



# **Mutual Heights**

## **2018 Community Survey**

## Introduction

In June 2018 an email was distributed to 273 people, all involved in Mutual Heights and the Mutual Building in some way (for example as owners, tenants, agents, or family), asking them to complete a survey made available through Google Forms. The Mutual Heights web site also provided a link to the survey, and printed copies were posted under all doors in the building. Responses were received from all three of these channels.

The results that you see here are now under detailed consideration by the managing agents and the trustees.

Further input is always welcome.



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[info@mutualheights.info](mailto:info@mutualheights.info) | Community web site <http://www.mutualheights.info>

Check out "Mutual Building" on Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual\\_Building](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_Building)

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## Analysis of responses by email address

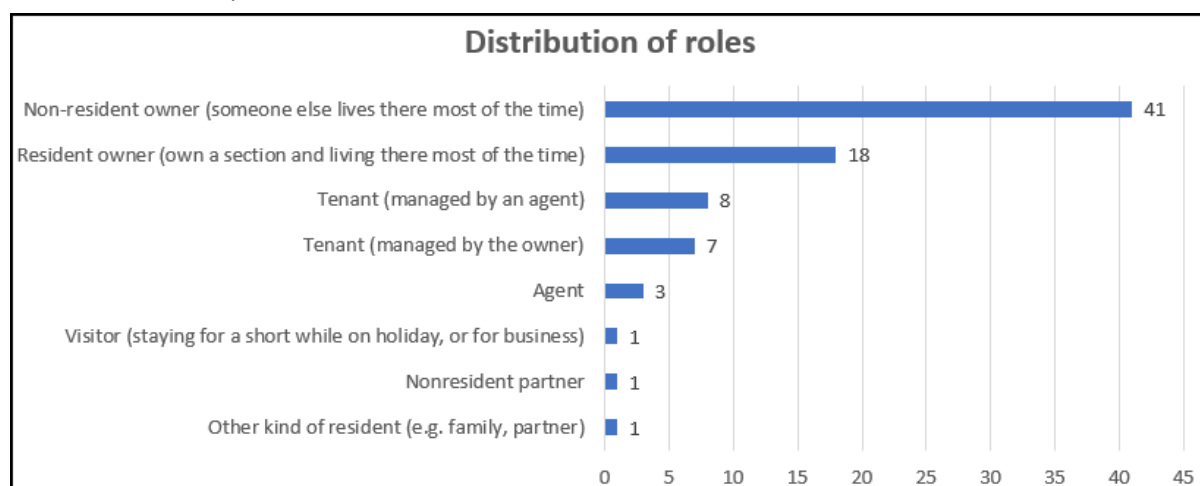
Respondents were asked to provide an email address as a simple way to validate who they were. Some of the respondents were 'known', in that their email addresses were already on file so that they were already on the invitation list; some were new (presumably coming via the web site or from the paper notice). The analysis of email addresses that responded and those that did not respond is as follows:

Emails	Count
Total emails distributed	273
Known email addresses replied	59
Known email addresses not replied	178
New unknown email addresses	21

This resulted in an adequate sample of 80 responses.

## Analysis of responses by role of respondent

The number of responses in each 'role' was as follows:



*These eight roles are a simplification of the eleven that were actually returned – see the discussion below*

