

Homeowners Group Sub Committee Minutes

13th May 2024
5.30PM
Video Conference –
Recorded
JMB Boardroom

Attendance

- Clive Shaw (Chair/JMB BOD)	- Martin Bacon (<i>Member</i>)
- Kirk Davis (<i>Member</i>)	- Halima Iqbal (<i>Member</i>)
- John Lynch (JMB BOD)	- Emma Crookes (<i>Member</i>)
- Karen McLachlan (<i>Member</i>)	- Jennifer Dawn (JMB Homeownership Services Manager)
- Jason Gray (<i>Member</i>)	- Ali Iman (JMB Head of Property Services)
- Leigh Hatts (<i>Member</i>)	- Ian Newman (JMB BOD)
- Nick Pandy (<i>Member</i>)	

Agenda Items

1. **Introductions** – Ali Iman introduces himself to the group and that he will attend the Major works sub-committee meeting on the 28th of May 2024.

2. Apologies

- Christine Parsons (**JMB BOD**)
- Sam Mercer (*Member*)
- Ali Gurer (*Member*)

3. **Minutes from the 08/01/2024** – Agreed, with the actions points to be covered under JMB Homeowner updates section of this meeting. The Chair urged the group to follow up on the discussion topics from these meetings so that the JMB can proactively include them in the following meeting's agenda.

4. JMB Homeowner Updates - Jennifer dawn

Feedback on action points from the 08/01/2024

- *AP1: JD to update information to cover information for homeowners that are connected to a communal district heating system.*

If your property is connected to a communal District Heating system, you are not required to have an individual boiler gas safety check as this is carried out by the JMB on the communal boilers. Internal electrical safety checks are still advised.

<https://leathermarketjmb.org.uk/home-ownership/homeowner-gas-servicing/>

LH: Concerns were raised regarding the need for engineers having to come out twice a year to turn the radiator on and off within the dwelling as the seasons change. It seems that this is a design fault of the district system, and are the JMB paying a fee for every call out to do this?

Action Point 1: The Chair will look into this issue with the JMB and report back to the Kipling TRA as this must be affecting other residents also. JD will discuss with the JMBs contracts co-ordinator to ascertain if a fee is paid per visit.

- *AP2: If members of the group wish to have additional/more detailed information than that provided via the JMB and Southwark websites, Jennifer Dawn will invite a representative from the Southwark's conveyancing team to attend a meeting in 2024.*

No requests were received.

Leathermarket JMBs Website

- Monthly Estate inspections and the 2024/2025 deep cleaning schedule (Jet Washing) have been added to the JMBs website

<https://leathermarketjmb.org.uk/estate-inspections/>

Action Point 2: The chair will ask the JMBs Estate Services Manager whether this programme will cover clearing the moss on the pavements that can cause a slip hazard.

- Information regarding Southwark council's requirement for all homeowners to apply for a selective license if they are renting out their property has been added to the JMBs website.

<https://leathermarketjmb.org.uk/home-ownership/>

Southwark are now sending the JMB copies of the licences as we are the managing agent which we will save on the relevant house files, but the JMB do not get awarded any of the income generated from these licences.

IN: The licence is valid for 5 years and costs approximately £700.

2023/2024 Revenue Actuals Building Insurance premiums.

- The buildings insurance premium for 2023/24 revenue actual service charges will go up to close to the level of the 2024/25 estimate as the new insurance kicked in just before the beginning of April 2023, after the estimates had already been sent to leaseholders. The finance manager will be writing to all leaseholders with advanced notice of this ahead of the actuals billing run, which become due on the 1st of October 2024.

Please refer to the Southwark Council homeowners' section on their website, which details the difficulties they had in securing buildings insurance once Zurich indicated they wished to exit the market.

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/home-owners-services/buildings-insurance?chapter=2>

Leathermarket JMB IT solutions

- The JMB invited 2 companies to present their products with a view to find a company that can provide a comprehensive IT solution that will cover the general comms, complaints register, repairs ordering and recording, all finance and homeowner systems in one package.

Now that the JMB are more aware of what the market can and cannot provide, and the possible amount of bespokeing for homeowner services to match the

Southwark lease, the next stage is for the JMB to specify its requirements in order to go out tender.

NP: Asked if this procurement was subject to S20 consultation, how was it being paid for and will the homeowner system be better so that it matches the quality experienced previously when under the Southwark billing system.

JD: Office running costs are charged under the management fee for homeowners. Due to the IT system benefiting the entire JMB portfolio, it is not envisaged that the costs would be above the £250 per dwelling threshold.

However, any IT requirements that are solely for the benefit of homeowners and not across all stock are only charged to homeowners which could then lead to the threshold being met. The Southwark system was heavily bespoke and the costs to the JMB to remain on their system were too high, therefore a basic package was purchased which, although not overly user friendly, allowed the JMB to carry out the requirements of the lease. The JMB want to provide a better IT service for homeowners; however, these costs need to be measured against the potential increase in homeowners' management fees.

