

Tom Tugendhat MBE MP
Member of Parliament for Tonbridge & Malling
130 Vale Road
Tonbridge
Kent
TN9 1SP

10 June 2020

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 2nd June 2020 regarding the residents concerns that have been raised in regards to the recently issued Service charge budget and invoices.

We do understand that this has not come at a good time and we do fully appreciate that some residents are experiencing financial hardship and we will work with owners, where necessary over the amounts that are owed on individual accounts.

We do understand that on first glance, it may seem that the costs have increased significantly. The previous budget, issued some 2 years ago, was issued prior to Trinity taking on many areas of the development. Since areas have been taken on, costs have increased due to usage of the areas and an increase in costs where electricity is concerned. Also, there are significant areas (110 acres) that require an annual health and safety review. These areas are also subject to tree surveys annually.

The Community Centre, Sports Pavilion & Sports Field are all under the remit of the community interest company. All of these services require costs to be paid in advance by owners for the upkeep. Throughout the year, costs for these areas when rented/hired are collected and all costs are reconciled at the end of the year. Following this reconciliation, any costs that are collected are paid back to owners following the completion of the year end accounts.

We do appreciate that further details are required over the running costs and I have detailed these below;

Regarding the costs for the staffing of the CIC; The CIC are responsible for the ownership, operation and management of the community facilities on behalf of the development. Also, amongst other responsibilities; To monitor the performance of the Management Company and to develop and deliver a program of Community development which aims to create a cohesive community.

The role of the Community Development manager specifically is:

An essential ingredient for the success of LGM CIC will be the appointment of the Community Development Manager. The role of this Manager will be to act as an interface between the Board and community. The Community Development Manager responsibilities will include: implementation of policy; management, maintenance and repair of community spaces, assets and to

maximise income opportunities and the hire and coordination of the estates management company. The Community Development Manager will be the welcoming face of the Community Development and will often be the first point of contact for residents. The Community Development Manager will report to the Board and will attend Board meetings but will not be a Board member.

Further details can be found in the Community Development Trust business plan which was appended to the legal documents which all residents were given when they purchased their property.

Please note that historically the organisation LGM CIC was referred to as the CDT, at one point it was thought there would be two organisations however LGM CIC will perform the Community development objectives therefore the CDT is not a separate organisation but a function of LGM CIC.

In relation to the £22,000 being allocated for the general repairs this is based on potential costs throughout the year, this is not just for the community centre but the whole of the CDT land including the Pavilion. The £1,500 included in the budget towards a redecoration fund, this is for a reserve fund. This is to ensure there is enough funding in place for when the redecorations are due on the building we carry out the same procedure on blocks of apartments. The £1,500 contribution equates to £2.11 per property for the year.

I am afraid at the moment we would be unable to give the residents our expectations on the amount of hiring income the development would receive this year. Due to Covid-19 and the lockdown that was put in place any income that would usually be received during this time would not have incurred.

In relation to the electricity charges, the costs have increased due to additional areas taken on within the development over 2 years. We do source the best deal where possible with our suppliers.

I can confirm having looked at the service charge budgets that were issued for 2018, 2019 and 2020 our management fee has not increased.

During the budget approval process we worked closely with Taylor Wimpey and the CIC in compiling accurate costs, following a successful retendering process and also ensuring we secure the services of local service providers. Of course if a large expenditure is due to be spent on the development we will ensure that this is communicated with the residents on the development.

We would be more than happy to arrange a meeting with yourself to discuss this further if you wish.

Yours Sincerley



Chris Tompkins MIRPM MSc AssocRICS
Operations Manager

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Trinity | Vantage Point | 23 Mark Road | Hemel Hempstead | Hertfordshire | HP2 7DN
0345 345 1584 | info@trinityestates.com | www.trinityestates.com

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