

22 September 2023

# Walterton and Elgin Community Homes

Selbourne House, 36A Elgin Avenue, W9 3AZ

020 7266 3347 | www.wech.org.uk



## RESIDENTS' UPDATE – 2023 AGM RESULTS AND PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Dear Residents

I'd like to thank all of you who attended this year's AGM, which took place on Wednesday 20 August 2023.

I am writing to confirm the names of the successful candidates and to publish their names as follows:

Nadia Faucher  
Gary Lewis  
Gordon Quinlan  
Lorraine Etienne  
Sean Griffin  
Vera Mrdak  
Angelique Csere  
Luis Johnstone

Where the business of the evening ran later than expected, I announced that the answers to residents' previously submitted questions would be published as part of this update. These are as follows:

**Question 1:** *I would like to propose a change to the order of the agenda for the next annual meeting to reflect the residents' voice more. Would it be possible for the 'formal' items to come after the questions from the residents? Maybe after agreeing the minutes?* (Question from Loraine)

**Answer:** Agreed. This year, we planned to respond to residents' questions on the annual report at item 7, immediately after voting. In future, we'll make sure residents get the opportunity to speak as early as possible in the meeting.

**Question 2:** *What has happened to the 5-year maintenance cycle, as it is now six years since this was last carried out? It seems that in the last few years standards within WECH have fallen and not as they used to be.* (Question from Barry)

**Answer:** Cyclical decorations ensure WECH's properties are wind and watertight, and are structurally maintained. None were carried out during 2020-21 and 2021-2022 because the Covid pandemic prevented access.

Cyclical decorations to 20 percent of WECH's properties would normally have restarted 18 months ago, with another 20% started six months ago. However, WECH's previous Chief Executive stopped the cyclical works programme, and the condition of WECH's properties has deteriorated.

I shall propose to the WECH Board that we restore this programme as quickly as possible, starting with the properties which have not been done for the longest time. In the

meantime, we are surveying the condition of WECH's homes to identify what needs to be done.

I am determined to bring back standards to at least what they used to be. Residents say they used to see Andy around the estates, and they could talk to him whenever they needed help.

I want to get to know WECH's residents, its staff and contractors, and all of the WECH family. By listening to you, I will find out what needs to be done and how best to do it. I want to work with you to build WECH back to be even stronger as an organisation and a community than before.

**Question 3:** *Where in the accounts is the one million pounds saved by WECH not carrying out repairs?* (Question from Andrew)

**Answer:** The previous Chief Executive changed the budget headings for the different types of maintenance expenditure at the same time as stopping the cyclical works programme. Not enough money was spent maintaining and repairing the properties and the cost of repairs have escalated by between 10 and 15%. Meanwhile, we must pay back a £6 million loan from building the new homes on the Elgin Estate.

I am investigating how WECH's expenditure has changed over the past three years, and I shall present options to the Board for taking back full control of WECH's money.

Increased costs, through inflation and higher interest rates have hit WECH like everyone else. But WECH's income last year was £4.5 million. It has over a million pounds in the bank. And it owns valuable assets. Properly managed, WECH can afford to maintain its properties, look after its community, and pay back the loan.

**Question 4:** *Please tell us what happened, and what is the present situation with Coral Williams?* (Question from Juan)

**Answer:** The previous Chief Executive terminated our service agreement for Coral to provide debt and welfare advice for WECH residents. Since July, WECH engaged a member of staff, Alex, to provide this service, which is now available five days a week. We shall keep this under review to make sure we are providing at least as much support this way as we did through Coral.

The previous Chief Executive also terminated Coral's lease on her office in Selbourne House. I shall review this and see how best we can use the office space owned by WECH and options to accommodate Coral, other WECH services, and community organisations.

We are very grateful for the support Coral has given WECH residents for the past 15 years. The services Coral provides are much valued by the people in North Paddington. WECH will do everything it can to find office space for her to continue to deliver her services as locally as possible.

I look forward to continuing to meet with you and the new Board and taking forward the priorities identified by them as your democratically elected representatives pending the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive.

**Suzanne Wolfe**  
**Interim Chief Executive**



