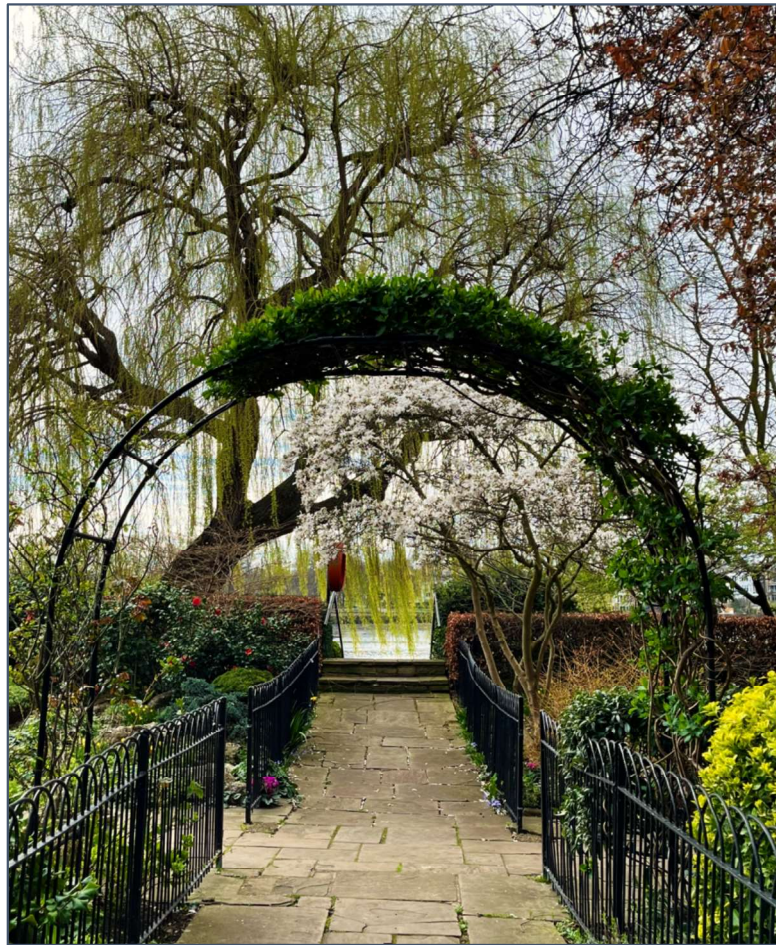


RIVERMEAD COURT

NEWSLETTER



Spring 2024



Contributions to the Newsletter

I always welcome contributions for the Newsletter, both written and pictorial, and in particular I appreciate photographs for the front cover.

Fiona Fowler, Editor, flat 69 fionafowler31@gmail.com.

Useful contacts

The Estate Manager (Anne Isaacs): mobile 07852 518 345; email info@rivermeadcourt.co.uk.

Porters: Lodge: tel 020 7736 3993; mobile 07384 641 606; email porters@rivermeadcourt.co.uk.

JCF Property Management, Associate Director (Tania Armstrong): tel: 0208 785 1926; email: tania.armstrong@jcfpropertymanagement.com

As a temporary measure, if you have an issue that would need Anne's urgent attention please send it to the porters and they will do their best to resolve it for you. If it is something related to billing or alterations, please send it to Tania Armstrong (details above)

<https://rivermeadcourt.com/>

The Rivermead Court
Annual General Meeting

will be held on

Tuesday 4th June 2024

at 6.30 pm

in the Hurlingham Club

Doors open 6 pm

From the Chairman

Dear All,

First and foremost, I am sure you all will join me in wishing Anne Isaacs the very best for her treatment and recovery. Anne is dealing with emails when she can but please continue to direct queries to the porters (porters@rivermeadcourt.co.uk, telephone 020 7736 3993 or 073 8464 1606). To support Anne through this period, the Board is recruiting an admin assistant to cover for Anne when she is unable to make it into Rivermead Court.

