



FRIENDS OF ZEBRA NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2018



WELCOME

Welcome to the sixth Friends of Zebra newsletter. Friends are people who have benefitted from the experience of living in London with us, former Board & staff members, and others who have an interest in what we do. The purpose of our newsletter is to keep you in touch with what we are up to, and to assure you that you still matter to us, even if you are not directly involved anymore. We hope you find it informative, and we would welcome your news & pictures, to be included in future publications, if you would like to send them to us.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

In autumn 2017 we completed the major repair of Jeannine House, Upper Montagu Street, W1 - our beautiful, listed, early nineteenth century residence in fashionable Marylebone. This involved replacing the roof covering, repairing brickwork, parapets, chimney stacks and chimneys, renewing flashing and valley gutters and redecorating externally. We are very pleased with the finish and Jeannine House now looks every bit the elegant early Victorian terrace of townhouses.

We also completed the refitting of 10 kitchens and bathrooms. Increasingly these refurbishment projects are now undertaken by our in-house maintenance team.

We've always had a major focus on Health and Safety, but the terrible tragedy of Grenfell Tower has brought the matter even more to the fore. Fire safety has been a clear priority and we've replaced and upgraded fire doors, replaced all our fire extinguishers, and have a continuous programme of servicing and updating fire detection equipment. Even though much of our accommodation is self-contained we are subject to fire protection regulations for hostels and HMOs, which are more rigorous than those for ordinary flats. Our fire protection regime is independently audited and reported to the Board. Additionally, we've also completed major asbestos and legionella surveys.

BOARD & COMMITTEE NEWS

We've had some quite significant Board changes. Richard Kennedy, who has been a Board member for some 5 years was appointed Chair in September 2017 and Emily Orme, who has been a Board member for 3 years was appointed vice-Chair at the same time. Two ex-residents Alex Vougiaris and Henrik Lonberg have joined the Board as have Roland Shanks, of UoL Residential Services and William Wilson formerly Head of Student Accommodation at UCL. Alison Ahearn, Bola Adesoga and Paul van Driessche have left after a number of years of loyal and enthusiastic service. We are therefore recruiting, and if there's anyone out there who'd consider Board membership we'd be really happy to hear from you.

The Board has agreed a new set of rules, based upon the National Housing Federation's model rules for small Housing Associations. We'll be producing a new long-term business plan later this winter.



RESIDENTS

Resident satisfaction remains high and our bi-annual survey showed that 90% of residents were satisfied or very satisfied with Zebra and its services.

We organised 10 social events during the year which included Aladdin, Evita, Travesties, Don Juan, the Kite Runner, Stomp, 42nd Street, and the Grinning Man. The family Christmas show was Slava's Snow Show. Theatre in London, unsurprisingly, remains very popular with residents, and our contacts with agents and individual theatres enables

us to get the very best deals and seats for our residents. We also use our Social Programme budget to further subsidise events, helping residents who are often on restricted budgets.

As ever, our annual garden party was very popular with over 120 residents and guests attending. We always ask residents for their suggestions for social events, and Aladdin, which was one of those suggestions, was the most popular show of the year.



Finally, here is a quote from some residents which we've used in the 2018 Annual Report. It encapsulates very eloquently what Zebra is about

"We met at the university when we were Masters degree students. At that time we were living in private accommodation. We had so many issues with housing, due to poor conditions and lack of health and safety inspections. The ceiling of one of our houses even collapsed once! We literally were living for half a year without a part of the ceiling. One of the best things about Zebra Housing is the sense of security regarding housing conditions and health and safety. These are very valuable aspects, especially in London, where the housing crisis is blatant. The second aspect we would like to remark on is the central location of the apartments. We would have never had the opportunity to live in central London if it weren't for Zebra Housing. Living at Impala House offers a wide range of attractions and cultural activities. Since our baby was born in September 2016, we especially enjoy Regents Park, Hampstead Heath and Primrose Hill. Zebra Housing is making these locations more inclusive neighbourhoods. This is also very important for us as we are committed to social justice at various levels. Finally, Zebra Housing is formed by a warm international community of students. Doing a PhD can be a very isolating process. Having a close network is crucial, especially in the absence of relatives, friends and a wider social fabric."

STAFF CHANGES

We've had quite a number of staff changes. Alison Young, Head of Finance, left to take up the post of Director of Finance at another HA. Alison had been with us for over 2 years. Alex Adjei, Finance Officer, also left to take up a post of Management Accountant. Alex had been with us since 2005 – so we lost a massive amount of knowledge and history with his departure. Effectively therefore we have had a complete change of personnel in our Finance Department. We've used this positively to review and improve all of our financial processes and systems, and we are excited by the potential for better reporting and financial information. Sass Ezekiel has joined us as Director of Finance and Jettie Hassan as Management Accountant.

We also lost Bart Rypsysc and Aaron Gasper, both Maintenance Officers, and they have been replaced by Michael Christopher and Daryl Coe. Michael and Daryl have brought new skills and experience to the maintenance team.



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