

Committee Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	Dated: 16 05 2017
Subject: City of London Almshouses Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information
Report author: Jacqueline Whitmore, Sheltered Housing Manager	

Summary

This report gives Members an information update on the City of London Almshouses, in Lambeth. Some of the information in the report also relates to the eight Gresham Almshouses on the estate.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In February 2013 the City of London Almshouses Trustees Committee was merged with the Housing Management Sub-Committee to form the Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee. This report is presented to alternate meetings of the Sub-Committee. It updates Members on operational matters relating to the Almshouses and their residents, and highlights any issues of concern, particularly where funding is required, which is additional to the current year's budget.

Current Position

2. Waiting List

As part of the Decant programme at Mais House, several residents expressed an interest in moving to City of London Almshouses. Five residents from Mais House have moved to the Almshouses and are very happy in their new homes.

Mais House residents have been given priority for the past year, but there are no further Mais House residents currently expressing a preference for an Almshouse, so other people on the waiting list can now be considered. There are currently three people on the waiting list. Officers will be contacting the applicants to ascertain their current requirements and offer vacant properties as they occur.

3. Communal Garden

The Almshouses Manager has surveyed residents with plans for the communal garden at the rear of the community hall. Residents have made suggestions on

planting and layout which have been incorporated into the design. Contractors will be engaged to undertake much of the work after quotes have been submitted.

4. Social activities

Residents were very happy with their Christmas Hampers, and extend their thanks and appreciation to Trustees for this annual gift. The Almshouses Manager, Tracy Taylor has arranged social activities this year including a Murder Mystery Night and coffee mornings. She is encouraging residents to get more involved in running social events. Tracy is also planning a Wellbeing event for late Spring and a summer event in the garden which Members will be invited to attend.

5. Estate meetings

Officers continue to work with Southwark Mediation Centre in engaging with residents to participate in estate events and improve relationships on the estate. At a recent meeting, several residents requested that we review the Pet Policy at the Almshouses, as many would like to have an indoor cat. A survey has been sent to all residents to establish the demand for change overall. If residents vote to have up to two indoor cats, this would reflect the Pet Policy currently in force in HRA general needs properties.

6. Refurbishment Programme

Officers have met with the Major Works Delivery Team to discuss plans for refurbishing the estate. Your Sub-Committee agreed a refurbishment programme for the current financial year. Surveyors have visited every home and noted individual property requirements. These vary - for instance, some properties have already had new kitchen units installed when vacant. Officers and project staff agree that it is important to appoint a Clerk of Works to monitor work and liaise with residents for the duration of the project. Resident consultation will begin once final plans are available.

It is estimated that the work will take approximately 6 months. Contractors will work on four flats simultaneously, to maintain the work flow. Scaffolding will be required for roof repairs. Officers will work with residents to minimise any possible problems with contractors being given access to homes.

Preparation work before the work can start will include full asbestos testing and CCTV drain inspections. These will enable a detailed report to be presented to Members once the work plan and full costs have been finalised.

7. Rent Arrears

The current arrears have reduced since our last report. The majority of debt still relates to one resident. Other arrears noted are low level amounts which are being managed by the Income Recovery Officer.

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