

## Minutes of meeting held on Rosemont

Date: Saturday 24 November 2007

Time: 5:15pm-7:30pm, 8:45pm-9:45pm, 11:45pm-12:45pm (25/11)

Venue: Leeds

Attendees: Ahmed Shafiu, Ali Haidar, Mohamed Ahmed (Manik), Ahmed Jamsheed, Ahmed Niyaz, Mohamed Razeem, Mohamed Muizzu (representing the CC)

Absent (due to unforeseen circumstances): Hassan Ugail, Ismail Mohamed (habarey), Faris

Minutes taken by: Mohamed Muizzu

### Introduction to the Meeting:

9 Rosemont Avenue has been under MSA management since October 2005. Since then several works have been done to improve all aspects of the house, such as the financial transparency, self-sustainable strategy for income and expenditure, physical improvement and refurbishment of the house, implementation of proper rules and regulations, and fairness in selecting tenants and appointing wardens.

Since the set of discussions held during the hand over of the management of the house to MSA, and the formulation of the rules and regulations of the house back in 2005, such focused thorough discussions have not been held.

Thus, in order to improve and adopt better strategies and policies (if necessary) in the management of the house, it is important to review the progress made, the set backs experienced, and the steps taken towards better management of the house, in an open, focused discussion forum.

To this effect, a sub-committee of mainly independent members, were selected to discuss these issues in a brainstorming session and come up with recommendations to the CC.

Members included in the sub-committee (in addition to the Chairperson) are: Ahmed Shafiu, Ali Haidar, Hassan Ugail, Ahmed Jamsheed, Ahmed Niyaz, Mohamed Ahmed, Ismail Mohamed, Mohamed Razeem, Abdulla Faris

### Aims and Objectives of the Meeting:

To review and reflect on any achievements and setbacks MSA has experienced over the 2 years of its management, and tackle various issues in a holistic manner, in the aim of ensuring sustainable and effective management of house in the future.

Various specific aspects such as warden's performance, rent and charges, daily maintenance levels, summer usage of the house, implementation of the Rosemont Regulation, advertising and publicity efforts need to be looked into. The questionnaires submitted will be reviewed as part of this exercise.

### Points discussed:

- Lessons have to be learnt from the experience gained from the last 2 years.
- Some visitors did not know what are the responsibilities of the warden, tenants and visitors at the house, however, it was argued that it is one's own basic responsibility to learn about these from the regulations. Thus, a one-page summary of simple pointers to be made and made available at the house, and website of MSA. This summary is to give the gist of the regulation so that the visitors, tenants can understand every important thing about the regulation at first instant. A copy of this is to be given to every visitor, tenant on Day One.
- Cleanliness and basic hygiene not maintained at the house during the summer period. Visitors found not following the regulation in maintaining the cleanliness of the communal areas of the house, and not helping the warden in doing so. Furthermore, the warden was found to be not friendly enough and need to improve on the ways of interacting with the visitors.
- The experience of the new students at the house during the summer period makes them wrongly believe that the house will be just like that during the academic year as well. Thus steps need to be taken to improve the situation, specially to keep the house clean and tidy, so that the first impression gained by a person who comes to the house for the first time is a positive and good one.
- It was also noted that to some extent, the CC did not take full responsibility in looking into what is happening at the house and take action in a timely manner.
- The image cast in some of the prospective students' minds are such that they do not even want to stay at the house as a visitor. Thus, work needs to be done so that prospective students get a true and sincere image of the house.
- It was also argued that the CC did not take strict decisions at times when it was deemed necessary against some tenants and visitors, such as when they do not pay the due rent/charges, when they do not do their bit to clean the house, smoking or any such act which is strictly not allowed in the regulation. However the chairperson mentioned that the policy of the CC was to regularly keep in contact with the warden and make sure the warden deals with such issues properly, and if the CC directly intervenes into such issues further negative repercussions are very likely.
- The Rosemont Regulation was not found to have any contradictions but its wordings and other aspects of it need to be written in professional legal terms. Thus the task was assigned to a professional legal advisor to be completed before the AGM.
- An independent team to be elected at the AGM by the members to manage the house, and included in the MSA Constitution at the AGM. Details of the team and its responsibilities, how it is formed, its relationship with the CC, AC and the members and other such aspects of it to be formulated and made public before the AGM.
- The payment method of visitors- based on the experience from the last two years, it was discussed to take a 7-day advance payment on the 1<sup>st</sup> day, and MSA will payback any refunds if the visitor do not stay for the whole 7 days. Furthermore, if the visitor wishes to stay beyond the

7 days, another advance payment of 7-days to be taken on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. The same procedure to be followed afterwards in refunding and/or further payments. The payments can be paid by cheque or cash by the visitor, and by cheque, cash or bank transfer by MSA.

