flooring should be treated with the correct products rather than using soap and water which could potentially be damaging the floor.

A member suggested that a specification is drawn up and given to the cleaners to determine if there would be any increase in charge.

Front door light

A member commented that the front door light has not been working for some time. They were advised that a resident switches them off again each time they are switched on. Two suggestions were that a key switch is installed and/or anti- tamper screws replace normal screws to prevent bulbs being removed.

Additional electrical maintenance

EICR and occasional light maintenance.

Grounds Maintenance

£140.00, for trimming back hedges by side of building to enable erection of scaffolding, and previously gravel and bedding plants were purchased for the front of the building.

It was mentioned again that £1,100 was charged by Alan Hastings as agreed by directors for a roof survey that has never been received. It was agreed not to pursue Alan Hastings for either the report or a refund due to the bad feeling it may cause on the estate.

Fiona commented that she still hasn't been recompensed for the survey that she had to commission to be able to progress the repairs to the roof. The attendees were asked if they would agree to reimburse Fiona for these costs.

Insurance and D&O

The costs of this has decreased from 2019.

The managing agent advised that the administrative requirement of the site is disproportionate for the number of apartments and that it would continually review its services to determine if it would be feasible to continue under such circumstances.

AOB

A member thanked Andy for the assistance provided to them following a leak into a neighbouring property.

Meeting concluded at 8.24pm