

Heathfield Court (Chiswick) Ltd
Company wholly owned by all 74 flat owners
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**HEATHFIELD COURT CHISWICK LTD.
BOARD MEETING 11th JANUARY 2022.
REPORT TO RESIDENTS**

On the 11th of January the Board of Heathfield Court (Chiswick) Limited (HCCL) held a Zoom Board Meeting to review the company's financial position, to plan the Leaseholders' AGM and to take other decisions about the day-to-day management of the Estate. Below is a summary of the main areas of discussion and decisions that affect non-leaseholder Residents.

Remember you can find this letter and more Heathfield Court information on our website at www.heathfield-court.co.uk

1. Key Points:

1. We intend to proceed with the planned project to replace the lifts in Blocks 2 and 3, scheduled to begin in the late Spring.
2. We are taking advice about getting more efficiency from our new communal central heating system in anticipation of escalating gas costs. See below for more information.
3. Bike thefts have continued within the site so we plan to enclose the existing bike shelter and ask a security consultant to produce a report on the overall security of the Heathfield Court estate.
4. The rubbish bins are a problem with increasing untidiness in the area. As a trial we will ask Hounslow Council to provide more bins for recycling.
5. We plan to improve the garden areas with more year-round colour and more perennial plants.

2. Lift Project:

The Board has instructed Faraday, our Building Managers, and our lift consultants to proceed with plans to replace the lifts in Blocks 2 and 3. Work should start around May 2022 and be completed by the Autumn. Faraday will be in touch with flat owners and residents once a detailed schedule of works is finalised.

3. Managing the Central Heating and Hot System to reduce gas consumption:

As you know, Heathfield Court provides all the hot water and central heating to the flats from a bank of communal central boilers. Because residents have no separate gas bills to pay, it's easy to think that the heating is 'free', yet it is one of the biggest single costs included in the annual Service Charge that all Leaseholders pay.

Without timers or wall thermostats, it's difficult for residents to control the temperature inside their flats, other than by turning their radiators on or off manually. For this reason we need to manage the communal system as efficiently as we can to provide flats with heating and hot water at a comfortable temperature while at the same time exercising control over our energy consumption and costs. At the moment, Heathfield Court has a fixed rate gas contract until May 2022, but, with recent dramatic increases in gas prices, we must be prepared for a significant price rise when the contract is renegotiated.

With this in mind, the Board has consulted the company who installed the new boilers about the best ways to operate the system to reduce our consumption of gas without unduly affecting the comfort of residents. The following points emerged:

- a) The new boilers, with their more sophisticated control systems, were commissioned in November 2020 and already seem to be showing some reduction in gas consumption.
- b) The system's temperature controls are at present set to respond to the external air temperature, but with no limit on the heat generated or the times when the boilers are running. This could be a wasteful way of heating flats and particularly the common parts.
- c) There have been complaints that many flats are too hot and that the tap water is also very hot. The heating can sometimes still be on during warm weather, as well as throughout the night.
- d) We often find the staircase windows are opened, even in cold weather, as the landing radiators are too hot, which is an expensive waste of energy. Fitting radiator thermostat valves in the common parts might be problematic, as the heating pipes are old and sludge could clog up these controls and therefore be costly to maintain for perhaps limited benefits.
- e) With climate change and reducing carbon emissions high on the agenda, Heathfield Court needs to be proactive in reducing its energy use.
- f) Preliminary advice is that we can reduce our energy consumption significantly by taking some simple steps that will make a difference. These are summarised below.
- g) There are other initiatives we will consider which will be subject to a further cost benefit analysis, such as better insulation of the hot water pipes, draft-proofing the fire escape doors, and improving the roof insulation. We will also look at the economics of installing photovoltaic solar panels on our roofs to provide electricity to the garages and communal areas.

A Heat Loss Study of our blocks will therefore be undertaken to advise on ways to reduce our gas and electricity consumption, which will include measures that can be undertaken by residents within their flats.

In the meantime, the following 'Quick Wins' have been identified that would have an immediate reduction in gas consumption. These will be closely managed by Faraday and our boiler engineers to make sure that residents' comfort is not compromised..

