

## Hughenden Court (Hastings) RTM Co Ltd

### Minutes of general meeting held 18 October 2023

Directors present: -

Katja Seaton (chair), Steve Collinson, Tim Miller, Tony Oak and Linda Scott. Apologies received from Howard Seaton.

Leaseholders present: -

Dave Jones, Lorraine Thomas, Alison Oak, Steve Deaville, Patrick & Sharon O'Farrell, Vivian & Nigel Chatfield, Barry Foster, Rod Stapley, Jo Woodford, Rick Allen, Sharon Cox, Robin Tyler, Mark Bennett, Lesley Dennis, Michael Edwards, Kevin Lever, Nikki Bryant and Alex Hardy. Apologies received from Stephen Ashdown.

Also present: -

Emma Woodhouse and Lee Potterton (Housemartins Property Management)

### Introduction

Meeting has been called to provide leaseholders with an opportunity to meet and question representatives from Housemartins Property Management in light of concerns being aired through anonymous notices being circulated around Hughenden Court.

It was also explained to all present that continuing with the current management arrangements was no longer viable, especially as the bulk of the work was being borne by one person and who has been subjected to verbal abuse and bullying from some leaseholders and tenants!

### Introduction from Housemartins Property Management

Housemartins Surveyors were established in 2004 and then diversified into property management in 2009. They currently manage around 40 developments.

The RTM is being charged £195 + VAT per unit per year = £10998.00.

(Housemartins were approached along with 3 other companies. 4 companies were invited for an informal meeting and tour of the building. A formal interview carried out by a panel of 4 RTM directors then took place before selecting Housemartins. All 4 companies were invited but 1 then decided not to participate).

### Service charges

The current payment arrangements and financial year are out of sync with those set out in the lease and legal advice has been received that we should return to these i.e. our financial year runs from 31 January to 30 January and service charges are paid annually in March.

Over the last 6 years of self-management the directors have endeavoured to keep service charges low and a great deal of work has been carried out on a voluntary basis, but this is no longer a practical option with increasingly complex legal requirements particularly with regards to fire safety in light of the Grenfell Tower fire. It was made clear that the current fire safety issues are not down to any negligence by the directors.

The first service charge demand issued by Housemartins cover the interim period from 1 October 2023 to 30 January 2024 (4 months). The next demand will be issued for the year 31 January 2024 to 30 January 2025 and is due to be paid on 25 March 2024. For this year ONLY it will be possible to make quarterly payments – in March, June, September and December. It is essential that if any leaseholders is experiencing difficulty in paying the MUST contact Housemartins.

Collecting monies on a yearly basis allows for better planning of maintenance expenditure. A rolling programme of at least 5 years work is required to address the problems the building is suffering.

A dedicated client bank account has been set up at Nat West to hold Hughenden Court leaseholders' funds.

#### Fire safety

As a priority a survey of all fire doors (both communal and flat front doors) is in progress – a requirement by our building's insurer in response to new fire safety regulations. Very few doors are compliant (so far 1 out of 100) so a programme of improvements will be needed!

Communal doors will be paid for from the service charge, while flat front doors will be charged to each leaseholder separately. It would be sensible to allow Housemartins to arrange the remedial work to each flat door as the legislation empowers them to be able to act on our behalf. However if Leaseholders make their own arrangements, they must provide certification that their door is now compliant. If the door fails its re-test, Housemartins will be instructed to engage a contractor to deal with the remediation at your expense.

#### Building's insurance

In light of the issue of the fire doors and other fire safety issues around breaches to fire compartmentalisation our insurer is threatening to remove cover. The consequence of this is that it will not be possible to buy or sell flats. While issues are being addressed it is also likely that our premiums will increase.

#### Section 20

In view of the amount of work required it is likely that S.20 consultations will also be needed. Leaseholders are able to nominate contractors as part of the consultation process. The contractors will be vetted for suitability before they are asked to tender.

#### Other immediate priorities

Due to the water ingress issues being faced by south and west facing flats on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors a leak detection company is being engaged. They use thermal imaging cameras to identify possible sources of leaks. Affected flats' leaseholders have been contacted.

A long term maintenance plan will be created to help with budgeting going forward.

A vote of thanks was proposed and accepted to all the directors for their work on behalf of leaseholders.