

# Winter 2011 London Yard Newsletter



## Message from the Board

Since we started creating these newsletters three years ago, we have continually received positive feedback from shareholders who appreciate being kept up to date of goings on in London Yard. It is for this reason that we have decided to extend them whenever possible so that we can provide more information on the news that matters, such as finances and more detailed articles. We are encouraged by the positive atmosphere from the AGM and as we move forwards, it's important to remember that we're all in it together & we all have the same dream to see London Yard become a premier place to own property and live. We ask you all to make a new years resolution to help us turn these dreams into reality. In the meantime, we wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a prosperous 2012!

*The LYMC Board*

## AGM 2011

This took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> November at Mudchute Farm and we'd like to thank everyone who came and contributed to the various discussions. There was a real spirit of cooperation and understanding in the room and a collective desire to work together on an on-going basis. All the motions were passed, including the new M&AA and the minutes will be posted on the website shortly after the November board meeting.

## Cycle Store - We Need your Help!

The store has proved very popular with many residents taking good advantage of being able to leave their bicycles in a secure holding without having to clutter up their own homes. This positivity was supported at the AGM where the Board were commended on providing such a facility. Unfortunately we have been requested by LBTH to put in a retrospective planning application. As it makes such an important and effective contribution for both London Yard and the environment, we need your help in ensuring the application is approved. Once the application has been accepted, we will be provided with a Reference Number and relevant Contact details, which we will make public to all shareholders. We then ask that you please write to the planning department as soon as possible to support the cycle store. In line with the new Code of Conduct, we will be enforcing the lease conditions regarding the storage of bikes, etc. in the common areas so please ensure that you use the facility which has been provided for you.

## Parking Policy

Whilst a robust parking policy is still a necessity on London Yard due to the many years of abuse by shareholders and residents, we have always acknowledged that it is a work in progress and will need constant monitoring. To that end, we will be holding a review and consultation in Q1 2012 in line with the feedback received and the needs of shareholders, residents & visitors. This will also include a review of the clamping company.

## Winter Gardening

Simon has met with Parc and discussed the Winter Plan. He has identified 7 key areas to work on and we look forward to the improvements next year. We will also be planting spring bulbs shortly to give us a burst of colour early in the year. This will include tulips, to go with our overall Dutch theme.

## Let's work together

### Being a Good Resident / Leaseholder

ARMA is the only body in England & Wales to focus exclusively on matters relating to the block management of leasehold properties. In an ongoing effort to improve everyone's living environment, we will be highlighting one issue per quarter from their LAN10 document.

**Fire safety** - do not store petrol, calor gas or paraffin heaters in your flat or on balconies or garages. Please do not light barbecues, of any size, on a balcony.



### External & Internal Works

The external works finished 2 weeks earlier than planned which was great news. We anticipate a modest underspend against budget but we won't have any final numbers for a few weeks. We will send out these numbers with the Project Implementation Review document, which will tell you what works were completed on your block. Once this is done we will be starting the Section 20 process to commence the internal works. Work has already started on Block 4's internals, with a 12 week work program, including a short Christmas break

### Summer BBQ

After the rain called off the first attempt, the determined Board rescheduled the Summer BBQ to 24<sup>th</sup> Sept and we are very pleased to report that it was a roaring success! The weather stayed dry, the drink flowed, the children played and the London Yard residents bonded over a good burger! One of our talented leaseholders took some great snaps and you will find a link to these on the front page of our website Our new board member, Ro Mills, will be focusing on bringing more social events to London Yard so watch this space! If you have any ideas or would like to help arrange something, please get in touch.

### Christmas Tree Collection

And from summer to Christmas! We hope you enjoy the festive season but when all the fun is over, please remember that as in previous years, Tower Hamlets will be collecting up our used trees so please ensure you make use of this service. Please take your trees to the outdoor storage area for the Caretaker by 5<sup>th</sup>

**January 2012.** The area can be found on the South boundary at the end of a 3 garage block with wooden fencing to the entrance.



### Budget

We will shortly be starting the Budget & 25 year plan review process. We have some challenges around the 25 year plan as there are some items, such as the pond, which were not originally included and we have a number of issues to further understand and address as part of this process. As always we will endeavour to keep all costs or payments for shareholders to the minimum.

### Redevelopment of the Asda site

Asda have now proposed a plan to increase the size of their supermarket and to build 850 new homes, many in a 21 storey block and are also planning to close the petrol station - a local and much needed service. A recently published article on all the plans can be found on our website and in the meantime, please email Councillor Gloria Theinel at [gloriathienel@aol.com](mailto:gloriathienel@aol.com) or write to her at: c/o Members Services Town Hall, Mulberry Place, E14 2BG with any concerns or objections to the proposal.