The transition to JCF Property Management as our new managing agent is now complete. You will also read a report inside about the appointment of Howe Chartered Surveyors to replace Faraday Surveying. If you see a drone hovering overhead in a few weeks time, it will be Howe surveying our facades and roofs in preparation for updating the major works programme.

Inevitably there have been some hiccups as new systems bed in. That's only to be expected. Overall, I remain confident that we made the right decision to part from Faraday. If there are still any residual issues associated with the transition, please do not hesitate to bring them to my attention.

Thank you for your generosity in contributing to the staff Christmas Fund. We raised a little over £37,000. Up on last year. The funds have been distributed. Many local suppliers also donate gifts to our staff. As last year, these were distributed by a raffle.

Tim Soane

From the Finance Committee

Annual Report

With the service charge and parking/storage rental demands now all distributed, work is focused on preparing the annual accounts in readiness for the AGM. While the transfer of accounting from Faraday to JCF is largely complete, we will continue to need Faraday's support preparing the accounts. One consequence of the transfer from Faraday was a delay to distribution of rent demands for garages, parking spaces and stores as it proved challenging to get this information across and set it up correctly in JCF's systems. All demands have now been sent and should have been paid on receipt. In future, the invoices for parking and storage will revert to being sent out with the service charge request.

There were more than usual late payers of the service charge. We will be sending reminders to those who have not paid as, with a new managing agent, the demands may have gone to your spam email. However, you should note that interest is chargeable on arrears of the service charge. With the current base rate this stands at 9.25% p.a.

Once the Annual Report is complete, we will be preparing a review of the overall Pipework Project costs, along with the income from lease extensions. This will be shared at the AGM.

Reserve Fund

An early task of JCF was to recommend a surveyor to undertake a full survey of the estate. This is in hand and will enable us to make an up to date forecast of the long term cost requirement of necessary major works. This in turn will enable us to assess, in light of ever escalating building costs, what is needed to maintain the reserve funds at a level sufficient to meet those costs as they arise. The result of this and any proposals with respect to the reserve fund will be shared at the AGM.

Insurance

Another area of focus is insurance, in particular in respect of the damage caused by water escapes from one flat to another. The situation with regards to water escapes from Rivermead Court owned pipework is relatively straightforward and fully covered by our insurers, albeit with an excess. The Rivermead Court Buildings Insurance, however, does not cover water escapes from the internal plumbing and appliances which is the property of the flat owner. Where an escape is from a flat's own plumbing and impacts flats below, it is the responsibility of the owner of the originating flat to pay for the cost of making good the damage. Different insurers appear to be taking very different stances on paying out on insurance policies with public liability cover held by flat owners subject to such events. We are therefore exploring what can be done to address this uncertainty.

Nick Green

There seems to be some concern and misunderstanding about the separate charge being made for the heating component of the service charge. A full explanation is given in the next section.

From the Pipework Committee

Charging for Heat

You will have noticed that in 2023, and again in 2024, your Rivermead Service Charge was presented in two parts 'Service Charge' and 'Heating Charge'. This was done as a preparatory step to the progressive introduction of charges for heat being based on individual meter readings (where meters are installed).

But to be clear, these charges for 2023 and for 2024, were simply the familiar total Service Charge split into two component parts, and allocated, as always, between flats on the basis of the 'lease percentages'. So, in total, no change whatsoever. The 'split' was achieved by considering separately items such as gas and electricity, maintenance, some allocation of staff costs, and other elements such as the cost of heating common parts.

The New Pipework System was commissioned in December 2023 and we have been progressively connecting those that are ready. At the moment, a total of 23 flats are connected to the New System and have operating meters.

Currently, heating is charged half-yearly in advance, based on budgeted costs, and flats with additional heating (either because they have additional radiators connected to the Old System, or because they have full heating running on an HIU) will continue to pay the 'additional' heating charge of £400 per year.

