



The Manor Fields Estate Limited

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Manor Fields Leaseholder Newsletter March 2025

Dear Leaseholder,

Your Board is pleased to provide an update on current projects and future plans for our Estate. We will be sharing regular newsletters throughout 2025 to keep you informed on progress with key Board priorities.

Please save the date: At the November Leaseholder meeting, we committed to hold our next 6-monthly Leaseholder Update Call in May to update leaseholders on our key priorities. The Teams call will be held on **Thursday 1st May 2025 (7pm to 8:30pm)**. Invitation to follow.

1. Managing Agent Selection

The competitive tender process for selecting our Managing Agent is well underway, in line with the commitment made to leaseholders last May. This process follows the **Section 20 Consultation** requirements.

- The First Stage notice was issued in December. Ten firms participated in Round 1.
- A **shortlist of five firms** is now preparing submissions for Round 2.
- Due to the competitive nature of the process, details will remain confidential until the **Second Stage notice**, which we expect to issue **mid-April**. This notice will include firm names and bid summaries.

2. Budget for the Financial Year 2025/26

Preparation of the **annual operating budget** has been adjusted to align with the start of the financial year. The 2025/26 budget will be shared in April and discussed at the next 6-monthly Leaseholder Update meeting in May:

- **2024/25 Budget:** £1.06 million
- **Projected expenditure:** Slightly under budget
- **Trustee Reserve balance:** £1.96 million (for non-annual projects)

3. Non-Annual Projects Update

The following major works are currently in progress.

3.1 Lift Refurbishment Programme

This is a major project, under the supervision of Ardent Lift Consultancy, to ensure the lifts in all houses continue to work safely and efficiently for many years to come, barring ad hoc maintenance.

- The following houses were completed in February:
 - 1–8 Somerville
 - 9–16 Bede
- The next lifts scheduled for refurbishment are:
 - 1–8 Balliol
 - 9–16 Somerville
 - 9–16 Balliol
 - 1–8 Keble
- Residents will receive advance notice of work once the start date is confirmed.

3.2 Fire Safety Works

Three fire safety projects are underway to protect **communal hallways as primary evacuation routes**:

Project 1 – Flat Entrance Door Upgrades (Leaseholder Responsibility)

- Each **flat entrance door** must be upgraded with **automatic closers** and **fire and smoke seals** to provide adequate fire resistance. We now have confirmation that existing **letterboxes** can be retained and do not need to be replaced.
- As these doors form part of the **demised premises**, **each leaseholder is responsible for the cost of the upgrade**.
- Works will be starting at **Selwyn House** and those leaseholders who had kindly volunteered to be part of the pilot. The full programme/sequence is currently being prepared.
- Thank you to the **majority of leaseholders** who have already paid the **£400 first instalment**. The **remaining balance** will be collected **after the works on your door are complete** and will vary according to the options you select.
- The contractor, **Brylane Construction**, will issue **paperwork on completion** confirming that the door fittings comply with British Standards, and that the work has been carried out by an approved specialist.
- Several Directors have volunteered to have their doors upgraded first **to validate the process, the cost and the end result**. These Directors are happy to make their doors available for inspection at reasonable times for any interested leaseholders. Please contact office at manager@manorfields.co.uk.

- **Next Steps:**
 - **Information pack** will be circulated to all leaseholders regarding flat entrance door upgrades.
 - A **second Teams call** will be scheduled, providing Leaseholders an opportunity to ask questions directly to **White & Lloyd (surveyors) and Adena (fire safety consultant)**.
 - **Work specifications** will be available from the **Estate Office** for those who prefer to arrange the work through their **own contractor**.

Project 2 – Riser Cupboard Fire Sealing

- **Holes in the walls between each flat and the riser cupboards need to be sealed** to prevent the spread of fire and smoke.
- **Electrical Intake Cupboard doors** will be replaced.

Project 3 – Hallway Fire-Resistant Coating

- The **woodwork in communal hallways** is being treated with **fire-resistant varnish** to enhance fire safety.
- The process involves **sanding down the woodwork**, which may cause some dust and minor disruption. Your patience and co-operation is requested while this essential work is carried out.
- The contractor will **thoroughly clean** each hallway upon completion to remove any residual dust.

3.2 Communal Entrance Doors

- The **communal entrance doors** to each house are undergoing restoration, including:
 - **Sanding down** the existing finish
 - **Treatment with oxalic acid** to remove the white bloom
 - **Missing studs will be replaced**
 - All doors will be **fully repainted with several coats** of durable **marine varnish** for a refreshed appearance.
- Now that **warmer, drying weather is returning**, work can resume on restoring the front doors of remaining houses.
- The project is on track for **completion this summer**.

