

## **Haringey Leaseholders' Association Committee Meeting**

**Meeting held on Wednesday 4 March 2015 at 92 Gloucester Road, N17**

In attendance

### **Committee:**

Sue Brown (Chair) (SB)  
Nick Martin-Clark (Treasurer) (NMC)  
Peter Gilbert (Secretary) (PG)  
Stephanie Rice (SR)

The meeting was opened by the Chair at 7.20pm

### **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting.

### **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Lloyd Grandson and (subsequent to the meeting) Grace Lungu.

### **Draft Committee Meeting Minutes**

The draft minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 14 January 2015, which had been circulated, were read at the meeting and, subject to two amendments, were unanimously agreed. It was agreed that NMC should redact them as appropriate before posting them on the website. SB thanked NMC for his work in redacting the minutes of previous Committee meetings and posting them on the website.

### **Matters arising.**

- **De-recognition of the HLA and removal of Chair from the Resident Scrutiny Pane– further action**

SB reported that the personal case that she was bringing against Homes for Haringey was under way. She had asked for a judicial review of the papers, including all relevant internal memoranda, and HfH had until Friday 6 March to respond to this request. SB said that she was asking to be restored to the Resident Scrutiny Panel and to the Audit and Risk Committee. She was also asking for an apology from HfH for the libels against her, for HfH to post a withdrawal of the libels on its website, and for HfH to draw universal attention to the apology and withdrawal. She added that HfH had made a very vicious attack on her which they had to withdraw.

NMC said that HfH's appeal to the Resident Scrutiny Panel against the findings in their report had been made in February via a memory stick which he had handed to the mentor for the RSP and that all the papers had been emailed to them. The RSP had met in the middle of February to discuss the appeal, but their reply was still awaited, probably because the RSP Chair and the mentor had each been on holiday. PG was asked to remind the RSP Chair if no reply had been received by Friday 13 March.

As Haringey Council was unable to consider HLA's complaint against the Chair of HfH Board, NMC would let PG have a copy of the scoping document for PG to send with the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

- **Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Study into the Provision of Residential Property Services in England and Wales**

PG reported that he had raised the relevant recommendations of the CMA report at the meeting of the Leasehold Panel on 28 January, when he had been told that HfH would consider what action it needed to take when the CMA put its strategy on the sharing of best practice into effect. This was due to be by 2 June.

#### **Appeal to HfH Board from the General Meeting on 25 October 2014**

SB said that the appeal had not yet been made to HfH because HLA did not know whether HfH would hear it. NMC confirmed that, as far as he was aware, there was no specific time limit for making the appeal. It was agreed that, when the decision by the RSP was known, PG would submit the appeal to HfH and ask whether it would be heard and, if so, when.

#### **FoI Request for HfH regarding reductions from agreed maximum price**

NMC said that this issue had been raised with him by Andrew Lyssis (AL) who was facing a bill of some £19,000 for Decent Homes work and who was asking HfH a number of questions. AL had been at a meeting with HfH where he had been advised that the initial price quoted under a S20 notice was a maximum price. AL had observed that HfH carried out surveys of Decent Homes properties in a very casual manner. The surveyor did not bother to go inside the roof space. They then waited until scaffolding had been up for some time before HfH's constructor partner validated the price. There should be room for HfH to reduce the price when it was finally agreed.

It was agreed that PG should ask the Home Ownership Team to explain when the final invoice price was calculated and issued to the leaseholder. Further to HfH's response, HLA would then make a FoI request regarding information relating to Decent Homes work for which leaseholders had been invoiced in 2013-14.

NMC would let AL know what HLA was doing.

#### **Outreach**

NMC advised that AL had been employing a surveyor for professional advice in relation to the Decent Homes work that was being carried out at his block. The surveyor had provided a number of useful reports. The Committee agreed to reimburse AL 50% of the surveyor's fee of £600, provided that AL could set up a group of leaseholders in Russell Court.

AL was also in touch with a solicitor in regard to the Decent Homes work. NMC had not offered him any financial assistance from HLA in this connection.