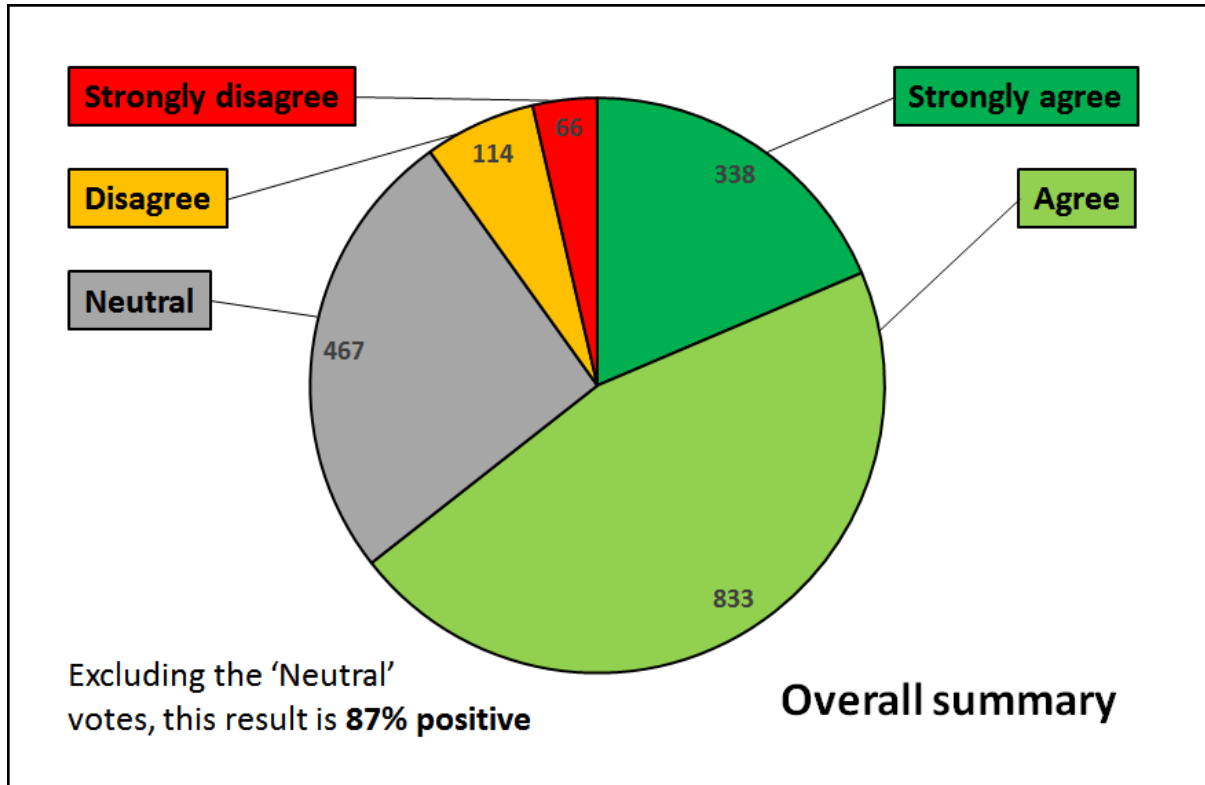
### Notes:

- The difference between the number of resident and non-resident owners reflects the fact that there are more owners who are non-resident.
- The difference between the number of agent- and owner-managed tenants suggests similar numbers on each side, but there must be many more than 15 tenants overall, and this group is probably under-represented.
- Similarly, there are more than three agencies involved in the building and this important group needs better representation.
- Short stay visitors were not invited to participate in this survey; however, it would be useful to have their input and this needs consideration should the survey be re-run in the future.

## Overall satisfaction

The majority of the 'questions' in the survey were in fact statements, with which respondents were invited to agree or disagree on a five-point Agree-Disagree scale, including 'Neutral' and also 'Not applicable'.

The analysis of the five points on the scale provides the following result:



From this we find a good result: if we exclude the 'Neutral' votes in order to gauge the balance between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, the result is 87% positive. This provides a useful overall benchmark figure for future surveys.