In the future we envisage that flats with heat meters will continue to be charged in advance, with a charge based on overall average usage (so exactly as at present), with a half-yearly retrospective adjustment to reflect actual usage. With experience, and much more data collected over a longer period, we may be able to refine the advanced payment calculation to reflect the flat's individual average usage, rather than overall average.

It is likely that metered usage will apply to a flat only from the first complete half year following installation of the meter. If your meter is installed in say October, metered charging will first apply for the period Jan to June the following year, with the first adjustment thus made in the June request for payment. Otherwise, the calculations will be too difficult!

Charges to flats remaining on the Old System will continue unchanged in any way.

Like any utility, the charge for those on meters will be made up of a 'standing charge' and a variable element (based on the meter). The non-variable costs of providing a heating and hot water system are such that, while those that like their flat warm may see some increase, if a metered flat is unused for the whole of a half-year period, with all the heating and hot water switched off, the heating charge will go down but it will certainly not be nothing.

We will provide a further update when the June payment request is sent out and in our next Newsletter.

Plastic Pipes Survey

Thank you to all leaseholders who returned the survey on plastic plumbing pipes circulated in December. At the time, we explained that in the past few years there have been a number of incidents involving the failure of plastic water pipes, several of which have caused serious damage both within the flat

concerned, and in the flats below. Apart from the inconvenience and distress caused by major leaks, they potentially expose leaseholders to possibly large claims for damage, and recent incidents have caused significant increases in Rivermead Court's insurance premiums.

In total 153 leaseholders returned the survey and from replies received, taken together with Rivermead's own records on 26 other flats (mainly from Alterations Licences), we were able to establish that there are 17 flats where there may be a concern which would benefit from further investigation. If your flat is one of those, Anne Isaacs or John Wells (our retained engineer) will be in touch shortly.

As a brief reminder, the potential concern is the use of plastic plumbing pipes on recirculating water systems (at Rivermead, most are not recirculating) or heating circuits that are always on, notably towel rails. To be clear, plastic waste pipes (for example from basins and sinks) are not a concern.

We do understand that there may be a degree of 'survey fatigue', but it is by far the least disruptive means of collecting information. We have no information on 32 flats. If we have not recorded a survey response from your flat (one or two forms omitted the flat number), we shall be sending another form. Your prompt response would be appreciated.

If you have any concerns about pipework in your flat, please speak directly to the Porters or Mrs Anne Isaacs, Estate Manager.

Michael Stevens

Fire Regulations and Front Doors

Michael Kightley and Anne Isaacs recently met the Hammersmith & Fulham council official responsible for fire safety. He was very impressed with what Rivermead Court has done to implement the *Fire Safety Regulations 2022*. These regulations implement the majority of the Grenfell Tower Phase 1 recommendations which were made on account of the inefficiencies in fire safety protocol of high-rise buildings, such as the lack of on-site information available to London Fire Brigade and the damage and disrepair of fire doors.

The fire regulations require that our front doors are inspected annually. These were all updated in 2016 but the recent inspection revealed that some may need further changes. If it is updating the previous work (eg missing an intumescent strip to the bottom of the door), this will be done at the landlord's expense. However, leaseholders are responsible for their flat door and any changes that have been made to the door by the leaseholder (eg to letter boxes) will have to be reinstated at the leaseholder's expense. If leaseholders do not carry out the repairs to their flat door, Rivermead Court will have the work done for them and the cost added to their service charge. The porters will contact you directly to make an appointment if remedial work is needed.

Thank you to those who cleared their corridors but we stress again that anything that might be a trip hazard must be removed. The council will be inspecting the building again in mid May and may fine a resident for non-compliance.

From the Exterior Committee

We are in the process of appointing Howe Chartered Surveyors to take over the role as surveyor previously performed by Matt Fletcher of Faraday. Matt is still overseeing works that are underway but not yet completed such as the maintenance of the lightwells. Howe was suggested by our new managing agent, JCF Property Management to provide these specialist services and all future works will be overseen by them. They will be taking over the schedule of maintenance works and keeping it up to date. We are considering adding a planned maintenance plan for the iron staircases to the schedule. An updated version will be available for the AGM in the summer.

