

## IWRA Resident meeting notes 21 March 24

Hello everyone!

Apologies for the delay in this update we were waiting to have some information confirmed on a couple of issues.

First thank you to all of you who attended - we had approx. 25 people and a good open discussion about many common issues. We appreciate that many of the owners will not always be in the UK - we hope in the future to be able to arrange a zoom for people to dial in, but that may be a month or two down the road. In the meantime, we will always send out agendas and if anyone wishes to raise an agenda point, please let us know in advance of the meeting.

**IT WAS AGREED** that a limited company would be formed in order that the association has legal structure and therefore gravitas. This was questioned by two or three people who wondered if it were necessary, however it was pointed out that several other associations used a Ltd company format. There was no apparent downside apart from minor costs - the set-up of approx. £400 and an annual auditing fee (which should be kept to a minimum) it was therefore agreed we would go forward. Teresa and Jeremy will be directors initially - if anyone else would like to be a director or treasurer please do let us know.

**MEMBERSHIP IS GROWING** and we now have over 150 confirmed apartments and over 180 people on our mailing list. It was discussed that the most important thing was to grow this list - if we get to the magic number (which we believe is 450) we then have some real power and St George, FHC and R&R will have to take us seriously.

It was suggested and agreed that an annual fee of £50 per apartment would be paid to cover any costs, although if we decided to take legal or forensic accounting action, we may need to increase this as a one off. But - we would not do this lightly or without a reasonable chance of success. It would also be a matter that would be put to a membership vote

We are intending to reach out to the owner / leaseholder database through St George as we believe we have the right to request them to send an email to all leaseholders regarding the setting up of an association. Jeremy has contacted Petra Owen and she said she will help facilitate this through the R&R portal. She also told us that the R&R contract is renewed annually and gave the impression that she was open to dialogue regarding the 'association's' concerns.

In the meantime, it is important that everyone contacts or speaks to neighbours and encourages them to join. We will be sending a list to everyone already signed up in

each building showing the apartment numbers which we need to enlist. It is essential that we all do our best to increase the numbers.

We are also looking to have a representative for each building - so volunteers please!

**JAMES LI** has kindly offered to build us a website and we hope to have that up and running soon - adding gravitas but also allowing us to set out our aspirations' whilst encouraging further membership. Thank you, James!

**ELECTRICITY COSTS** - Martin reported back on his ongoing complaint to St George, relating to the electricity costs and procurement process for 21 and 22. At the time he had not received a written response however this has since been received but it was rather supportive of R&R, setting out the process and citing the unstable state of the electricity market at the time, suggesting that they are "satisfied that R&R acted reasonably....."

- They noted that landlord electricity prices are considered to be non-domestic which is something we believe we have a reasonable argument to dispute and which we will take up with our MP.
- Government backed discount schemes were not introduced until late 2022 and any discounts had been directly applied to the electricity bills and passed on to leaseholders in year ending balancing adjustments.
- It is believed that R&R ( who do not use an independent broker) receive a fee from the electricity company. In 2022 they confirmed it was 0.3p per KWH. However, it is unknown if there are any additional consumption based retro payments.
- It would seem an offer of compensation (as a gesture of goodwill) was made directly to Martin to 'cover his time spent' however, it is currently unclear if this would be more broadly applied to affected residents.

St George considers the matter closed, Martin does not and has made a complaint to the Ombudsman. We thank Martin for his outstanding work on this issue and will continue to support and act if we are able to take this matter forward. We will also use this exercise to allow us to also seek compensation for 23 if we are successful.

The key to here is to have a unified approach on these matters in conjunction with the significant influence that a recognised 'association' gives us. If we can get more than 50% of owners, then we can ensure a seat at the table to discuss the procurement for '24/25 utilities which happens in the next few months.

**COMPLAINTS AND OTHER ISSUES** - We would like to create a database of any ongoing or recently resolved matters in order that we can use experience gained to assist going forward. Please do send any details to

**imperialresidents@outlook.com**

**ONGOING ISSUES** of which we are aware -

- **Service charges** - The continuing increases and possible mismanagement of these funds, is top of everyone agenda. Teresa and Jeremy are both collecting information in order that we can decide the best way forward. The electricity costs, staffing, maintenance all fall under R&R's responsibilities, however we are also considering the reserve fund and in particular the effect St George has had on this by previously holding the fees down to help increase sales.

It would seem Chelsea Waterfront are taking R&R to a tribunal over increased service fees which have doubled in last 3 years. We will monitor this closely although we understand these complaints often end without success. We are also reaching out to other R&R developments to obtain any other info we can.

- **Airbnb/short term rentals** - There is a discussion with R&R about this problem which particularly effects Nacovia. It does require a lot of evidence to stop and having spoken to R&R and they do seem to have a reasonable protocol in place to try and obtain evidence against leaseholders who do short term lets. If anyone else is experiencing problems, please could you let us know.
- **Restaurants** - We are aware that there are problems here, particularly for the people who overlook the rear of the premisses. Please let us have details.

- **Security In garages and around development** - We have discussed this briefly with R&R. It would seem after problems relating to about 18 months ago with youths and a stabbing, cameras were installed and the police were consulted. The police have upped their support and presence which has helped. It was apparently discussed that automated shutters should be added to the carpark entrance to increase security but it was decided a 'public address' system similar to those used on petrol forecourts which allows a non-physical challenging of potential trespassers, thereby deterring criminal behaviour. We will continue to monitor this but please do let us know of any specific security problems.