

Minutes of Hughenden Court (Hastings) Co Ltd meeting held at 11am on 18 May 2019 at St Mark's Church Hall

RTM Company Members present

1. Welcome and introduction

Steve Collinson (Company Secretary) welcomed all members to the meeting and the other directors (Barry Foster, Howard Seaton, Tony Oak & Rod Stapley) introduced themselves.

2. Apologies for absence

3. Minute of the last meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 1 December 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising

The cavity wall insulation has not gone ahead yet as only 13 flats automatically qualify under HHCRO for funding. Flats qualifying under 'Eco-flex' are not having their applications supported by East Sussex County Council. We are awaiting a response to an enquiry to Warmfront about the cost of installing for the 35 that don't qualify.

The installation of solar panels has not been proceeded with due to concerns over funding and the suitability of the roof as well as the possibility of a revision of the lease which could be costly.

Issue of the unidentifiable meter has been resolved and a refund of around £1k has been received from Southern Water. Installation of individual meter still looks unlikely due to the plastic pipe work and individual assessed charges would be more than what each flat pays now.

Electricity is now being paid by monthly direct debit currently £440 – this reduces the annual bill by 7%.

5. RTM Finances

It was reported that all money had now been transferred from Fairways Management but there were still concerns about possible funds in another account they might be operating. Still no progress was being made to arrange a handover meeting with Fairways.

It was agreed by the meeting to authorise the directors to engage a forensic accounts solicitor to deal with the issue of our financial arrangements with Fairways.

The meeting was also made aware that a number of flats still owed service charges/water rates for previous years, have not made full payments since 1 October 2018 and are not responding to any correspondence from the RTM.

The meeting further instructed the directors to also approach a solicitor as the first stage to recouping outstanding amounts, although some legal advice already sought was not particularly helpful.

6. Proposal for future payment arrangements for the company secretary

It was agreed to increase the company secretary fee in 2019/20 to £1000 per annum. This amount is equivalent to the postholder's monthly service charge (currently £68.33) and an additional amount of £15 per month in recognition that his own laptop, printer, electricity etc is being used.

7. Proposal for future billing arrangements of the water rates

It was agreed that from 1 October 2019 a monthly charge of £25 would be added to the monthly service charge to cover the cost of each flat's share of the water bill. The figure of £25 is based on our last bill and regular meter readings going back to December 2017.

8. Building maintenance priorities based on surveyors report

It was agreed to approach Nick Bonner to repair car park ventilation upstands and other work to be carried out on an ongoing basis. Advice to be sought on flooring particularly removal of 'Marley' tiles under the carpets. Two quotes received for replacing carpets in lift lobbies (£530 & £750 per floor) but requiring us to remove and dispose of existing carpet.

It was agreed that more expensive work (e.g. repointing) although not immediately urgent needs planning. In light of this it was agreed to set up a sinking fund to help meet the cost of major work by: -

- Adding any unspent maintenance money at the end of each financial year starting this September.
- From 1 October charging each flat an additional £10 per month to add to the sinking fund providing £5640 per year.

9. Lease regulations relating to flats and parking spaces and 'code of conduct' for rented flats

It was suggested that landlords must incorporate these as part the tenancy agreement.

One area that is causing concern is the separate renting out of parking spaces to non-residents of Hughenden Court. The subletting of part of a flat is not permissible and depending on how the lease is interpreted the car park space is part of the flat – the demised premises is defined in the lease as the flat **and** car parking space.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 1pm.