

RIGRA

THE RIVER GARDENS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER
WINTER 2021

Welcome to the Winter Newsletter, which includes an up-date from Louise Billingham about Fire Safety matters, and a feature on Security by Ahmed Omar, Chair of the Security Group who writes about the group's work in general and Marksmen in particular. Dana Pavel's local history moves next door from the Power Station, which she wrote about in the previous Newsletter to the Trinity Hospital. This Newsletter arrives close to Christmas and comes with our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

- The Comms+Vote Group



FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION
AND THE COMMITTEE,
PLEASE CONTACT:

DAVID CUTTS
(RIGRA COMMITTEE CHAIR)
✉ RIGRA@CUTTS.ME
☎ 07785 304723

What is RIGRA?

The River Gardens Residents Association (RIGRA) represents the interests of the private residential leasehold tenants. Its membership includes residents from all the private residential blocks. The RIGRA Committee is a group of volunteer residents who act on behalf of the Association in negotiations and discussions with London+Regional and Bellway, the two developers, and with Rendall & Rittner (R&R), the Managing Agent for the whole Estate. So RIGRA has a relationship with Bellway, L+R and R&R, and advises them in the interests of the residents but has limited authority. The Committee welcomes all residents to contact us on general matters in relation to the Estate and we will do everything within our powers to help.



PHOTOGRAPH OF LOUISE
COURTESY OF BEN TOMLIN

Fire Safety

LOUISE BILLINGHAM, CHAIR OF FIRE SAFETY PROJECT GROUP

Building Safety Fund (BSF)

Granite and Wyndham have been approved for a full BSF grant but the funding has not yet been released. The process of obtaining funding is near completion and R&R are in the final stages of conducting legal and due diligence reviews prior to the contracts being issued and signed.

The RIGRA Fire Safety Group has had several meetings over the last months with R&R to try and understand in more detail how the next stages of the BSF application will be taken forward.

The Group's priorities are:

1. Ensuring the BSF grant money is safeguarded and that no cost of the cladding remediation is passed onto Leaseholders.
2. The brief for the construction method plan is for scaffolding to be erected in small sections across the façade of the buildings to reduce impact on residents.
3. The main contractor selected for the works is competent and financially capable to carry out the contract.

Most recently RIGRA have been able to attend a meeting between R&R, our landlord London+Regional (L+R) and appointed project manager, Martin Arnold to discuss next steps following the appraisal of the preferred contractor. There are still concerns about the preferred contractor's ability to perform. It was therefore agreed that other contractors who previously tendered for the project would be re-approached to determine their interest and understand if the route of changing contractor is viable. A high-level cost to carry out the works will be requested including options for a construction methodology with reduced sections of scaffold across the façade.

The final decision about how to proceed with the BSF application and a preferred contractor lies with L+R. In particular, the decision rests with Leonard Sebastian, Managing Director of L+R who is also the director of Greenwich Wharf Management Company, which is the entity that has applied for BSF funding for the development.

It is understood that the Greater London Authority's BSF Case Officer is aware of the development's position and that changes to the preferred contractor or price are permissible under a variation of the funding agreement.

It is still very difficult to estimate when works might start on site. However the Group will meet again with R&R, L+R and Martin Arnold in mid-December.

Granite Waking Watch

R&R have successfully obtained grant funding for the Waking Watch Relief Fund for the installation of a communal alarm system in Granite. Once complete this will mean that the Waking Watch will no longer be required. Work is expected to start in December and complete by the end of January.

Access to every apartment in Granite will be needed for a couple of hours to allow for the installation. R&R will be coordinating a rota of when access is required. Please do return your consent forms to R&R to allow Waking Watch to be removed as soon as possible.

IF ANY LEASEHOLDER HAS SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CLADDING REMEDIATION OR GENERAL FIRE SAFETY ISSUES THEN PLEASE DO CONTACT ME AT ✉ LOUISEROSEBILLINGHAM@GMAIL.COM



Security

AHMED OMAR, CHAIR OF SECURITY GROUP

Welcome

As chair of the RIGRA Security Group I have thought to understand and assess the security challenges facing our development in an unbiased way. With the help of the Group's members, R&R, as well as input from residents we have introduced a series of changes with the key target of making our development a secure place to live, as well as being a great place for the local community to interact with.