Maintenance work is carried out periodically on a predictable cycle. The next scheduled project will be the redecoration of the central block facades and the south facing facades of east and west blocks and is due to take place in Spring 2025.

Some discretionary improvement works have been evaluated and will be kept under review. These include installing cabling for charging electric vehicles, insulating the attic spaces, and installing solar panels on the roofs. These all have challenges that affect their economic viability but will be kept under consideration. Residents who would like to contribute ideas for cost-saving and improvement works should contact me at: michael.i.kightley@gmail.com

Michael Kightley

Lease Extensions

Registration of the Rivermead leases continues. 93% of the leases have now been registered by the Land Registry. The majority of these registrations have been sent to the respective leaseholder but there are some for whom Bishop & Sewell need to confirm correspondence addresses.

Some of you have asked about having two copies of the lease, one signed by Rivermead Court as the landlord (referred to here as the lease) and one signed by the leaseholder (referred to as the counterpart). Once both Rivermead Court and the leaseholders have each signed their part of the lease, Bishop & Sewell register it digitally with the Land Registry. The Land Registry only requires a scanned copy of the Landlord's copy so only this is uploaded. The hard copies of the signed leases remain in B&S's office until registration is complete.

Once registration is confirmed, the hard copy of the lease (signed by the landlord) is sent to the leaseholder. Once all leases are registered and the project completed, B&S will return the hard copies of the leaseholder counterparts to the landlord (RCL).

So post-registration, the landlord receives the leaseholder's counterpart of the lease, and the leaseholder receives the landlord's copy of the lease.

Fiona Fowler.



RIVERMEAD COURT SUMMER PARTY 2024

25TH JUNE AT 6.30PM

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

COME AND MEET YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS IN THE GARDEN

From the House Committee

The Rivermead Court summer drinks party will be held in the gardens (the east lawn) on the evening of 25th June at 6.30 pm with a backup date of the 2nd July in the case of bad weather. Do encourage any new residents (and tenants) to come and join us. Please bring your own food and drink. Reminder notices will go up in lifts, entrances, and notice boards in the middle of June.

Entrance doors

The doors have recently been locked at 11 pm but this has not proved popular, and they will revert to 12 midnight.

Security

If you have a garage under the west block, please do not leave the basement door unlocked or propped open. This is a fire door, and if there was an incident or a break in, it would nullify Rivermead Court's insurance, so this is a significant security risk. The lock will be adapted to ensure that it cannot be left unlocked, and a camera fitted.

Please could residents using the pedestrian gate by the east block check it is closed behind them when they enter or leave, and the same applies to the garden gate by the Hurlingham entrance. If the gate is left open any opportunist thief can just walk in unobserved. It has happened in the past and we do not want a reoccurrence. Thank you.

Smoking

Another reminder to all residents, not to smoke on the back landings of your flats. This is a fire risk and antisocial to your neighbours as the smell of smoke travels. You are also reminded not to smoke in the driveways or outside the Porters Lodge or drop your cigarette butts down the drains or on the paths.

Garages & storerooms

There are a few garages and storerooms available to rent. Please contact Anne Isaacs if interested.

Community Fibre

22 March marks the fifth anniversary of Rivermead Court signing the wayleave to allow Community Fibre to provide ultrafast fibre broadband to all 207 flats and the common areas. If you have signed up, you are already enjoying the benefits. If you have not, why not take a look at their website: <https://communityfibre.co.uk>

Abseilers

The abseilers have almost completed the repairs to the wells. They are a few weeks late but the weather has not been helpful. I think we would all agree they have been very efficient and very charming. They will be checking the work before leaving so any windows that were not cleaned or other problems should be sorted then.