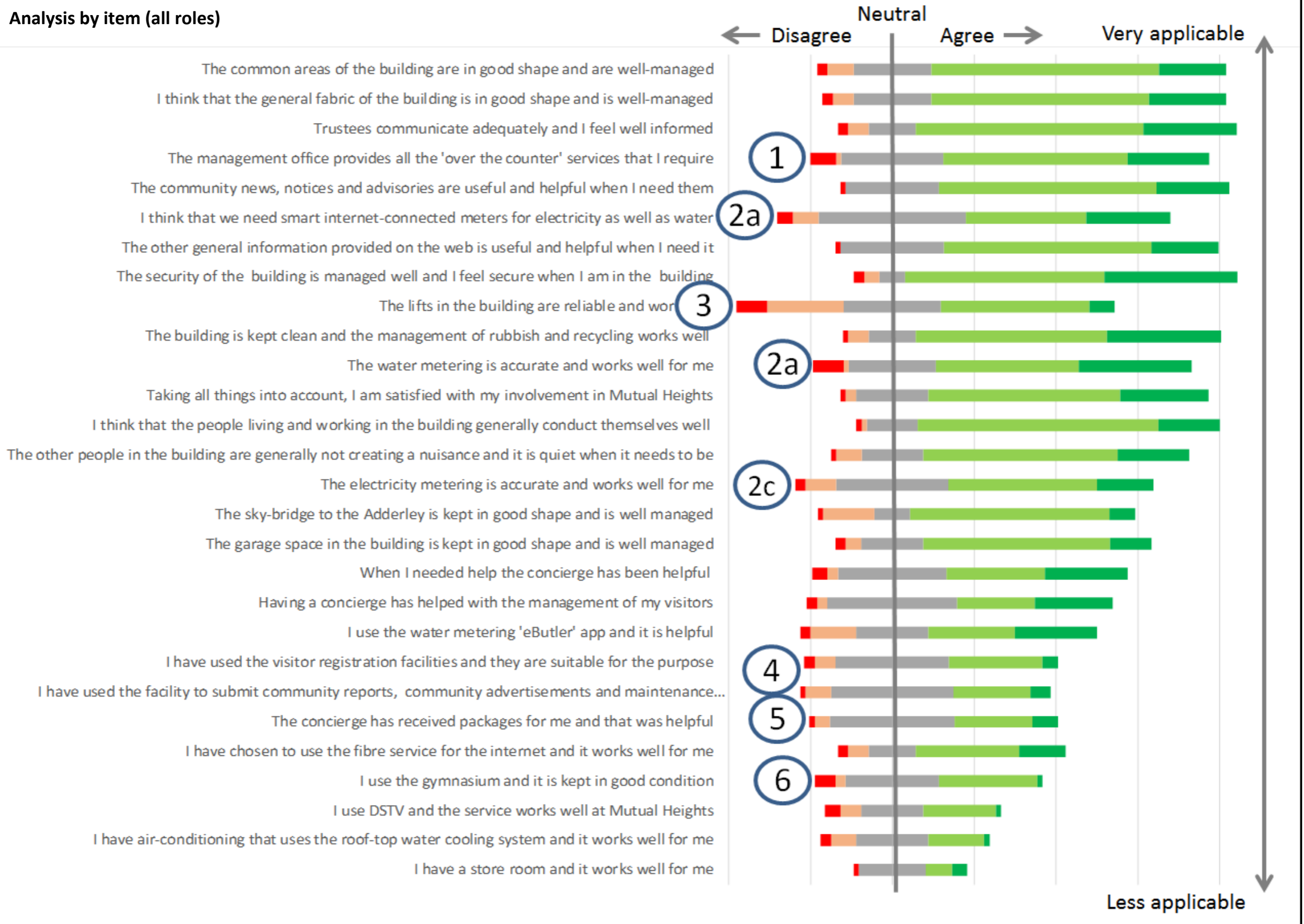
The total of the counts in the figure above indicates that there were 2302 individual expressions of an opinion. Inevitably, we now need to investigate the variety of opinions across the 28 areas of the enquiry.

### Analysis by item – all roles

The chart that follows plots the number of votes (using the five agree-disagree options: red, orange, grey, pale green and darker green) within each of the 28 areas of enquiry. It is also sorted vertically so that the most applicable items are at the top (for example the cleanliness of the building and communications), and the least (for example air conditioning and store rooms) at the bottom.

All roles are accommodated in these results. The annotated numbers relate to the comments on the page that follows.