Action Point 3: The Chair confirmed that the IT project will be discussed at the next Board meeting and that it is hoped that significant progress would have been made by the next meeting of this group in September 2024.

5. Suggested topics of discussion by group members:

- Service charges – how are repairs works are recorded and checked for quality.

NP: The breakdown of repair jobs sent by the RSO are not clear and seem to have duplications as well as jobs for individual properties within the block.

HI: Repairs to windows and front doors are the JMBs responsibility to repair and therefore form a part of the service charges.

JD: The process for querying the actual service charges is to request a detailed breakdown from the RSO, which should be presented in a user-friendly format. If there are any queries regarding the contents of the breakdown, ask your RSO to investigate and respond to you accordingly.

JG: A breakdown was received but no explanation has been given as to whether the repeated repairs jobs have resolved the issue, and if not, what is the JMBs plan to resolve it. Also, who is checking the quality of the repairs.

JD: Daily repairs work in general terms are not pro-actively checked for quality unlike major works that have a specific specification, schedule of works and defects period. The JMB does rely on resident feedback, TRA estate inspections, the estate staff that are on site daily and the operatives themselves. If a problem is identified, the JMB does have processes for quality checks dependant on the contractor that undertook the initial work. If the work is carried out by the JMBs internal repairs direct labour force, then the repairs supervisor or manager will post inspect. If the work is carried out by an external contractor, the JMBs contracts co-ordinator will carry out the investigation.

KM: Raised that there are paint failures on the downpipes and rippling of the walkways at Crosby Row post major works, and wondered if these would be service chargeable to remedy.

JD: If the project is in defects, the contractor should come back and make good under the terms of the major works contract at no extra cost to the JMB. Either way, a leaseholder should not have to pay for the same service twice within the expected lifespan of a product, such as external paint, as it would mean that the repair/decoration has failed in its expected lifespan/manufacturers guarantee period. JD and the Chair advised KM to alert the major works manager Ian Cade or Ali Iman so that they can address this issue at the next major works sub-committee meeting.

Action point 4: JD asked that NP & JG send her their two examples of service charge repairs breakdowns so that she can investigate and use them as training tools for the RSO team on how to respond correctly to these requests.

- Comparable property service charging

EC: Are the service charges for a property of the same size the same across different blocks.

JD: Estimated Service charges are based on the last 3 years of actual charges for the block; therefore, the service charge would not be the same for different blocks with different repairs histories. The finance team also take into account any major works undertaken that would have rectified the previous repairs issues making the 3-year average redundant for that element of the service charge. The building insurance premiums are currently only based on bed weighing and not the location or height of the block that the property falls within.

- Inspections post renovation (leaseholder consent to make alterations)

JG: The quality and care carried out during the JMBs post inspection of internal works left a lot to be desired, and the communication when arranging the appointment, which was at least 6 weeks after the matter was referred by Southwark, was abrupt. The operative, although pleasant and polite, didn't seem to know why he was there, didn't check the works against the extremely strict and detailed FRA requirements made by Southwark and was only in the property for a matter of minutes. Although the JMB have reported back to Southwark that the works were carried out satisfactorily, the basis of this seemed to be by photos taken rather than an actual inspection of works making the JMBs role in the process seem a pointless exercise.

JD apologised and confirmed that the JMBs procedure for the post inspection of internal alterations had failed since the departure of the Property services manager, who would carry out the post inspections personally against the application documentation and certification provided post works. The interim Head of property Services allocated these post inspections to the repairs supervisor, and this reported experience is not of the turnaround time or quality required for post inspections that would allow Southwark Council to provide a leaseholder with informed consent and satisfy the JMB that the works carried out are safe.

Action Point 5: JD will feed back to the Head of Property Services so that he can address either the training needs within the repairs team or the re-allocation of the leaseholder post inspections to another post holder.

6. Any Other Business

- **EC:** Panels were damaged at Burwash House during the major works project, but not rectified as it was intended that they would be replaced under a future FRA programme. Is this still the case, and if not will they be made good by the contractor for the major works that were service charged.

JD & CS: The plan for the block is not yet certain, but it will be highlighted to the Head of Property Services and the Major Works manager by JD and EC so that they are aware of the outstanding works and that they either need to be undertaken under the major works contract or the costs removed at final account so that there isn't a double service charge for when they are repaired/replaced.

- **KD:** Asked if there is a timeline for requesting and responding to breakdown requests.

JD: There is a statutory period of 6 months after actuals are demanded for homeowners to request a detailed breakdown free of charge. The Landlord must respond within 30 days.

The JMB will respond and provide detailed breakdowns outside of this timeframe (electronically for free); however, the response timeframe may be longer as the finance team would be working on the current year's financial matters as a priority.

- The Chair & JD asked for agenda items to be sent proactively over the next 3 months.

7. Next Meeting Date – Monday 16/09/2024 at 5.30pm.

Meeting concluded at 18:48.