

WELLINGTON MILLS HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

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London
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ALL RESIDENTS

JULY 1993

THE CHANGING FACE OF CO-OPERATIVES AND ALL THAT**INTRODUCTION**

This note covers ground, relevant to all residents at WM and (we feel) should therefore receive a wider circulation than purely tenant-members. Who knows, we might even attract one or two to apply to join/rejoin the co-op.

CHANGES

As most of you now know (either from what you have read in the newspapers or from what we have passed on to you), Central Government (CG) has clearly sought to change the role of Local Government (LG) in the past years as far as the provision of services is concerned --- local authorities assuming more of an "enabling and monitoring" role in the provision of services rather than as the chief providers of local services. Increasing financial controls have been clearly tied into a policy of increasing the power of CG to decide what should be provided by LG and how it should be provided.

The Housing Act 1988 has pushed some councils into recognising that they must have some kind of partnership with their tenants if they want to keep them and their housing stock. It has started to make some councils regard the tenants more as customers with a less paternalistic, bureaucratic style of management, often developing local neighbourhood and estate housing officers, or have allowed whole estates to bid to become EMB's or TMC's.

Against this background, and given an inbred reluctance (over the years) to deal with LBC, WM appears to be caught in a time-warp. Some of us feel that we are being underfunded by LBC to allow us to operate the way we do and additionally, we are missing out on benefits falling to other estates. On the matter of financial provision, the Chairman has referred to this at the last 3 GM's, so it should come as no surprise to see this in writing. Although probably a pointless exercise (because reference to financial matters appears to be about as popular as a visit to the dentist) he will give the usual 5-10 minute

summary at the next GM. On matters relating to TMC's etc., even on sprawling conurbations such as the Tabard in Southwark, the tenants are uniting/pulling together to take advantage of what is on offer (see attachment).

TO QUOR OR NOT TO QUOR

As mentioned before, one of the problems faced by MC's, past and present, is whether enough members will turn up for GM's. (ie. the dreaded Quorum). Although a lack of attendance might be seen (by those monitoring performance) as a marked reluctance to continue as a co-operative, we know that there are some extenuating circumstances (illness, immobility etc.) which means that some tenants are unable to do so. We also know that there are some who could attend but do not wish to do so. Although there is little we can do to influence those who fall into the latter category, it might be helpful to explain why a lack of attendance some 4 times a year can be somewhat demoralising to committee members, who put in many (unpaid) hours of their leisure time so that the co-op. may continue to function.

There are two factors worthy of mention in this respect. The first is the nugatory effort resulting from a cancelled or poorly attended meeting. (This means that the preparation time, including the additional meeting attended by the MC to discuss possible arisings at the GM, is wasted effort). Secondly, a suspension of SO's to allow a meeting to proceed, means that it is not possible to take a vote on expenditure items. Given that for some items there is already a built in time lag, ie. the need to go out to tender, receive and evaluate quotations etc., the inability to get "approval-in-principle" at the GM delays the process by at least a further 3 months.

Turning finally to the position of the current MC regarding quorums. After our first two GM's (which were both well attended) and taking into account that the Social Committee had been reformed during this period, we felt that we had turned the corner as far as "a lack of a quorum" was concerned. A pessimist advised, however, that it would be complacent to assume this as, the first meeting included an item proposing "a rent free period" and that meetings with this item on the agenda were always well attended, and the second, an item likely to provoke heated discussion, which would also attract an audience. Pessimist said that the test would be the 3rd. meeting, when neither item was on the agenda, and felt we would not get a quorum. We disagreed, but were eventually proved to be wrong. The purpose of this parable, however, is to advise beforehand that although neither item is likely to be on the agenda for our 4th. (and last) meeting, we still hope that the quorum will be met.

THE WAY FORWARD, COMMITTEEWISE

Over the years a goodly number of tenants who came here in the Seventies have exercised the RTB (followed by the Right to Sell) and have left the estate. In the last 3 years we seem to have lost a number who were heavily involved in committee/co-operative matters and therefore difficult to replace. One

explanation put forward in this connexion, is that from 1990 LBC have shown greater interest in events at WM and the perceived loss of autonomy led to the exodus. Another view is that those who had committed much of their time to community matters felt that without the support of those around them, the time had come to move on. It is likely that the real reason for the departure of so many falls somewhere between the two. Whatever the reason it falls to those who remain (renters and leaseholders) and those who have recently arrived to decide whether the status-quo is worth retaining and supporting. We believe it is, not least because other estates are now overtaking us in the context of their level of commitment.