The selection of Marksmen as a security service provider follows a period of consultation with key stakeholders. The result is a proportional security service that does not turn the development into a 24/7 surveillance zone, and does not drastically impact our service charge (details of the Marksmen service can be found below).

A key drive of the Security committee is input from residents, I personally encourage all residents to get in touch with RIGRA, me personally at the email below or R&R with any thoughts or feedback on the current approach to security management on the development.

Marksmen

The proposal is intended to address anti-social behaviour and security issues around River Gardens with intermittent and short notice patrolling.

We met Marcus Harbut, Marksmen's Operations Director in September. He has recently transferred from a career in property management and consequently has experience of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and security issues, and expectations of residents. He had toured the estate and listened to the issues we face at River Gardens. The problems and challenges we face are not unusual, and he concluded that Marksmen could help effectively. This is not always the case, and they do turn business away if the synergy is not right.

His background talk and responses to questions yielded the following, which I hope provides more background than was possible for R&R to give in its bulletin:



- › Marksmen hopes to develop a relationship with residents, and encourage a dialogue when around the Estate. The hope also is to educate on the protocols of reporting incidents. In this context, it may make sense for R&R to develop a flowchart for residents, and the Concierge Team as what to do under different circumstances.
- › The aim is to offer a peace of mind to residents that the Estate is regularly patrolled with the option of a call out facility.
- › Marksmen 'sit' between the Police and a security company such as J7 Security who R&R has employed for what is widely known as 'static security' based on pre-determined shifts.
- › Marksmen offer three site visits within a 4:00pm- 4:00am. The times of the three visits will be random leading to unpredictable patrol times. So regular intruders will not notice a pattern.
- › These patrols are seven days a week, 365 days/year.
- › The officers for River Gardens will be drawn from the same group of operatives. There will be a key officer and a secondary person to ensure continuity and knowledge of the Estate.
- › In addition and at no extra cost, patrols can be called out at other times to deal with any security issues. A patrol will normally arrive within 20 minutes of the call, a target that Marksmen can offer because they are organised within regions of the city, and operate 'in loops'. They are working, for example, within the Peninsula and have bases in SE1 and SE2.
- › There is one officer on patrol, well protected, wearing high-vis jackets, and equipped with radio and CCTV.

CONTD. ON NEXT PAGE

CONTD. FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

- › If it becomes clear that an incident requires more than one person, up to an additional five officers can be called to arrive within twenty minutes. This also applies to a dog unit, which is always a highly effective deterrent.
- › Officers are well trained, and 75% of the team has been with Marksmen for four years or more. Marcus finds that this leads to a good culture of communication and support within the company.
- › Patrols come in a clearly marked car, which can either be driven up onto the podium or parked in Banning Street. They like the car to be prominent to emphasise that there is a security presence.
- › We stressed the importance of using the history of security patrols and of our own records so that Marksmen are patrolling in the right points from the outset. Patrols will include car parks and the playground areas, with checks on doors and the like. Defects will be reported.
- › Patrols can be adjusted according to experience and feedback from residents and/or the Concierge.
- › Marksmen's policy is to engage with intruders and/or people who are showing ASB, and to move them on. The general approach is for a Marksmen officer to identify himself/herself, explain why the officer has approached them (e.g. ASB and/or intrusion), and ask them to move on. If the people refuse, then Marksmen will escalate the incident with more officers and dog unit patrols.
- › They are aware that some areas on the towpath for example, are owned by Greenwich Council, and others are private residential areas. Experience suggests that the public is not aware of these distinctions and so engaging with them, wherever they happen to be, is not an issue.
- › Special call outs are best organised via the 24hr concierge. The relationship between the Concierge team and Marksmen officers is key to success, and officers always call in to report their presence, enquire after any issues of the moment, and report on their visits.
- › Marksmen's experience is that it takes three months to get things right on an Estate. First month: establish themselves with help of database of previous experience from security companies such as J7. Second month: relationship with the Concierges and with residents starts to build up, and lead to improved co-ordination. Third month: full awareness of all the issues on the Estate and what actions are required.

Members of the Security Group who have professional experience of dealing with security matters confirmed that evidence supports the idea that a regular presence and a call out facility does lead to incidents dropping away. This pattern has been borne out over the first two months during which there has been a 80% reduction in intrusions. We were also aware of the history of the Estate, which shows that patrols of this kind will be essential when new buildings open, as will happen from Spring 2022 onwards.