Christmas Carols

Thank you to everyone who joined us to sing carols before Christmas. The princely sum of £650 was raised for The Trinity Hospice. Thank you to Jen Tatham for arranging the donation. A big thank you to the Rivermead Court staff for setting up the gazebo, electrics, lighting, and tables for serving the food and drink. Thank you to all the House Committee for providing the sausage rolls, mince pies and mulled wine. Especial thanks go to Vanessa Lowndes for providing the Christmas tree and to Carol Ferguson for providing the musical accompaniment.

Deborah Richards



2024 Rivermead vs Hurlingham Annual Bridge Match

This much-anticipated annual event was held on 29th February at Hurlingham, with the Club acting this year as host. Because of circumstances beyond our control, the match took place about two weeks earlier than normal, and as a result, Rivermead was missing a fair number of our usual players due to travel, holidays etc. Nonetheless, we fielded 12 pairs and only 'borrowed' two players from beyond the gates after some last-minute illnesses in our team.

As was expected, it was a very enjoyable afternoon, including a particularly splendid and well-presented tea at the intermission break— special thanks to Daisy Carpenter and her team at the Club. We played 15 hands in total and I think next year we should start a little earlier so as to play our normal 18 hands.

As to be expected, the match was very competitive. In the end Hurlingham edged to 30.5 winning rounds to Rivermead's 29.5 including one round that was a draw.

The Chairman of Bridge at the Club, Roger Lawson, presented the prizes. The prize for the best Rivermead pair was won by Bridget Frost and Judy Jenks; Charles Fisher and Antonia Previte won the prize for Hurlingham, as well as the prize for being the first pair to bid and make a slam. Ellen Lyons, Convenor of the Hurlingham team, accepted the prize for the winner.



I very much enjoyed being the new Convenor of the Rivermead team, following in the very able footsteps of Gavin Trechman. Should anyone in the Rivermead community, having not been involved in this fixture before, wish to join the team at next year's match, please do let me know. And also, anyone who was on the Rivermead team this year, if you have any comments or suggestions about the arrangements, please do bring them to my attention (fraserindenver@hotmail.com).

Next year's match will be hosted by Rivermead and is tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of Thursday 13th March 2025, subject to any unexpected impact of the anticipated major works at the Club next year.

Bruce Fraser

Overground lines to be named

The 6 routes of the London Overground have each been given a name and its own colour. According to the Mayor's office this will make the network easier to navigate and reflect London's diverse history. The line most likely to be used by Rivermead residents is the Stratford to Richmond/Clapham Junction line that goes through Putney Station. This is to be called the Mildmay line – and will be blue.

The name celebrates Mildmay, a small, charitable NHS hospital in Tower Hamlets, with a long history of helping Londoners in need. Mildmay opened in the 1860s as an informal help centre organised by William Pennefather, the vicar of a church in Mildmay Park, Islington. William organised centres for the care of the sick and his wife, Catherine, trained well-educated young women – 'deaconesses' - in nursing. When cholera broke out in 1866, some of the deaconesses volunteered to assist in the East End's poorest slums and they continued working in the area after the outbreak had subsided. The first purpose-built Mildmay Hospital opened in Shoreditch in 1892.

In 1948 Mildmay joined the NHS but as a hospital with less than 200 beds, it was regarded as uneconomic and was closed in 1982. After a campaign led by its trustees, it reopened in 1985 and in 1988 became Europe's first hospital for people with HIV and AIDS-related illnesses. Princess Diana visited the hospital 17 times. Today Mildmay has evolved from being an AIDS hospice to an internationally-renowned HIV rehabilitation centre. During Covid, it also became London's primary COVID-Care Centre for the homeless or rough-sleeping, recuperating from illness or injury, providing rehabilitative healthcare.

From the Garden Committee

The Hydrangea Hedge

James has postponed for several years cutting back the Hydrangeas, but they have grown too tall so, as you will have noticed, they have been subjected to a hard prune. The creation of the impressive hydrangea hedge that rings the Central Lawn was inspired by David and Jen Tatham some twenty years ago and we must thank them for one of our finest features.