- The major questions in the current Rosmeont questionnaire to be put up in the MSA website as single poll questions every week so that more members' participation can be obtained.
- The warden to make sure the register to visitors is properly maintained, as it is a very important document ( for the visitor and MSA)
- The warden also to set up standing order to pay his/her room rent, and MSA to refund monthly any money spent by the warden during that month.
- A Cleaning Rota to be made by the warden and put up in all the rooms, bathroom, kitchen and living room, so that the tenants(including the warden) can take turn in cleaning these places. However, the visitors are also required to make sure they do not leave anything unclean after his/her use.
- During the summer, a daily interaction between the warden and the CC (or the proposed Rosemont Management Team) to be maintained, and members of the CC (or the proposed RMT) to visit the house more frequently during this period. The proposed RMT should also make regular and need based (if any issue that requires prompt action arises) visits throughout the year.
- To proposed during the AGM to reduce the rent by 10% as advised by the RC 2006, and in accordance to the vote taken during the EGM 2007. At the EGM it was voted to not reduce the rent by 10% if the impending Council Tax issue at that time do not get resolved in MSA's favour, and to revote at a later date if resolved in MSA's favour.
- It was observed that students only want simple rooms with simple facilities. But having a Sky multichannel subscription will be favourable as students has expressed their concern that they do not get the privacy at times when there are visitors at the house and occupying the living room
- It was also proposed to allow tenants to install additional telephone lines into their rooms, all the payments for which will be paid by the tenant.
- The rent of the large room to be set at £270, and if a tenant or CC finds an additional person to share the room with the existing tenant (if the existing tenant wants to share the room), then reduce the rent to £200 per person(and refund the overpaid rent if applicable ;i,e, if an additional tenant is found then the overpaid rent can be either refunded or used as part of the rent of the future months, whichever is applicable and/or preferred by the tenant.)If an additional tenant was not found to the room by the end of the tenancy, then no such refunding can be done. This needs to be included in the Regulation and tenancy agreement before AGM.
- The charges imposed on visitors during the summer was looked into and discussed. It was agreed that the current charges of £4 per night and £6 per night for the summer are fine and need not be reduced.
- IT was suggested to acquire additional sleeping bags (number of bags to be decided) and this stock is to be maintained, and should also ensure these are maintained clean.

- Warden should ensure that luggage that are intended to be stored, are kept in the shed, or in the attic (once its properly cleaned and made ready, and if the shed is full). The warden should ensure the living room and other communal areas are kept as clear with only minimum essentials being temporarily kept.
- A clause on RMT(Rosemont management team) to be put in the Constitution in order to give it a permanent and sustainable foundation.
- Procedure (to be included in regulation and amended in the tenancy agreement before AGM) on rent collection procedure:
  - the rent is due on 1<sup>st</sup> of every month (by Standing order)
  - 10 days window period is given for ease of rent payment
  - contact the tenant on 11<sup>th</sup> (by the proposed RMT) and from the discussion if an acceptable reason is not given by the tenant for the unpayment of the rent, then Notice will be immediately given (by CC on recommendation of the RMT) and informed to MoE
  - if an acceptable reason is given by the tenant for the unpayment of the rent, give a 1 month period (by phone and in written form), and if still not paid by the end of this period, send Notice and inform MoE and the tenants sponsor/funder
- To obtain the funding body/person's details during the tenancy application process

One-page summary (named: Rosemont Essentials) (order of the points to be sorted)

1. Transit visitors can stay 3 nights consecutively free of charge during the Summer Period
2. Maximum 30 nights free of charge for visitors during the Academic Period. No visitor can stay at the house for more than 30 nights during the Academic Year.
3. Remember to observe cleanliness and basic hygiene
4. Be social and respect each other
5. Ensure timely rent payments (by tenants), and advance 7-day visitor payments (by visitors during the Summer Period)
6. Visitors will not be given a duplicate key for the house, and hence are advised to coordinate entrance to the house with tenants/warden (by email: [rosemont@msa-uk.org](mailto:rosemont@msa-uk.org), or by phone)
7. Sleeping arrangements are limited: visitors are encouraged to bring own sleeping bags
8. Since July 2007, smoking is illegal, under British law, in these premises. Use the back/front garden for smoking
9. Be courteous to and respect the neighbours
10. Refrain from storing packed belongings in the sitting room
11. Tenants, visitors and warden to cooperate with each other to make your stay pleasant and enjoyable
12. All these points are covered in the “Rosemont Regulation”

## Rosemont Management Team (RMT): its roles and responsibilities, and other aspects

No. Of members: 3

Election: During the first year, the CC to propose minimum 5 names, out of which members elect 3 members at the AGM 2007.

Continuity: As a start, the member who gets least number of votes amongst the 3 elected, leaves office at the end of first year. The member who gets the second lowest number of votes amongst the 3 elected leaves office at the end of the second year, and the member who gets the most votes leaves office at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Starting from the second year, CC nominates 3 names each year and members vote for 1 member to the vacant post of that year. From the second year, each new member who gets elected serves a 3 year period.

Who could be a member?: Any present or past student at a UK institution. Preferrably someone with experience about Rosmeont and its management, and someone who is studying/has studied at a postgraduate level course.( It is important that this team is mature enough to handle situations & is capable of dealing with difficult issues. Such mature individuals would perhaps also be respected by most of the students and hence will be listened to!)

Tasks and responsibilities:

- primary management body of Rosemont
- Making sure the Rosemont Regulation is properly implemented
- Regular supervision-minimum 1 physical visit to the house mandatory every month, and should be increased as much as necessary during a particular situation, if deemed necessary.
- Keep regular contact with the warden and the tenants
- Prepare financial report monthly and yearly report and send to CC. Prepare any other report which is deemed necessary at that time by the CC or the RMT itself
- Send recommendations on various issues to the CC, and make sure it is seen through until the CC takes a decision on it
- Financial decisions cannot be taken by the RMT