1. The Central Heating System will be shut down from late Spring to early Autumn rather than relying on the external temperature control.
2. The Government recommends that an acceptable room air temperature should be around twenty one degrees and we will set the boilers to achieve this within the flats.
3. We will also trial having variable temperature settings between day and night hours.
4. Many residential blocks, old and new, have no heating to their Common Parts, so we will trial turning off the hall and landing radiators. It has been estimated that this initiative alone could reduce consumption by approximately five per cent. We will maintain some ventilation in the common parts as a Covid19 precaution.
5. The hot water tap temperatures will be monitored and reduced as necessary to a more comfortable level, consistent with overall safety.

4. Refuse and Recycling Bin Area:

With the increase in online shopping and home deliveries, a lack of recycling capacity has become apparent, particularly over the weekend, with items being left untidily alongside the bins. Unfortunately, providing more bins, including some for glass and food waste, is not that simple.

1. The bins are in a very restricted area boxed in by the garage blocks, and the Raylian and Devonhurst residential buildings.
2. The refuse area can attract vermin, including foxes.
3. The neighbouring flats in Devonhurst Court have complained about this area and previously informed us that they would object to glass and can recycling because of the noise.
4. Online shopping and home deliveries have exacerbated the problem of disposing of packaging materials.
5. Some residents have been seen on CCTV not placing their rubbish in the bins, leaving the area untidy and an invitation to vermin. This should stop.
6. Every morning the Porter tidies up the area and moves the waste bins around so they can all be used, but this cannot be done at the weekend.
7. Sometimes residents leave large items by the bins for which they should make special arrangements for Hounslow Council to collect or take to the nearest Municipal recycling Centre.

There are no easy solutions, but it will help if residents are more considerate:

1. The Porter collects residents' bagged waste every morning from outside their flats, which ensures that the waste bins properly used and well managed. Residents should use this facility.
2. As a trial, and with the cooperation of Hounslow Council, we will increase the number of cardboard and plastic recycling bins and correspondingly reduce the number of waste bins.
3. Faraday will discuss with Hounslow Council the possibility of more frequent collections and bottle recycling solutions.
4. Faraday will investigate the cost and practicality of a compactor as a long-term solution.
5. If residents have large items to be disposed, they should contact the Porter for help and advice.
6. All residents will be asked to manage their rubbish and recycling more carefully and not to leave rubbish outside the bins, particularly at weekends, bearing in mind that Porter will be making a collection from each flat in Monday morning.

5. Heathfield Court Security and Bike store:

Despite recently upgrading the CCTV and security lighting, in the last year there has been a number of bicycle thefts. We have also had a break in to six garages. Therefore the external bike shelter will be enclosed and the cost recovered by charging users a small storage fee, though bicycles will still be left at the owner's risk. We will also get professional advice on other ways of making Heathfield Court a more secure place.

9. Garden Planting Review:

The Board and our garden contractor have carried out a detailed review of the Heathfield Court landscaping. A programme of planting shrubs and bulbs in the lawns and borders will soon begin to introduce more year round colour into the landscaping and to provide a more diverse range of flora that will better support birds and insects, including butterflies, as well as the local hedgehog population! As part of the programme of works the two wooden planters at the front of the lawn fronting Block 2 will be removed and replaced with shrubs to provide an array of colours during the spring and summer months.

Further information on the garden planting programme will be posted on the Heathfield Court website.

Consideration is also being given to the large conifers in the courtyard which have grown to the point where they dominate this part of the Heathfield Court estate, removing light and sterilising the ground under the trees where no vegetation will grow. We have looked at solutions in the past, but these trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order and Heathfield Court is in a Conservation Area. After taking proper advice, we will have further discussions with Hounslow Council to see if consent might be forthcoming to replace these trees with species that are smaller in scale and that will better support bird and insect life, as well as bring more light and colour to the courtyard.

10. Procedure for Dealing with Noise and other disturbance matters:

Fortunately, we do not have any real social disturbance issues at Heathfield Court. From time to time we do receive complaints from residents about noise, but often this arises from misunderstandings of the rules and guidelines that prevail at Heathfield. In the first instance any complaint should be reported to Faradays who will contact the parties concerned. If the problem persists the Board will take action under the terms of the Lease or any rental agreement, and in extreme cases, take civil action.

Residents are advised not to take matters into their own hands. Faraday and the Board will diplomatically handle the matter.

The Heathfield Court Management Board.

21st January 2022.