

St James Park (Long Ditton) Estate Company Limited

Minutes of the Annual general Meeting held at The Blue Room, St Andrews Church, Maple Road, Surbiton, Surrey KT6 4DS on Thursday 26th June 2025 at 8.00pm

1. Apologies

A list of apologies, including Robert Smith, the Chairman of the Estate Company, proxy submissions and attendees are held by Wallakers, the managing agents.

On behalf of the Board Alex Harvey chaired the meeting, introducing himself, his fellow Board Directors and Mr Robert Heald, Principal of Wallakers, managing agents.

The following items of business were discussed:

2. To Receive the Chairman's Report

The Chairmans report was delivered to the meeting by Stephen Moss in the Chairs absence. A summary is attached.

Questions arising:

a) The replacement of Wallakers with Bartholomews

The majority of residents in attendance were not aware that the Board had gone into tender for the management of the estate (houses and flats under separate tenders) or why.

The Acting Chair outlined why a review had been undertaken, the main components of the tender documents and the replies received.

The Board re-iterated that it acts in the best interest of all residents and that the plan had always been to advise residents of the transfer to Bartholomew's when the transition was underway and the administration, supporting policies and protocols had been initiated.

Residents were keen to understand what the Boards success metrics were for Bartholomew's. The Acting Chair advised that they were the basis for the tender and focused on: ensuring health and safety compliance, particularly in the apartments; and transparency, standardisation, visibility and control of activities and costs.

Residents, while grateful to the Board for all that they do, requested that communication be improved and that an opportunity to meet with the Bartholomew's is arranged. The Board advised that more information and a more structured communication policy would be available after an introductory meeting with Bartholomew's on 10th July.

Action: Board/ Bartholomew's

The Board confirmed that the estate had no direct employees, that the gardeners are employed under contract through Landform; and that the caretaker had recently resigned from his post. The Board will now look to bridge the gap with a temporary caretaker; and review the caretakers' duties and hours.

Action: Board

b) Covenants

Residents expressed concerns over covenants that were broken, and they felt, often not enforced.

The Board reiterated that new regulations or technology – boiler flues and EV chargers – meant that covenants had to be re-examined. In which case new guidance was issued. Unfortunately, some residents chose to ignore instruction, or not seek permission in the first place (i.e. painting over render).

The Board will be expecting Bartholomew' to be more pro-active to such issues; and have the advantage of an in-house legal department.

The Board are confident that in the future, this issue will be better managed.

c) Flat buildings insurance

Flat residents would like written confirmation on the building insurance purchased on their behalf. The Board confirmed that this was reviewed on a regular basis and that this would be noted as an action point for Bartholomew's.

Action: Bartholomews

d) Service charge

The Board confirmed that they did not expect any more extraordinary increases to the service charge, but did expect the service charge to increase with inflation.

There was a discussion around using RPI when planning estate income and expenditure. The Board are happy to consider this, but felt that because the service charge is collected only twice a year, this would not offer any additional insight.

3. To Receive and Approve the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting Thursday 27th June 2024

Minutes approved.

Matters arising from the minutes of the AGM, Thursday 27th June 2024

- Structure of apartment block and estate limited company: Residents from the flats were unaware that the apartment blocks have their own limited company and elected Board who meet separately, but also feed into the Estate Board. Residents suggested that a written note was posted to all flat owners advising them of this and inviting election to the Board.
- Roof tiles: Wallakers confirmed that the original roof tiles are no longer manufactured. Alternative options and clear repair/ replacement guidance is given on the estate website.
- Parking: Inconsiderate car parking is an on-going issue. The Board continues to monitor the situation, issuing notices and speaking and writing to residents as appropriate. Currently, the Board is reluctant to introduce clamping via an external company. This would involve installing numerous unsightly notices and an aggressive policy that the Board, at this stage, would prefer to avoid.
- Solar panel: 'Stick on' solar panels are not acceptable. In time panels that are recessed into the roof or solar panel tiles may be considered where the impact to the 'street scene' is minimised.
- Bin/ cycle stores: Although a covenant requirement, few residents keep their bins in their garages. Bin store are increasing and vary in quality and design. Perhaps the Board could issue guidance on size and design to encourage some uniformity. Cycle stores posing as bin stores are not permitted.

Action: Flat Board

Action: Board

4. To Receive the Accounts for the Company for the year ending 31st December 2024

Accounts approved.

The Board reiterated the effort made to control estate costs over the last 18 months and emphasised that this was always designed to be a short-term measure to the counter the deficit. Now that this has been achieved, the focus will turn to building reserves.

Of particular concern is the funding of large infrastructure projects, such as roads and pavements. Currently funds are insufficient to roll out an estate wide plan.

The residents thanked Fiona Canning and Steve Giddings for their time and diligence in getting the estates finances back on track.

The Board anticipate that with the transition to Bartholomew's the estates accounts will be more transparent and accessible.

5. To elect Directors

Derek Ball, Fiona Canning and Lorraine Black put themselves forward for re-election and were duly re-elected.

6. To Consider Any Other Business

- Social fund: Proposal to increase the monies collected for social events. To be taken away and discussed by Board, but in the interim we will stick to voluntary contributions of £2 and have a voluntary donations bucket at events.
- Bicycle box: Wallakers are investigating the possibility of a locked bicycle box in the basement of Grovesenor gate.
- Orchard: The pyracantha in the orchard is an on-going problem. The residents appreciate that it offers a nesting site for birds; and are happy for it to remain if it is better managed – pruned annually and at the right time so that nesting birds are not disturbed and berries allowed to form.
- Fountain: Security to the enclosed fountain is poor. Residents felt that this should be easy to rectify.
- JC pedestrian gate: The pedestrian gate onto Jennings Close is left open. Can it be made self-closing?

Action of the above items: Board