We obviously looked at the financial implications of hiring Marksmen compared to a company such as J7 Security who have worked on the Estate in the last year: J7 Security's costs are over four times those of Marksmen's. This is not quite a straight comparison: J7 Security's rate is based on twelve hour shifts, which is the minimum that they can be signed for. Marksmen's presence is for fewer hours and is more flexible. We thought that Marksmen's proposal would suit the needs of River Gardens more than regularly employing J7 Security.

We therefore supported the idea of engaging Marksmen, and recommended the Committee to follow up with R&R, to sign Marksmen for a three-month trial period, which runs until the beginning of January 2022.

FEEL FREE TO CONTACT ME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS ARTICLE.

MY EMAIL ADDRESS IS ✉ A.OMARALI1988@GMAIL.COM

In Our Neighbourhood



THIS ENGRAVING OF THE HOSPITAL FROM THE RIVER IS DATED 1798 AND HANGS IN THE MAIN BUILDING. THE EARL OF NORTHAMPTON WAS BORN IN NORFOLK, WHICH MAY EXPLAIN THE CAPTION 'THE DUKE OF NORFOLKS ALMS HOUSE, GREENWICH'. PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ENGRAVING COURTESY OF DANA PAVEL.

The Trinity Hospital

ONE OF THE EARLIEST BUILDINGS IN GREENWICH, STILL GOING STRONG

The Hospital stands on the site of Lumley House where Robert Dudley, the Duke of Leicester grew up. Howard, Earl of Northampton bought the house in 1609 and demolished it to make way for the Hospital, which he founded in 1613 as an almshouse to provide shelter for twenty 'Poor Men' plus a Warden. Twelve men were to come from Greenwich and eight from Shotham (now Shotesham) in Norfolk where the Earl was born.

The Earl laid the building's foundation in February 1614 but died four months after and was buried at Dover Castle. A monument to the Earl by Nicholas Stone, architect and sculptor (1587-1647), which was initially installed at the Castle can now be found in the Hospital's Chapel. Construction was

subsequently completed in 1617 by his secretary, John Griffiths, and his nephew,

Thomas Howard. The Chapel was dedicated the same year when the first residents moved in, and features a sixteenth century Flemish window depicting the Crucifixion, thought to have been brought here from an older Howard house.

The orders for the Hospital were strict, as the following extract from the statute book reveals: *Also, we do order that every poor man chosen a member of this Hospital shall be an inhabitant of Greenwich or Shotham, by the space of four years at least next before his election, and a single unmarried man of the age of fifty-six years at least at the time of his election; and if he after marry, then his place be void, 'ipso facto' and he shall be a man that is decayed, and is become poor by casual means, and not through his own dissolute life, and one that hath always lived in honest name. No common beggar, drunkard, whore-hunter, haunter of taverns nor ale houses, nor unclean person infected with any foul disease, nor any that is blind, or so impotent as he is not able, at the time of his admission, to come to prayers daily in the chapel...'*

Life in the Hospital was highly regimented as you might imagine, up at 6:00am and to bed by 9:00pm with meals and work in between. Indeed the Hospital had a slightly monastic feel with a small cloistered courtyard and twenty-one rooms that were little more than cells.

Although the Earl was not a Mercer, his will entrusted the almshouse and its endowment to the Mercers' Company. This was one of the main livery companies that had been incorporated in the fourteenth century to represent merchants especially those involved with fabric (the French word mercerie translates as haberdashery).

The Mercers' Company runs the Trinity Hospital to this day. The Chapel was rebuilt in 1812 as part of a substantial reengineering of the Hospital. However, far more extensive changes were made in 2009, the result of which is that the Hospital now contains forty-one apartments for men, women and couples who have been residents in Greenwich for at least four years. The Prime Meridian passes through the site and two sundials were added to the garden in 2007 to mark this fact. The charity also owns six flats in Shotesham, a further link to the Earl of Northampton's original vision.

Trinity Hospital opens to the public once a year as part of Open House London, which is normally held over a weekend in September. Visit www.open-city.org.uk



A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE HOSPITAL TAKEN IN THE WINTER OF 2018. COURTESY DANA PAVEL.

