

HARINGEY LEASEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 3 TENTERDEN ROAD, N17,
ON MONDAY 30 APRIL 2012

Present

Sue Brown (Chair) (SB), Nick Martin-Clark (Treasurer) (NMC), Peter Gilbert (Secretary) (PG), Rita Batzias (Committee Member) (RB), Anne Gibson (Committee Member) (AG) and Kate Worley (Committee Member) (KW).

Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Delsie Grandson.

Chair

SB advised members that she would be away on holiday from 6 to 23 May inclusive. She had been notified that her cancer had recurred and that her surgeon had advised her that she would need chemotherapy for around four and a half months (six treatments at intervals of three weeks). She had been told she would probably feel less unwell towards the end of each period between treatments, just before having the next one. It might therefore be a good idea to time any meetings which she should attend accordingly. After those courses were finished, she would have to undergo a period of radiotherapy. She was waiting for a letter from the hospital notifying her of an appointment with the oncologist to discuss the dates of the treatments. She asked members not to inform HfH for the time being. When she returned from holiday, she would consider what she should tell HfH.

SB asked to be kept informed of any reply by HfH to the application for recognition that she had sent on 25 April. David Sherrington would see it when he returned from leave on 1 May and there had been no reaction from Sharon Morgan, to whom she had copied the application.

SB added that there did not appear to be any specific plan for a new structure for HfH: the Board would be considering an Aspiration Paper by the Chief Executive, which would then go to wider consultation before any restructuring took place. Possibly there might be interim arrangements to take over Jackie Thomas's former responsibilities before interviews were held for any new posts arising out of the reorganisation.

HfH Board

NMC said that the HfH Board was due to meet on 1 May. The agenda mentioned that JT had left and that her responsibilities would be split between four senior officers for at least six months. Sharon Morgan would head the Resident Involvement Team for the time being. HLA's application for recognition should be considered at the following meeting of the Board, which would probably take place

early in July. KW offered to attend the Board meeting the next evening and to report back to HLA colleagues.

(Officer comments in the Board papers on the application from the Association of Tenant Representatives for recognition included that there was ~~no~~ conflict with the other **currently-recognised** group, Haringey Leaseholders Association.)

NMC added that at the Board meeting in January 2012 some members had wanted to put a time limit on appeals to the Board. SB commented that HLA had not known until the Chief Executive had rejected the complaint against de-recognition that we would need to submit an appeal. This had been some time after the AGM in February 2011 and it had been necessary to hold another GM in order to obtain the 25 signatures that were required to support an appeal.

SB added that even if there were discussions with HfH that had a satisfactory outcome HLA would still not withdraw the appeal. Other members suggested that there might be room for negotiation if HfH made a substantial retraction of the decision to de-recognise and of the allegations in the officers report to the HfH Board for its meeting on 1 December 2010. She would nag David Sherrington that week to obtain a response to HLA's request for a meeting. NMC commented that the ball was now in HfH's court.

In reply to AG, PG said that if SB had not received a reply by the end of the week he would pursue the matter with David Sherrington. The Committee agreed that any meeting would need to be after SB's return and no earlier than 25 May: in view of other members' commitments, other possible dates were 31 May, 1 June and, if NMC were not away, Friday 8 June.

The Committee agreed that, if either Mr Sherrington refused a request for a meeting or the agenda for the subsequent Board meeting did not include provision to consider HLA's application for recognition, HLA should protest as it had done what HfH required, including considering a series of changes to the constitution at the AGM.

In answer to AG, SB said that HfH should have stuck to its own recognition criteria, that recognition ran from one AGM to the next, with a grace period of three months which allowed for the two months that an organisation has after its AGM to apply for re-recognition. The delay in the application following the AGM in late 2008, which had been due to HLA's ignorance of the ruling, had been treated very casually by HfH, who should have been fully familiar with their own rules.

NMC suggested that at the Board meeting on 1 May KW should try to speak to Rowann Limond and Phil Goodwin. SB thought that they would probably be discussing HfH internal arrangements, maybe including who would be dealing with the HLA. PG added that that could form part of the temporary arrangements

pending the restructuring that might arise out of the Chief Executive's consultative document.

KW added that the proposed redevelopment of Tottenham included proposals for North Tottenham, Tottenham Hale, Tottenham Green and one other area. By analogy with a scheme in Hackney, the last of these could result in leasehold properties being subject to a CPO. SB said that when the Localism Act came into force, any such proposals would need the agreement of the local community.

Future Work of HLA

NMC said that HLA needed to return to normal activities. Even if it wasn't possible to hold full Committee meetings, sub-groups could be formed to keep things ticking over until the Chair returned to full working health. HLA needed to update its database and collate its records of leaseholders who had made enquiries and who needed to be phoned back. HLA should also resume outreach work, eg attend the Ferry Lane Action Group (FLAG) meeting in June and suggest the formation of a leaseholders' sub-group that could affiliate to HLA, respond to leaseholders who had replied to the recent survey on service charges and publicise on the website how HLA members had been involved in the discussions on HfH's policy on sub-letting.

KW said that HLA would need to be responsive to changes in the public sector that might affect leaseholders. She was willing to answer phone calls and to help to reconnect HLA with its member leaseholders.

NMC, who is HLA's Data Controller, said that he could show colleagues how to update the database. He said that if HLA were re-recognised it could ask HfH for an up-to-date version of the database. It would be difficult to keep in touch with leaseholders if HfH did not have an advice centre.

SB suggested that it might be possible to hire a room somewhere for one evening a week or one a month: we would need minimal space, enough for a secure cabinet, a few chairs and a phone connection. KW commented that it would be difficult to find a legally qualified person who was prepared to offer advice pro bono.

It was agreed to form an IT/Outreach Sub-group consisting of NMC, AG, PG and KW, to meet ad hoc. There would be no formal minutes of the sub-group's meetings. HLA's Data Protection Policy would need to be updated formally to entitle any member of the HLA Committee to a copy of the database, if this were required to further the work of the HLA. NMC as Data Controller would have oversight of the Sub-group's work and would ensure that the database was updated in a standardised way. The Sub-group will also want to review the schedule of direct debits and contact current leaseholders who have cancelled their direct debit.

The Sub-group's next meeting will be held at 3 Tenterden Road, N17, at 7pm on Monday 14 May 2012.

Restructuring of HfH's Panels and Sub-Groups

SB said that she was due to attend a meeting on Tuesday 1 May which will consider proposals to abolish the Key Leaseholder Group and the Sub-letting Sub-Group. (SB has been nominated as Vice-chair of the Leasehold Panel, which is chaired by Ann Goodhew, and would probably be voted in at the next Panel meeting.) KW said that HLA needed to consider its strategy in relation to HfH's consultative groups, sub-groups and panels. It was suggested that other Committee members might like to attend various Panel meetings during the period when SB was unable to do so.

Minutes

The Committee agreed and adopted the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 22 February 2012.

SB would check and amend as necessary the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 3 April 2012 and would ask PG to circulate the amended draft to Committee members.

SB would find the original minutes of the Committee meeting held on 5 November 2010, which still needed to be agreed, and forward them to Committee members.

Complaint re Freedom of Information Requests

NMC advised that, further to Haringey Council's decision that HLA's Freedom of Information requests were vexatious, HLA have the right to submit the response to the Information Commissioner for adjudication, but will not do so for the time being.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm, with a vote of thanks to KW for her hospitality.