## Analysis by item (all roles)



A number of comments arise from the above chart (see the numbers superimposed on the chart):

1. Although the over-the-counter services are generally good, there are instances where people have not had the service that they expect.
2. The metering of water and electricity shows some disappointment despite the success of the water metering at a time when water management was critically important to do well. There are anxieties about the cost of internet-connected electricity meters and the advantages are not clearly understood.
3. The lifts stand out as possibly the most significant point of difficulty.
4. The web site services to register visitors and handle community reports needs review.
5. The new concierge services are valued by some (those owners and agents that are managing short term rentals, presumably) but not by others. There needs to be clear value from the investment in the concierge for all who are involved with the building.
6. There is concern about the quality of the gymnasium.

These are just some comments, based on a first scan of the statistical results. Overall, the results are positive but in order to understand where things might be going wrong it is important to look at the different views of *the different kinds of respondent* (this is done in the next chart) and *the specific written comments that were made* (this is done next).

### **Analysis of items according to roles**

This analysis shows the extent to which the different kinds of respondents felt, across the 28 items.

1. The larger portion of the figure (orange) shows that non-resident owners are content.
2. Equally, resident owners (darker brown) are content.
3. Where we see a cluster of discontent (lighter brown) towards the bottom we find that owner-managed tenants are unhappy about the lifts and the gymnasium, also about visitor registration. DSTV is bothering people who live in the building.
4. The concierge is generally effective for all role players but there is a minority that is not content (but just two people – an agent and a short-stay visitor).



- Non-resident owner (you own a section but someone else lives there most of the time)
- Non-resident owner (you own a section but someone else lives there most of the time);Tenant (managed by the owner)
- Non-resident partner
- Other kind of resident (e.g. family, partner)
- Owner but not permanent resident
- Resident for half the month airbnb for the remainder
- Resident owner (you own a section and you live there most of the time)
- Tenant (managed by an agent)
- Tenant (managed by the owner)
- Visitor (staying for a short while on holiday, or for business)
- Was an owner, currently the owner of Afribode that manages 22 apartments in the building

Analysis of items according to roles

## Additional written comments



There were a variety of very useful additional comments that help us to get behind the numbers and see what people are actually thinking. There is a ten-page list of the comments available separately, there are summarised here and selective indicative comments are included verbatim.

### Comments about the building management

😊	😞
<p>Well managed, attractive, iconic.</p> <p>I feel the trustees have always done a good job of communicating and it is the only building we work in that has an intranet that functions successfully - I think in general the trustees are very forward thinking in the adoption of new technology to aide communication</p> <p>Always friendly, approachable and accommodating.</p> <p>Good and consistent</p> <p>I think they're doing a great job in terms of the upkeep. Everyone I bring there is very impressed by how well it's maintained.</p> <p>Makes very little sense for me to fill in this as I am a tenant not an owner but all in all I enjoy the building and the friendly and good security, so well done on that</p> <p>Thank you for your hard work. MH is a dream to live in</p> <p>Colin is always very helpful when I call him regarding queries.</p> <p>Always very helpful when I drop in the office or phone in with a request for info or help</p>	<p>I would prefer stricter control of contractors working in the building and access by retail store employees to the building</p> <p>I brought up the issues with the dilapidated gym 3 years ago and still no progress. Very disappointing.</p> <p>Surrounding area not always feeling " safe"</p> <p>I have been extremely frustrated in the past with the damp issues etc which I ended up paying for myself when I feel it was a building issue</p>
<p><b>Interesting ideas</b></p> <p>It would be good if front desk run a short term rental service and take commission for it, extra commission could be used to improve the building and it would be a good way to control and register short term renters.</p> <p>It might be nice to give the security people a bonus at the end of the year. We think their service is excellent.</p>	