### Sales & Rentals on London Yard

Thank you to leaseholders Barbara Gorrie and Shelley Charik who have collaborated on an article identifying our rental opportunities after both recently having very positive experiences of renting their refurbished properties (see over.) For your interest we have also asked 2 estate agents to comment on our sales market

### Contacts

- Mark Plunkett at Parc Properties : 020 7515 3553 or email [docklands@parcproperties.co.uk](mailto:docklands@parcproperties.co.uk)  
- London Yard Board : [lymc@londonyard.net](mailto:lymc@londonyard.net)  
- Parc 24 hour emergency: 0207 537 9394  
- All other contacts can be found on the website: [www.londonyard.net](http://www.londonyard.net)



## Improve your Rental Return for the Long-term



Is your flat rented out? The rental market is very strong at present. Are you taking full advantage? The London Yard estate is attractive and secure. Its proximity to Canary Wharf makes its flats very easy to let. At the same time, the lack of low-deposit mortgages has forced many would-be owners to rent instead. Rents are rising steadily. But this does not mean that renters will pay a high rent for an unattractive flat.



Some of the flats on the estate have had little or no improvement work since they were built over 20 years ago. Renters now expect good central heating, constant hot water, modern bathrooms and fitted kitchens. They want to see wood-laminate flooring or at least carpeting that is clean and unworn. Many owners have taken advantage of the recent opportunity to replace old window units during the external works to the blocks but there are still flats with their original windows, now beginning to leak and difficult to see through because of condensation between the panes.

Some owners perhaps do not realise the financial returns available from a refurbishment. To take a one-bedroom flat as an example: its sale value might be as low as £200,000 if in a poor state, or as high as £250,000 if refurbished. Its weekly rental might be as low as £200 or as high as £300. A refurbishment could be done for £10,000 to £15,000.

Leave aside the immediate capital gain in the value of the property. This can only be realised if you sell, and the sales market is somewhat depressed, for the same reason that the rental market is strong.

But just look at the return on the investment: an annual increase in rental income of up to £5000 which would repay the outlay in 2 to 3 years. Even if the annual rent increase were only half of this, the return would still be excellent. Suppose you borrowed £10,000 at 6%. You would pay interest of £600 a year out of the £2500 extra rent and you would have made enough extra income to repay the loan after 5 or 6 years (the effect of agency fees, taxes, etc. is omitted for the sake of simplicity). Put it another way, using the most conservative figures: suppose you put £15,000 into a savings account at 4%. You would get interest of £600 a year. The annual return of £2,500 from the refurbishment is four times bigger.

Real Estate agents Felicity J Lord, who attract clients looking for better quality flats at rents well in excess of £250 a week for a one bedroom flat, have recently rented out three refurbished apartments in London Yard. They say that, even though London Yard is an older block and not as central to Canary Wharf as are preferred other developments, a combination of modern refurbished blocks and renovated interiors is making it attractive to their clients.



Another local estate agent also commented that he has dealt with London Yard for over fifteen years and what was once regarded as an old faded development is fast achieving a more upmarket reputation.

Not only do you get more rent. You get the sort of renters who can afford a higher rent. These are likely to be better tenants who will take better care of your property and of the London Yard estate as a whole. They will be further encouraged to behave well, simply because the property they are renting is in an excellent state of repair. If a property is badly maintained, its occupants feel their actions cannot make it much worse. If it is modern and bright, they will be much more likely to keep it that way.

The rental market is very strong. Don't let the opportunity slip. If you are renting your property out and it is getting "tired", this is the perfect time to improve it.

*Barbara Gorrie & Shelley Charick*



## London Yard Sales Market



The recent communal refurbishments have put London Yard on a par with slightly newer developments such as Pier Head Lock and Galleons View. After a history of neglect and under-development buyers are now seeing London Yard as excellent value for money. Here one can buy a larger than average flat set in pleasant grounds, where very few flats are over-looked and there is a diversity of dwellings. LY service charges are average when compared to similar developments and as long as it is apparent what the money is being spent on, the charges would not put off perspective buyers. We recently sold a flat in Vermeer within one to two weeks. It had taken us about four months to sell it 3-4 years ago before the refurbishments. If London Yard is to continue its increase in popularity it is imperative that the communal areas are kept smart and modern.

With the recent and on going improvements within London Yard we have noticed a marked increase in interest for sales and lettings within the development. Showing properties is a lot easier now that the communal areas present a much nicer standard to the blocks. Its no surprise that the improvements and aesthetic appeal have not just allowed us to increase asking prices but the actual prices being achieved have increased on both sales and lettings. With the majority of properties offering larger living spaces than many other developments the interest and demand for London Yard will continue to grow as it continues to enhance it's appeal to both tenants and buyers.



## LYMG EVENTS PRESENTS 2011 CHRISTMAS EVENT

We would like to invite you to the turning on of

London Yard's Christmas Lights

Saturday 3rd December at 3.30pm



By the Pond – Mulled Wine & Mince Pies supplied