

Haringey Leaseholders' Association Committee Meeting

Meeting held on Wednesday 26 October 2017 at Wood Green Social Club, N22

In attendance

Committee:

Nick Martin-Clark, Chair (NMC)

Sue Brown, Secretary (SB)

Margaret Clapson, Treasurer (MC)

John Nolan, Committee Member (JN)

Michael Blasebalk, Vice Chair (MB)

Gillian Stewart, Committee Member (GS)

Susan Smith, Committee Member (SS)

Derek Martin, Committee Member (DM)

Sophia Elvey, Observer (SE)

Niamb Elvey, Observer (NE)

Gian Stewart, Observer (GSt)

The meeting was opened at 2:15pm

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions were carried out particularly for Derek, Sophia and Niamb who had not been present at the previous meeting.

Apologies

Lloyd, Kevin, Peter sent apologies

Workshop

Workshop had been agreed at last meeting. Preparations had been made and SS had worked very hard leafletting the whole of Nøand Park ahead of the meeting which is scheduled for 5pm this evening. NMC asked for members to rally round. Kevin was not able to attend after all although he had distributed leaflets yesterday. Zenek could not do his workshop either as he is in Poland. NMC also apologised that he couldn't stay for the workshop as he had to catch his plane back.

JN asked if NMC's commitment would wane now that he was living abroad. NMC admitted that it was not easy. NMC said he hadn't wanted to let everybody down by giving up from one day to the next.

NMC thanked SB for agreeing to attend the workshop. SS explained that she and MB might struggle to run the workshop now that other people weren't able to attend. SS explained that there were originally to have been three workshops, one on complaints, one on Love Lane and one general one. SS suggested restructuring things so that it would be a meeting. SE and NE said they would go along to help.

SB said that a future workshop should be on a Saturday not a Sunday. SS said it needed better planning.

NMC asked if MB could do the complaint workshop. NMC said SE had taken HFH to court and won. SE said HFH had taken her to court. She had so much evidence she could take it to the Crown Court. HFH had not been listening. They had made assumptions. NMC said it was encouraging for other people to hear. MC said many people didn't understand the importance of keeping evidence to build a case.

DM, MB, SS, SE, NE and SB volunteered to go to the workshop to make it a success. SS went through the agenda to make some changes to reflect the current position. NMC mentioned problem with change of venue. Arrangements were made to pay the fee for the new venue at the Adventure Playground (35GBP).

DM said there was a room that could be used for a similar meeting on Edgecot Grove.

Minutes of the meetings held on 16 August and 18 October 2017

Minutes were agreed for accuracy. There was a discussion about the leaseholder survey update. NMC explained that this referred to the HLA's own survey. There had also been a survey carried out by

HFH into resident engagement and, in addition, one carried out by the Council into the management agreement between HFH and the Council.

SB asked about Lorna Reith. She has been deselected so it is less important for the HLA to make contact with her. She will stay on the Board of HFH until May. She is pro-HDV. NMC explained that this was about the internal Labour Party process of selecting local councillors for the elections in May.

[At this point GS and GSt joined the meeting.]

NMC said Lorna Reith had a powerful voice on the Board of HFH and was not sympathetic to the HLA. MB would be representing the HLA. NMC had had a conversation with Lorna Reith in 2015 in which he had explained that the original RSP recommendations had been removed. It had been clear from her reaction that Keith Jenkins, the Chair of the Board at the time, had not told her about this. NMC had asked 'Did the Chair tell you he had taken the recommendations out?' and she had answered that she had no recollection and would have to check in her papers to see if it had been mentioned. NMC said she was a very effective Councillor. NMC said Lorna Reith had subsequently stayed quiet even though he had told her that the Chair had been abusing his position and that this was wrong. Lorna Reith bears a heavy responsibility for the whole mess.

NMC said this was not the only time the Board had failed. Alena Breckova had also failed to inform the Board about payments to the HLCCG even though she was part of the HLCCG.

Response to Board papers for 28.11 and arrangements for same

MB asked who the other umbrella group was. NMC said it was the ATR. This was result of consultation that ran from beginning of August until 22nd September. It was run by TPAS who then produced a report. HLA had seen this report and several of its appendices (4 out of 10). The consultation resulted from the court case and the court order. HFH had not carried out the consultation over umbrella groups particularly well. They didn't comply with the court order because they didn't write to all leaseholders.

SB asked how many people had received a copy of the consultation through the post. MB, DM SB, JN, GS and one other never got one though several others had. There was some confusion over the survey from HFH and the Council. Of those who had not been contacted by post none got the survey by email either.

This is consistent with the low response rate from leaseholders (13%) and only 15 postal responses coming back from leaseholders. SB said several times the HLA had asked how many leaseholders were posted a survey but that no FOI number had even been handed out.

NMC said this was deliberate because HFH had been hoping that the tenants would swamp the leaseholders if they kept leaseholders under-represented in the hope of getting a majority against umbrella groups. Most tenants know nothing about umbrella groups because only the ATR are affected. This is leaving aside the flawed consultation on the questions themselves. Despite all this overall 53% of respondents were in favour of umbrella groups.

So, in the report, for the first time the Board is given a choice. This is unprecedented. This also means that our attendance is very important and could make a difference. The HLA also has the right to address the Board for the first time as a result of the court case. Also the option to keep recognition comes with strings that were not consulted over.

The section 5.3 brings unacceptable conditions that remove our independence and nullify the point of recognition.

MC pointed out that 5.3 is a recommendation. NMC said it was very broad and would stop the HLA from helping somebody at the First Tier Property Tribunal. SS said it looked like they were looking at whether or not umbrella groups represented value for money for HFH. NMC said it was only 1,000 GBP. NMC said the duplication point was against the ATR.

MB asked whether the same could be said of the Leasehold Panel. NMC said the difference was greater because of the campaigning role of the HLA.

SS asked about genuineness of concern about representativeness. NMC said the Board of HFH had minimal BME representation. HLA included many BME people and covered the whole borough. SS asked about representativeness as well as diversity. NMC said that if HFH had a concern with the constitution or with the HLA's practices they should have a grown-up discussion about what it was. The HLA's democratic processes were the only possible guarantee of representativeness.

On value for money NMC said HFH had never given the HLA a chance to function properly and if they did this could work well for everyone.

DM asked if we had already contacted ATR. NMC said he had spoken to them and was hopeful a representative would attend at least to give a statement.

MB asked about the mention in the report of ending legal conflict. NMC proposed to move to agenda item 8.

Legal action – contempt of court

Treasurer's Report

Held over to another time

New committee members

SE and NE said they would let NMC know if they wanted to join. The committee agreed they could be members if they wanted. Meeting was closed at 4:15.