In order to gauge the level of support remaining here at WM (and this is very difficult to get a feel for at committee level) following the next GM, we intend to circulate a proforma to all households seeking views. This is something we would have to do anyway in order to demonstrate to LBC that we still have majority support.

NOTE

It is usual practice to circulate all proposed "round robins" to committee members so that they have an opportunity to comment on them before circulation. Given other commitments (not least among which is the fact that all of us are attempting to hold down "real jobs" when many about us are losing theirs --- apologies to Kiplin) and the fact that this GM is almost upon us, this has not been possible on this occasion. It should be borne in mind therefore that some points raised herein could be at variance with individual views of committee members.

Tenants take charge!

TABARD GARDENS TENANT MANAGEMENT CO-OPERATIVE

At Tabard Gardens Estate in North Southwark, we have voted overwhelmingly to form a Tenant Management Co-op to take over management of our estate from Southwark Council later this year. Run by tenants and residents through a main Board and six Area Committees, we will be the largest TMC in the country, managing over 1,400 homes.

Now we need to recruit top quality staff - committed to tenant control and equal opportunities - to advise us and to manage day to day operations. With Tenant Management Organisations high on the Government's agenda, to Tabard could boost your career - as well as provide you with an exciting job helping an energetic and supportive group of tenants and residents.

All salaries below are due for review from 1st July 1993. Rent free accommodation may be available for post marked 
We will consider candidates for the marked posts on a residential or non-residential basis.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSTS:

MANAGER

(Ref: M1)

£26,952 - £28,647

Qualified and experienced housing manager to advise on policy and to head our staff team.

DEPUTY MANAGER

(Ref: M2)

£23,547 - £25,254

Qualified and experienced housing manager to head Central Housing Management and to deputise for the Manager.

ARREARS & WELFARE RIGHTS TEAM LEADER

(Ref: AW1)

£19,806 - £21,195

Part-qualified housing manager with rent arrears and supervisory experience to advise tenants on benefits and to make sure rent is collected.

BUILDING INSPECTOR

(Ref: B1)

£21,741 - £23,547

CIOB or RICS qualified professional with management experience to head our building supervision and minor works team.

UPKEEP SUPERVISOR

(Ref: U1)

£19,293 - £20,316

Experienced cleaning and gardening professional to keep our estate beautiful.

FINANCE & ADMIN OFFICER

(Ref: FA1)

£21,741 - £23,547

Part- or AAT qualified accountant to control our finances and manage central services.

For further details write to our advisers, HACAS, United House, North Road, London N7 9DP or contact their 24 hour ansaphone service on 071-607 7747. Please quote the job reference(s). Closing date for receipt of completed application forms (CVs will not be considered): Friday 2nd July 1993 at 4.30pm.

HACAS
Incorporating Raynsford Dallison Associates

TEAM POSTS:

HOUSING ASSISTANT (3 POSTS)

(Ref: M3)

£14,523 - £15,744

to manage our estate and to help tenants.

ARREARS & WELFARE RIGHTS OFFICER (2 POSTS)

(Ref: AW2)

£16,191 - £18,795

to provide welfare rights advice to tenants and to make sure that rents are paid.

HANDYPERSON (3 POSTS)

(Ref: B2)

£14,523 - £15,744

to undertake small repair works throughout the estate.

CARETAKER / CLEANER (6 POSTS)

(Ref: U2)

£12,015 - £12,729

to keep our estate clean and to help tenants in emergencies.

UPKEEP ASSISTANT (2 POSTS)

(Ref: U3)

£7,314 - £11,379

to help keep our estate clean

RECEPTIONIST / TYPIST (2 POSTS)

(Ref: FA2)

£12,015 - £12,729

to provide secretarial support and to help callers in person and on the phone.

RENTS CLERK (2 POSTS)

(Ref: A4)

£12,015 - £12,729

to keep our rent accounts in order using a computerised system.

ACCOUNTS CLERK (2 POSTS)

(Ref: FA4)

£12,015 - £12,729

to operate our computerised general accounting system.