NMC was trying to set up a meeting with leaseholders in Joyce Butler House, N22. He was also in touch with Ian Watson of Oakfield Road, N4, with leaseholders in Wall Court, Stroud Green Road, including Keith McKenna, and with Clare Richardson and fellow-leaseholders in Lawson Court (off Lorne Road, N4): they had had a meeting with HfH's consultant, Richard Hazard, towards the end of January.

PG mentioned that he had spoken to Mel Perkins, a fairly new leaseholder in Wightman Road, N4, who had attended the Leasehold Panel meeting on 28 January and had voiced some concerns which she had since said that HfH staff were addressing. She had asked to be kept informed of HLA meetings, although she had not been able to attend the current meeting.

NMC added that AL and Clare Richardson had agreed to post blogs on the website. SR agreed to do so when she returned from a visit to her father in New Zealand. She commented that leaseholders often failed to question charges of which HfH notified them.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

NMC advised that although the bank statements in his possession were rather patchy they showed that HLA held a balance of £4,920.93 at the bank. He also needed to bank a cash subscription of £20 from Mrs Shaw.

It was agreed that NMC and SB should ask the bank to send him, rather than SB, the statements.

NMC would ask the bank whether there was a time limit for passing on Standing Orders to them.

NMC advised that SB should be reimbursed postage of £31.80, and that he had incurred the following expenses totalling £992 on behalf of HLA:

£ 20 (room hire for the GM on 25 October 2014, representing half the payment made to Wood Green Social Club for a booking that had not been taken up)

£810 (phone call service for the GM)

£ 36 (Telephone renewal from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015)

£ 60 (Dotmailer fees)

£ 66 (Telephone renewal in advance from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016).

It was agreed that whether to renew the telephone number again would be considered when the next bill became due.

The Committee agreed to reimburse all these expenses.

#### **Future of Council Housing Services**

Committee members were asked to attend, if possible, the seminar that HfH was holding on Tuesday 17 March to ascertain leaseholder opinion on the future of council housing services in Haringey once the current contract with HfH came to an end on 31 March 2016.

NMC commented that it had been difficult for one organisation to do the two jobs of delivering the Decent Homes programme and supporting leaseholders who wanted to challenge their charges and to become involved in the management process. It had been a

mistake to ask them to do both those jobs. He said that HfH was not interested in the democratic views of residents. Nor had HfH managed the system with integrity. HfH had broken its own rules and had made it impossible for HLA to work as an effective body.

Whatever the new structure was, the body in charge of the service would have to address these issues.

NMC added that HfH's governance had been poor ó for example, elections for the leasehold member on the Board had been unconstitutional and 1600 people had been disenfranchised, without a debate taking place.

SB suggested that HLA should put on its website the questions which residents should be asking. NMC commented that residents should have had a greater degree of oversight over the Decent Homes work.

#### **Arrangements for HLA AGM on Saturday 25 April 2015**

PG was asked to look into whether it would be possible to book Wood Green Social Club for the AGM.

It was agreed that arrangements should again be made for leaseholders to be telephoned to encourage them to attend.

NMC agreed to ring Brian Potter of Islington Leaseholders to see whether he would be able to speak. He would also talk to Chris Graham to arrange for a speaker from London Leaseholders.

PG was asked to invite all the local parliamentary candidates to attend to speak on the empowerment of local residents.

SB said that the AGM would have to be asked to support taking the complaint against the de-recognition of HLA to judicial review before the Committee incurred expenditure.

#### **Any other Business**

NMC said that HLA's constitution gave it the outline of a representative structure for leaseholders, which the Committee wanted to make more substantial so that HLA could have a larger consultative role, such as managing the Leasehold Panel's agenda and possibly even putting leaseholders in charge of the Home Ownership Team. He suggested that in future it might be worthwhile, provided that the exercise was not expensive, to investigate whether the relationship between HLA and the limited company could be adapted.

#### **Date, time and place of Next Meeting**

To be decided following the AGM.

The meeting closed at 10pm with a vote of thanks to NMC for his hospitality.