## Comments about utility metering

	
<p>I love the water monitoring app. It has been wonderful to show guests how much water they are using and I think they find it very useful. It has also allowed us to detect water leaks in flats that have no guests in.</p> <p>The smart water meters are incredible. Thank you</p> <p>My unit is rented out by a agent and he is very happy about the utility metering and the way it is working</p> <p>Happy with the water metre.</p> <p>Prepaid or smart electricity metering is important to manage tenants account.</p>	<p>It is difficult to get hold of the contractor/supplier of the water meter app.</p> <p>The electricity meter is outdated.</p>
<p><b>Interesting ideas</b></p> <p>Having temporary guests does take its toll on the cost of running the building (lifts, number of cleaning staff, foot traffic). Perhaps an increase in levies paid by owners whose apartments are part of a short term rental scheme?</p> <p>Not really clear why I pay electricity every month even when I'm away, so some internet based billing would give better transparency</p> <p>I assume the electricity reading is accurate but I think being able to monitor it on a day to day basis as we do the water will be very useful. Travellers are becoming more environmentally aware of their impact on the places they visit and I think this will encourage them to conserve. From an owner's perspective it will allow immediate detection of guests that are leaving their heaters and aircon on throughout the day when the apartment is empty.</p>	

## Comments about the concierge services

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<p>The presence of a Concierge is good. Always polite, friendly and assertive.</p> <p>Concierge is a great idea but not clear what his role and responsibilities are</p> <p>Since I do not personally live there currently I am unaware of this. But having lived there in the past this service sounds extremely valuable!</p> <p>Very helpful and efficient</p> <p>My airbnb agent says she finds concierge very helpful</p> <p>The security guards have been more helpful as they have made an effort to get to know me unlike the concierge. They have received packages and opened the glass doors for me much more enthusiastically - security guards</p> <p>Jozi is the best part of the building management</p>	<p>Not consistently present and only in office hours.</p> <p>I must have seen the concierge 3 times at the reception since he started working..and was greeted once.. after advising property management</p> <p>I feel the concierge service is a nice idea but I do not feel it has been thought through all the way. For owners that are using a property management company the concierge adds no benefit as they have staff that do the check ins and check outs. For people who are doing their own short term rental there is some benefit but it seems pretty limited. Ideally you need somebody who is available outside of normal hours ... I also feel that as a permanent resident there is limited benefit.</p> <p>the concierge should have been aware of the application by the banking hall owners for a liquor license and should have alerted the trustees</p> <p>The telephone system at the reception is very bad and you cannot hear anyone.</p>
<p><b>Interesting ideas</b></p> <p>I feel that there are several options. One is the use of internet based key-boxes that can be hired by individual owners or rental companies - they can then be programmed with expiring codes for late arrivals. As security is 24 hours and already on site, one of these staff could allow access to the key boxes based on the arrivals and checkout list. There could even be larger boxes that allow some deliveries for the permanent tenants.</p> <p><i>[There follows a detailed proposal based on the idea of outsourcing to an accommodation company – it raises a number of interesting ideas. Refer to the full listing of the comments for details]</i></p> <p>I think more clarity and granularity on the concierge service is needed so that it's clear what the role is. For example, I do short term lets on my apartment but I'm not comfortable relying on the service to meet and greet guests / do key handovers as there are no service level agreements in place (or not that I'm aware of).</p>	

## Comments about the web site

	
<p>Great work! Could do with more UX design thinking.</p> <p>As an owner I went on the website occasionally. I find a lot of it interesting. A lot looks useful but I have never really used it.</p> <p>Always up-to-date and informative.</p> <p>Great work thus far</p> <p>Useful and progressive</p>	<p>I would like more information about contract work in the building</p> <p>I would like to know how the visitor registration works</p> <p>Although visitor registration is possible, I'm still very uncomfortable capturing sensitive information about guests there. If I think about what my company has to do to secure websites and protect information, it makes me nervous to capture guest details on our community website.</p> <p>Old, outdated tech</p>
<p><b>Interesting ideas</b></p> <p>it would be useful to have a mutual heights app so that one can receive alerts that content has been added - or even direct info on what is happening</p> <p>Our airbnb agent says she's mostly on her phone, so she signs them in. She said an app to do that would be helpful.</p>	

