

HARINGEY LEASEHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION

Minutes from the committee meeting on Friday, 4 July 2008

7:30 pm at the Civic Centre, High Road, Wood Green, N22

Present: Sue Brown (Chair), Anne Crellin, Nick Martin-Clarke, Scott Russell, Chris Graham, Russell Chater (minutes), Selim Buyukdogan, Mrs Yumusak, Kali Mercier, Emeka Ekeowa

Apologies: Janet El Shoubashi

1. Introduction and Minutes of the last meeting

Sue informed the Committee that there were no minutes as yet available from the March and April 2008 minutes.

Action: Nick is to chase Sarah for the minutes

Sue and Malvinder are yet to arrange a meeting to sort out outstanding account issues.

Action: Sue to arrange meeting

Sue reported that Homes for Haringey had now sent a cheque for the remainder of the £700 grant for being registered as a formally recognised organisation. Sue to give the cheque to Selim to bank.

Action: Sue to pass on cheque

Chris reported that he had written to the Office of Fair Trading to find out the 77 building companies who have admitted guilt in relation to being involved in a 'cartel'. Chris reported that this was an ongoing investigation and that the issues raised would affect both leaseholders and tenants.

Action: Chris to continue investigating

Nick reported that the letter addressed to leaseholders alerting them to major works in year 1 of the Decent Homes programme and reminding them of the next AGM on 17 September 2008 had been posted with help from Anne and Russell. Nick reported that Catherine O'Reilly (from the Resident Involvement team) had demanded to see the letter, but it was felt that she had no right.

Following consultation with Anne, it was felt that the idea to send a letter to construction partners asking for a donation to the HLA should not be actioned as it was felt it would be unlikely to succeed.

Following his request, Nick reported that the council's request for dispensation had now been cancelled - which was a small victory for leaseholders.

Following the last meeting, Anne had emailed around draft constitutions from other boroughs as examples of how they phrased their constitutions. Chris reported that he had put the HLA's draft constitution on the website and also said that he would also forward Camden's constitution, which he felt was a good example. .

Action: Chris to forward Camden constitution.

Nick reported that he had visited the Milton Road community centre to assess as a possible venue for legal advice sessions. Nick felt that the venue looked promising.

All leaseholders present reported that they had received Section 20 notices regarding the installation of digital aerials. Anne reported that she had requested to view all Section 20 paperwork during the 4 week consultation period and that she is currently awaiting a set date.

Action: Anne to view Section 20 paperwork

Sue reported that Paul Bridge, the Chief Executive for Homes for Haringey had said that he would be present at the next AGM on 17 September 2008.

2. Finances

- a) **Current financial position:** Selim reported that he had received 86 standing orders to date and is to chase outstanding ones. £4,662 was reported to be in the current account as at 2 June 2008, whilst £2,784.24 was in the other account. £170.60 was reported to be in the third account which is to be ultimately closed.
- b) **Funding:** Nick reported Nesan Thevanasen had asked if the HLA wished to send out a standing order form again with the mailout of actuals. Nick wondered whether a form could be sent making it less easy for leaseholders to 'opt out'. Nick felt that HfH would probably say no, but felt it was worth asking.

3. Correspondence

Regarding the Section 20 notices relating to the installation of digital aerials, it was felt that it was unfair to be forced to pay for a higher capacity than people might want/need. It was thought that this issue should be discussed in more depth later, and that legal advice should perhaps be sought.

Action: All to discuss later

4. Strategy for mail-outs prior to AGM

It was agreed that this could be discussed at a later meeting.

5. HLA report on the Leaseholder Panel

The Committee noted a tabled paper, which will also be emailed. The Committee will have 1 week to respond.

Action: Committee to respond to the report

6. Update on outreach, including a report from Kali Mercier of Saltram Close leaseholders

Nick reported that the outreach letter had been sent out to estates in year 1 of the Decent Homes programme.

Kali detailed the major works and associated costs affecting Saltram Close. Leaseholders had received very little warning about the works, which was what the HLA had wanted to avoid by contesting the dispensation. Seventeen out of a possible 42 leaseholders had been 'rounded up' to protest at the plans.

Chris pointed out various legal requirements that the council were obliged to follow which it was felt might possibly benefit the leaseholders (e.g. environmental and access laws in relation to landscaping; the need to receive correct and comprehensive Section 20 notices in order to be legally charged etc).

Kali was advised to document how things proceeded, recording dates, names etc. If leaseholders could prove they had not been consulted properly, they were only legally obliged to pay £250.

Stock condition surveys should perhaps be requested to prove that the work was necessary, and a freedom of information request could also be submitted. It was noted that free legal advice could be sought from the College of Law; also that, if a case went to the LVT as opposed to court, it would also be a lot cheaper.

Action: Kali to continue questioning the works and report back at the next HLA meeting.

7. Constitution/recognition by HfH

It was agreed that this could be discussed at a later meeting.

8. Nick's complaint

The Committee noted a tabled paper, which will also be emailed. The Committee could discuss this in more depth at a later meeting.

9. Website

It was noted that Selim, in communication with various others, had set up the new HLA website design. Other people needed to view this and comment so that a finalised front page could be decided on and the site put in place of the old version. Chris reported that the HLA would have to pay approximately £10 for the website domain name to be updated as it ran out in September that year.

Action: All to comment on website. Website page to be agreed and updated

10. London Leaseholders' Network report back

Chris had already mentioned about his ongoing investigations into cartels.

Chris suggested that everyone look all the website www.nationaltenantvoicedebate.co.uk as it was a useful source of information.

Chris reported that he was instigating various debates, hoping to redress the current government controlled 'top down' approach.

11. Any other business

Nick reported that his previous complaint had been upheld by the Ombudsman – a small victory for leaseholders.

It was noted that the next Leaseholder Panel meeting would be on 10 July 2008.