Replant of the west border

There is an exciting plan to replant the border at the west end of the Broad Walk. The idea is to design a border in the manner of the Dutch gardener Piet Oudolf. This follows the long term plan to give different sections of the herbaceous border different personalities. Hence the planting of the border to the east with one section full of strong, vibrant colours and the other a softer, more muted arrangement.

Thank you!

The committee thank Peter Green, who has given Michaelmas Daisies to the garden. The do appreciate donations, especially in cash, but if in kind, could they please be vetted by the chairman of the Garden Committee

Alexandra Gibbs

Piet Oudolf

If, like the editor, you had not heard of Piet Oudolf, you may like to know that he is a Dutch garden designer, nurseryman and author and a leading figure of the "New Perennial" movement. His designs and plant compositions use bold drifts of herbaceous perennials and grasses to create a "natural" look that is in fact planned in meticulous detail. The plants are chosen as much for their structure as for their flower colour. If you have been to the New York High Line, then you have seen his work. In the UK he is about to redo the glasshouse border at RHS Wisley, which he originally designed 20 years ago.

I am not sure what James and the Garden Committee are planning but here are some examples of Piet's work. The border in our garden is tiny compared with those that Piet has worked on so James does not have the opportunity to create such complex planting, but I am sure the result will be spectacular.



Summer is coming so please ensure that children are supervised when playing in the garden, rubbish is taken home and noise muted to avoid disturbing others.

The Pipework Project is complete!

The final sections of insulation were applied to the New Pipework System during February, marking the successful completion of this major project – possibly the biggest upgrade to our facilities ever undertaken!

It all started long ago in 2013, when the initial concepts were presented to the AGM. The initial driver for the change was the fact that the Old Pipework was well beyond its design life, and was of a design, embedded in the building structure, that simply could not be replaced or repaired.

Following a detailed consultation with leaseholders, we decided to retain our communal system, known technically as a 'district heating system'. Along the way we appointed Ramboll, the Danish consulting engineers (the Danes are world leaders in district heating) and consulted legal Counsel (KC) which resulted in careful amendments to our leases. Price Building Services were awarded the construction contract which was undertaken with a high degree of offsite (factory) pre-construction. Oversight was provided by Atlas Quantity Surveyors and by John Wells, whom many of you will know, and who is our retained Mechanical Engineering Consultant. Separately, we extended our leases, the income from which has provided the finance for the project.

Overall, we can deem the project a success – it was completed on schedule, without major cost overruns (only a few additional costs to address issues that were not anticipated), and without too much disruption. The system is best viewed in the under-croft and light wells of either East or West block. Do take a look: it is quite a feat of design and construction.

And it works! So far 23 flats are successfully connected, and we are progressively connecting the remaining 46 flats that are ready.

The new system delivers real benefits to residents including:

- Making possible full central heating with individual control of the heating system – no more waiting for the Board to decide it is cold enough to switch on the heating!
- The ability to meter heat usage and use this as a basis for charging, in conformance with recent legislation. (See the separate article, *Charging for Heat* in this Newsletter.)
- An all-new pressurised mains water system – when connected a flat will have potable mains water to all taps (rather than from tanks in the roof spaces which get warm in the summer), and there will be better water pressure to top floor flats.

And there are significant overall benefits:

- All hot water pipework is well insulated, reducing losses.
- Since each flat has effectively an independent system, susceptibility to bacteria is nearly eliminated.
- The climate crisis has increased in salience since we started this work. We do not know how regulations about heating may change in the future, but with a district heating system we will be

well-placed to benefit from the appropriate technologies including, for example, wide-area district heating or heat pumps.

You will recall that one essential feature of the Pipework Project proposal was the decision to allow a 15-year period in which to convert from the Old to the New System. That period commenced in 2019 and expires in 2034 – ten years from now.

In the period since our plans were confirmed, leaseholders have been preparing their flats for the New System, and in addition to the 23 flats connected, we have:

- 27 flats with HIUs installed for some time, that have been operating connected to the Old System, and which we are now in the process of connecting to the New System
- 19 flats that are ‘future proofed’ – all the necessary pipework within the flat has been installed – and installation of a HIU and connection is work in progress.