IDEA, TEXT AND PICTURE RESEARCH BY **DANA PAVEL** ✉ DA16PA@GMAIL.COM

CONTACT RIGRA BY EMAILING:
RIGRACOMM@GMAIL.COM

SIGN ON TO **RIVER GARDENS FORUM AT RIVERGARDENSFORUM.UK** FOR INFORMATION ABOUT RIGRA INCLUDING MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

YOU CAN SIGN UP WITH THE INDEPENDENT RIVER GARDENS WHATSAPP GROUP BY CONTACTING ONE OF ITS ADMINISTRATORS WHO ARE LISTED ON THE SITE, STARTING WITH **ALEKSANDRA GIRLING**
☎ +41 79 885 7174

IF YOU WISH TO JOIN THE FIRE CLADDING WHATSAPP GROUP PLEASE CONTACT: **ALEX ARISTIDOU**
☎ 07703 342460

JOIN THE RIVER GARDENS **FACEBOOK PAGE**, WHICH YOU CAN FIND AT '**RIVER GARDENS GREENWICH**'

THE FIRST POINT OF CONTACT FOR **R&R IS THE CONCIERGE OFFICE**
✉ CONCIERGE@THERIVERGARDENS.NET
☎ 020 3372 2640 ☎ 07718 773195

ANDY WADSWORTH
ESTATE MANAGER
✉ ESTATEMANAGER@THERIVERGARDENS.NET
☎ 020 3372 2641
☎ 07701 397150

NEWSLETTER DESIGN: ARATIDEVASHER.COM
FLOWING RIVER MOTIF: ELLIE PINNEY
PHOTOGRAPH ON FIRST PAGE: DANA PAVEL
WITH MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED CONTENT TO THIS NEWSLETTER



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This is advance notice that the AGM will be held on **Saturday 26 March 2022, 10:00am on Zoom**. Details will follow by email in January including a Call for Volunteers.

JOINING THE RIGRA COMMITTEE AND ITS PROJECT GROUPS

The Committee seeks to keep its membership fresh and representative. So please do contact us if you would like to help, and have an interest in how the Estate should be run and have skills that you may think will be useful. You may alternatively be interested in joining one or more of the Project Groups listed below. If so, please do contact the people who chair them who will try to answer any questions that you may have.

COMMITTEE PROJECT GROUPS

BUDGETS & FINANCE

CARRIE THOMPSON ✉ CARRIETHOMPSONN@YAHOO.COM

CAR PARKS

ANGUS MACKENZIE ✉ ANGUSGTV@GMAIL.COM

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

JOHN WALLACE ✉ RIGRACOMM@GMAIL.COM

COMMS+VOTE

PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR THE CO-CHAIRS

DEFECTS

COLIN FORREST ✉ COLIN.FORREST@HOTMAIL.COM

FIRE SAFETY

LOUISE BILLINGHAM ✉ LOUISEROSEBILLINGHAM@GMAIL.COM

HEALTH SUITE

ZORAN ALMULI ✉ ALMULIZORAN@GMAIL.COM

LANDSCAPING & ESTATE APPEARANCE

ZORAN ALMULI ✉ ALMULIZORAN@GMAIL.COM

RELATIONS WITH BELLWAY, L+R AND R&R, AND THE FUTURE OF GWMC

DAVID CUTTS ✉ RIGRA@CUTTS.ME

SECURITY

AHMED OMAR ✉ A.OMARALI1988@GMAIL.COM

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ahmed Omar (Atlantic), Alex Aristidou (Granite), Angus MacKenzie (Granite), Carrie Thompson (Granite), Colin Forrest (Vice-Chair, Granite), David Cutts (Chair, Granite), Emma Kelly (Atlantic), Igor Ribeiro de Oliveira (Iverson), Jane Lawrie (Wyndham), John Wallace (Secretary, Henry Hudson), Louise Billingham (Granite), Mark Pinney (Wyndham), Nick Niknam (Block 9, 35 River Gardens Walk), Zoran Almulu (Wyndham)

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE COMMITTEE, PLEASE CONTACT JOHN WALLACE ✉ RIGRACOMM@GMAIL.COM

COMMS+VOTE GROUP

The team comprises Ahmed Omar, Carrie Thompson, Jane Lawrie and John Wallace. We would welcome feedback on the Newsletter and any ideas that you may have for its content in the future. Please do contact either:

AHMED ✉ A.OMARALI1988@GMAIL.COM ☎ 07872 595531

JOHN ✉ RIGRACOMM@GMAIL.COM ☎ 07493 181351

EGRA: EAST GREENWICH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

You can visit www.egra.com or email info@egra.com to learn more about the association and how to join it.