## Comments about services and facilities

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<p>The building is kept clean enough, however, there is a large dump trash beneath the stairs of the building's fire escape route from the mezzanine to parliament street.</p> <p>Security in my experience so far has been excellent, well done.</p> <p>I havent used the fibre internet because In not sure how to connect up to it, it would be good if the process was simplified with preferred vendors and transparent pricing.</p> <p>Generally everything works well</p> <p>Lifts feel rough but they work</p> <p>Many guests say how fast the fibre is. We have a 20mb line.</p>	<p>Store room is often flooded</p> <p>More discipline is required using the recycling facilities.</p> <p>There is refuse build up just outside our building (side entrance) as the city hasn't supplied adequate bins.</p> <p>There is still no indication on each floor as to where the rubbish containers are located.</p> <p>The staircase and corridor outside our unit don't receive as much attention as needed.</p> <p>There is room for improvement in the quality of the cleaning service - and the noise they make</p> <p>I think the gym is super ugly. I looks like some equipment thrown into a room.</p> <p>The gym equipment is a bit run down. One of the treadmills comes to an abrupt halt during the beginning stage of a run.</p> <p>The gym is kept clean but the equipment needs to be maintained more frequently</p> <p>The one stationary bike is broken and has not been working for months too.</p> <p>One guest found the gym equipment a bit dated. No one else has complained though.</p> <p>Elevators at the right side of the building entrance tend to break frequently.</p> <p>I have not read any recent complaints but I have had multiple bad reviews in the past based on the lifts not working.</p> <p>At the moment, I am also experiencing issues with my newly installed fibre. DSTV has signal issues</p> <p>i would interested to see what value we get from property exp ito cost / we seem to out source more / i think they are exceptionally poor in supervising work</p>
<p><b>Interesting ideas</b></p> <p>I have sent requests about adding a squat rack in the gym but have had no responses, i really would like this to happen.</p>	

## Comments about the maintenance of the building

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<p>The building is wonderful and I think most people like it, the only thing dragging it down is the dark mass that is the banking hall. I think this one things has more impact than anybody realises on the feel of the building.</p>	<p>Gym maintenance is very very poor, we need someone who uses the gym to be incharge of maintaining it.</p> <p>The water pipes that rattle (when there's flow) beyond my bedroom wall gets louder day by day. I only hope it's not pressure build up, as my appartment had received major water damage twice in the last ten years due to overflow from outside my appartment.</p> <p>these sre poorly conflated questions. eg the garage is in goiod order but the management of parking is reall very poor / the garage door is often left unattended and is used as a front door by many not in a vehicle. a big concern is its persistent breaking down and the time it tales to get repaired</p> <p>General fabric:still hoping for all brass parts to be polished one day,especially in Darling St/common areas: rubbish in stairways takes weeks to be noticed and cleaned/skybridge:always wet when it rains and no sealant has still been applied in the weak spots.</p> <p>Need a cleaning schedule for the Skybridge glass</p> <p>The garage space is not clean, the roller shutter door is used too frequently by the security staff, the skybridge requires attention. Protective covers are required on wall corners, some of the doors don't fit properly (see doors to Parliament Street lifts on 5th floor), noise control remains an issue (contractors, cleaners and door slammers)</p> <p>There is often faeces and urine in bay 26 in the basement.</p> <p>The parquet floor needs some love</p> <p>New carpets PLEASE 😊</p>
<p><b>Interesting ideas</b></p> <p>When I think of Mutual Heights and its iconic status in Cape Town I feel that it should be the one building that everybody is fighting to get into but they aren't. If you look at Cartwright's Corner there is no comparison, it is so much more beautiful, has so much history etc. The major difference is that when you walk into Cartwright's it feels lived in and when you walk into Mutual it feels abandoned. <i>[There are further comments provided with ideas to improve the situation]</i></p> <p>Would personally recommend a gate like structure at the loading bay that runs flush with the side walk. I've personally seen people sleep, urinate and leave garbage in that area.</p>	