That’s a total of 69 flats in five years, and means that, at that rate, we are roughly on course to convert all flats in the fifteen years.

If you are thinking about the subject, a few comments might be helpful:

If you would like to make the conversion, we now have a lot of experience and John Wells is available to help. It needs care and planning, but really isn’t difficult! The best and simplest time to convert and connect is when undertaking a substantial flat renovation or refurbishment – which means new kitchen and bathrooms, with their floors and the central hallway floor lifted.

Or if you prefer not to think about it just yet, there is no urgency, ten years to run, and the Old System continues to give excellent service!

If you are thinking of selling, many of the local agents are by now accustomed to the issue, and John Wells will be happy to provide advice to either agents or prospective purchasers. If you would like further information about how to convert your flat to the New System, do please contact Anne Isaacs, or John Wells.

The ‘Super Sewer’

Carnwath Road is the major entry point for London’s new Tideway Tunnel, or super sewer. Tideway’s huge acoustic shed built to contain noise during the project's shaft excavation and tunnelling and which has dominated the site for the last six years has now been demolished. Surface works continued until early this year when landscaping was supposed to begin. The site is now being ‘demobilised’ and vacated by the workforce. System testing will continue through the year before the super sewer becomes operational beneath the Thames in 2025.

Some local dates

Oxford & Cambridge Boat Race. Saturday 30th March at 2.45pm (women) and 3.45pm (men)

London Youth Conservatoire at St Dionis Church. 23rd March 5.30pm, a family jazz concert, tickets £12 or £3 for children from trybooking.com (discount if purchased by 17th March).

Music by the Bridge at All Saints. 12th April - Beethoven music by Blaze Ensemble. More details at <https://www.allsaints-fulham.org.uk/musicbythebridge.htm>

All Saints Fulham Dinner for Church Hall Restoration. All Saints Church is hosting a dinner at Hurlingham on Thursday 25 April at 7pm for 7.45 to raise funds for the restoration of the Church Hall. Tickets are £125 per person to include a three course dinner and wine. The Hall has been in a sorry state and underused for many years. The present plans will result in a bright modernised Hall with access to the large paddock, suitable for use by local causes and bodies as well as the Church's current activities. The aim is to raise funds through a live and silent auction. Tickets may be bought via secretary@allsaints-fulham.org.uk.

Wandsworth Bridge Road Spring Fayre, 12th May

Society of Fulham Artists and Potters. Spring Exhibition at Fulham Library, Saturday 8th June – Monday 17th June 2024. Autumn Exhibition, Saturday 9th November – Monday 18th November 2024

Parsons Green Fair, 6th July

Contact details

If you have a problem and need to contact someone, please first contact the Porters' Lodge on 020 7736 3993 or 07384641606. The Estate Manager, Anne Isaacs, can be contacted on 07852 518 345 or email info@rivermeadcourt.co.uk. If it relates to billing or alterations, contact Tania Armstrong at JCF on 0208 785 1926 or email tania.armstrong@jcfpropertymanagement.com. If you wish to contact a Board member, please leave a note at the Porters' Lodge.

Board of Directors

Tim Soane (Chairman)

Patricia Babtie (Company Secretary)

Keith Bedell-Pearce (Legal)

Fiona Fowler (Newsletter)

Nicholas Green (Finance)

Peter Green (Finance, Pipework)

Michael Kightley (Estates; Climate Change)

Deborah Richards (House; Health and Safety)

Michael Stevens (Pipework)

Staff Complement

Estate Manager Anne Isaacs

Deputy House Managers Berhane Dejenie,
Terry Fowler

Porters Keith Moody, Rony Pereira, Abel Abebe, Dylan Fowler, Ferenc Bartha, Faraz Rana

Housekeepers Malinda Fowler, Cathleen Gerald

General Assistants Roy Moody, Jaime Villapa

Contract gardener – James Sheen Ltd