3.4 1-8 Selwyn House – Repair to steps/pathway

- Repair work is due to start on the outside steps/pathway of 1-8 Selwyn in late March and is anticipated to last 3-4 weeks. Alternative access arrangement for that staircase will be put in place. Residents will be informed of the arrangements prior to the work commencing.

3.5 Damp – Ground Floor Flats

- Each year, the Estate carries out **repairs to ground-floor flats** with damp
- To better understand the extent of the problem, the Board has commissioned **Heritage Consulting** to conduct a **comprehensive survey** of selected ground-floor flats.
- The survey will assess:
 - The **scale of the issue** across the affected properties
 - Whether a **common and effective solution** exists
 - Potential **preventative measures** to reduce future occurrence

3.6 Drains Survey

- A **CCTV condition survey** of the Estate's drainage network is being commissioned to assess its overall condition and identify any necessary **clearance works**.
- The survey was initiated following **evidence of blockage** at **Bede House**.
- The results will help ensure the **drainage system is functioning properly** and allow for **repairs and preventative maintenance** where needed.

3.7 Green Man Wall - Tree Removal

- Two **30-metre chestnut trees** overhanging the **Green Man wall and the pub's garden** are demonstrating honey fungus and need to be removed to **eliminate the risk of accidents** to people and property.
- We have obtained **several quotes** and a **tree surgeon, Cypress Garden Services has been appointed** to carry out the removal.
- The work will be scheduled to **minimise disruption** to residents and neighbouring properties.

4. Staffing Update

4.1 Estate Manager Recruitment

- We have received a **strong response** to our search for a professional, qualified and experienced **Estate Manager**.
- We are at an **advanced stage in appointing the chosen candidate**, following **several rounds of interviews**.
- Details will be announced **once contractual discussions are finalised**.
- For clarity, the **respective roles of the Estate Manager and the Managing Agent are well-defined and complementary**, to ensure there is **no overlap** in responsibilities, hence both roles are necessary.

4.2 Donna Wilson's Retirement

- **Donna Wilson** will be retiring at the end of **March** after her invaluable contributions, having initially joined the Estate Office in **April 2022** on a **part-time basis** to manage **Health & Safety and Compliance**, working alongside **Tetra (our Health & Safety consultant) and KFH**.
- The Board sincerely thanks Donna for her dedication and wishes her a **long and happy retirement**.

5. Insurance Review

- At the **beginning of the year**, the Board conducted a **comprehensive review** of Manor Fields' insurance coverage.
- The review assessed:
 - The **Estate's insurance requirements**
 - Appropriate **coverage levels**
 - Any **gaps or instances of over-insurance**

Key Findings & Next Steps

- **No significant gaps** in coverage were identified.

- Minor **coverage adjustments** will be made during the **insurance renewal in April 2025**.
- The review also emphasised the importance of **obtaining quotes from multiple brokers** to ensure the Estate secures the **most competitive pricing**.

6. Electricity Costs

- As of November 2024, we are with a new provider at more favourable unit rates. Electricity usage across all communal areas continues to be **monitored closely**.

7. Drone on the Estate

- If you hear the **buzzing of a drone** near your building, **do not be alarmed** - it is part of the Estate's **regular maintenance checks**.
- The Estate will be using its **own drone** to survey **gutters and hoppers**, ensuring they are **clear of leaves and debris**.
- This approach is significantly **more cost-effective** than hiring external contractors for routine inspections.
- Contractors will only be called in **if a blockage is detected and requires clearance**.

8. KFH Weekly Drop-Ins

- **Weekly KFH drop-ins continue every Thursday 9 AM – 10 AM in The Bunker**.
- The Board is considering **additional arrangements** to better accommodate **working leaseholders**.
- **Juan Antelo**, KFH's **Senior Property Manager** for the Estate, joined in **January** and, alongside **Maria Cassar-Veres**, has been covering **essential services** while the recruitment process for a **new Estate Manager** is underway.
- The Board is **grateful for the temporary support** provided by Juan and Maria during this transition.
- As a reminder, **KFH's Out-of-Hours Emergency Number: 0203 542 0221**

9. New Directors

We are keen to recruit **three more Directors** to the Board. We are particularly looking for leaseholders with experience in **Construction, Finance or Law**. The current Board includes professionals with full-time jobs, and we understand that your role on the Board may need to be adapted to suit your availability. If you are interested, please send an email with a summary of your CV to Directors@manorfields.co.uk

Kind Regards,

Clare Morton	Director (Chair)
Alex Blake-Milton	Director
Dean Buckner	Director
John Chrastek	Director
Khushroo Dastur	Director (Finance Director)
Sheela Sharma	Director