## Comments about behaviour and nuisance

😊	😞
<p>The staff is polite, helpful and not intrusive</p> <p>We had a complaint about noisy guests in January but the guest seemed quite pedantic. Generally, no complaints about noise and bad conduct from our airbnb guests.</p>	<p>the banking hall parties can be very intrusive. the filming activities are fine and fun; but the parties seem to be generally poorly managed and result in street noise at unacceptable hours of the morning. it is not a suitable venue for these kinds of activities, being in the heart of a residential blg</p> <p>The owners of the banking hall create a nuisance</p> <p>The Banking Hall owners in particular were extremely disrespectful when they moved in, organized a late night, loud event without prior consent of the other residents, and in fact even prohibited other residents from making use of the main public entrance using strong arm security tactics - unacceptable in a building where we should all enjoy the same access rights, and should not be subjected to loud music past 10pm. I was very glad to be leaving around the time they moved in. I hope that was an isolated incident, but certainly not the best first impression.</p> <p>most film shoots always go over their stipulated time</p> <p>people disrespect public space by trashing things on the weekend especially in the lifts/lobbies.</p> <p>Still some unacceptable littering in common areas sometimes, noisy people in the atrium during the night.</p> <p>Middle of the night door slammers (especially on weekends and public holidays). Occupants of apartments with internal balconies is an issue. Some short term lets have too many people occupying the apartments. Barking dogs and screaming children running around in the public areas are occasionally a nuisance.</p> <p>It is difficult to concentrate when some residents are making a lot of noise the past few weeks with renovations.</p> <p>Sometimes cleaning staff will shout to each other in the middle-space, which is quite loud. The renovations? of certain flats are also a bit of a nuisance. But not so much that I want to tear my hair out.</p> <p>I found a hand full of residents to be exceptionally inconsiderate in terms of noise, and littering.</p> <p>Loud music from neighbors and children running/being loud on the second floor.</p>
<p><b>Interesting ideas</b></p>	

**Do you have anything else that you want to say?**

😊	☹️
<p>THANK YOU to the Trustees and the Managing Company for your much appreciated input and hard work</p> <p>I love living in one of the most beautiful buildings in the city.</p> <p>Very happy with the security, and I find the trustees do a great job, I always feel well informed and appreciate what everyone is doing, thanks</p> <p>Keep up the good work!</p> <p>I think the building management and body corporate are doing a great job and are at least trying new things like the concierge service - which is a great concept but needs to be developed more.</p> <p>I'm happy I bought there</p> <p>Thank you for the work that goes into a building of this nature</p> <p>I've always admired the [trustees] board as well as Charles and his team in the manner in which the building is run. Please keep up the good work guys!</p> <p>Generally happy, feel safe 24/7. Peaceful and quiet building.</p> <p>THE STAFF IS VERY HELPFULL AND KIND</p>	<p>Safety in the front of the building in the evenings.</p> <p>Too much loitering creating an unsafe arrival at the entrance.</p> <p>The banking hall has been a big problem and one of the reasons for my selling my apartment, 108. I don't know what to suggest but I feel that it should never have happened.</p>
<p><b>Interesting ideas</b></p> <p>i would prefer to receive notifications by email as i generally walk and dont use lifts</p> <p>i would like for security guards to be briefed re responsibility at the garage door</p> <p>i would like some supervision of guards / has the service level been adjusted?</p> <p>I love the Mutual Building and I used to love walking into it, I now go there very seldom because I find it a little frustrating and depressing. I have in my mind a vision of what it should and could be but then I look around and think that it is nowhere close to achieving its potential - not because of the body corporate or any one supplier but just because there seems to be a lack of vision of where should be and what it needs to do to get there.</p> <p>I believe a Coin op laundry would be of value to residents and visitors</p>	