

HARINGEY LEASEHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL ON MONDAY 19 OCTOBER 2020

Present: Sue Brown (Chair) (SB), Lloyd Grandson (Secretary), (LG) Margaret Clapson (Treasurer) (MC) and a total of 38 other members of the Association.

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting began at 19:00. The Chair explained the new procedures for voting and asking to speak due to the HLA holding its AGM virtually for the first time.

2. Minutes of the AGM on 29.9.18

These were passed for accuracy 28 -0 with one correction 'Caplan' needed to be changed to 'Clapson'.

3. Matters arising

Sophia Elvey asked for a copy of the minutes to be emailed to her.

4. Chair's report

So here we are again after a strange year. In fact it's been 2 years since we were last able to hold an AGM. We decided to move our AGM to May this year to match it up with the end of the financial year and then weren't able to hold it in May because of the pandemic. We've only just worked out how we could do it on Zoom. We're still finding our way so please bear with us.

During the last 2 years we've established quite a solid relationship with HfH and the new Resident Involvement Team. They were generally quite helpful at providing us with free meeting space, when we were able to hold meetings, and have circulated our meeting adverts on email and e-newsletters when available. However we do sometimes get the feeling that we aren't really being taken quite seriously enough and it could all be withdrawn on a whim. But we are working with them and seeing how it goes.

The big story over the past year has been changes in building regulations to ensure fire safety. First of all HfH were charging hugely excessive sums to replace front doors. Now they want to remove our hard-won right for leaseholders to install their own windows. It was the HLA who fought for that in the first place. They have once again carried out cursory tick-box consultation and expect us to be satisfied with that. They held 2 Microsoft Teams meetings with I believe a total of around 50 leaseholders out of nearly 5000 and have made up misleading statistics from the 149 letters that were sent in, to make it look like leaseholders aren't that bothered about the right being removed. As far as I am aware not one single suggestion from a

leaseholder has been adopted, or probably even considered. They had probably already decided on their plans before they even started the so-called consultation.

After a meeting with HfH about fire doors in September 2019 where the main man didn't turn up, the HLA spent a year trying to arrange another meeting to discuss these fire issues. We finally got a meeting a couple of weeks ago but discovered that officers have already written their report for the Council Cabinet about withdrawing the window right to go to them on 10 November. It looks like we are going to have to write our own report and present it to Councillors. We asked many technical questions at our recent meeting which flummoxed the HfH officers present. We have good arguments against all of theirs on why leaseholders could safely continue to install their own windows. We have now presented the main questions to HfH in written form and are waiting for a response. After that we, all of us, need to go to Councillors. The more who do, the more they will have to listen. We could run a petition, if members agree.

The other big story at the moment is the astronomical bills received by leaseholders in Noel Park for replacement of 60 year old bathroom pods. Some people are being charged over £100,000. There was a story in the Guardian about it a couple of weeks ago. Some of the people involved will tell us about it a bit later on. We need to support them as it could be any of us next finding ourselves stuck with a huge unreasonable bill. Meetings with Councillors and MPs are called for.

So all in all we have a busy time ahead. Haringey are still not treating leaseholders in a fair and reasonable manner and we continue to need to stick together to try and stop them walking all over us. They still treat us with a total lack of respect. Until this changes leaseholders need to stick together. If you can give a little bit of time and a few ideas and opinions to help that would be really good. We'll be asking for volunteers for election shortly.

I would like to thank all the people who have regularly attended meetings and helped and contributed ideas over the last couple of years, especially Margaret who has dealt with our finances in a highly efficient way whilst having to deal with a devastating personal loss. I can't thank her enough. I just hope the next year gets a few glimmers of light that this year hasn't had.

The meeting voted to accept the report 27-0.

Barbara Tierney asked whether it was not too late for members to their views on fire safety across. SB said we need to get back to Cllr Ibrahim quickly. L'holders should contact their Cllrs and say they object strongly. For instance the consultation had been misleadingly presented. The HLA submission alone was on behalf of 16 l'holders but had only been counted as one submission.

Sophie Elvey asked if l'holders could send their own letter in. SB said yes but she would sign the letter from the HLA.

5. Treasurer's report

MC presented the Treasurer's report. Dipak Shah arrived at her home during the presentation and signed the official copy. The accounts were shared on screen. Some l'holders found that they were blurry. Accounts accepted 27- 0. Nielsens were approved as auditors.

6. Election of officers

SB was elected as Chair 24-0; Melanie Scagliarini was elected as Vice Chair 25-0; Lloyd Grandson was elected as Secretary 25-0; Margaret Clapson was elected as Treasurer 24-0; Tina Buckingham was elected as Vice Treasurer 25-0.

Nick Martin-Clark, Barbara Feening, Barbara Tierney, Michael Hardy, Chandrika Bheda, Marina Hershmann, Kirsten Lowe, Hristo Ivanov, Sarah Klymkiw, Molly Ejon were elected as committee members.

7. Noel Park

Paul Keeping spoke on behalf of Noel Park l'holders. The major works in NP affecting some 400 properties had been talked about for a long time. The pods went in about 40 years ago and their renewal had been actively talked about over the last ten years. In 2012 2 pilot pods were built, 1 single and 1 double. The double cost £25,000 or £12,500 per leaseholder. The price has varied over the years. The collapse of the HDV and the end of the Decent Homes programme were the reasons for the delay. Costs have risen. 3 years ago the suggested cost was £25,000. Over the summer there was consultation with HfH and the s20 was received at the end of September. Pods now cost £50,000 per leaseholder and there are additions costs for rooves, windows and doors on top. The cheapest overall bill is £52,000 and they go as high as £127,000.

SB said she was from NP. NP was an article 4 conservation area and the houses had been built without bathrooms. The pods had been lifted by crane over the rooves. Their life-span was supposed to be only 15 years and 60 years later they were falling apart. They also contain asbestos.

PK said l'holders were glad that attention had been given to the issue but that they want a brick structure. L'holders without pods have to contribute to tenants' pods. Some would like to get rid of the pods altogether. Observation letters were being compiled. Quentin Carbonell has given good feedback. They had come together as a group. They had formed a legal team, a media team with Twitter, the Guardian and maybe TV and a liason team for talking to Cllrs. They had asked for a meeting with Joe Ejeifor who was due to present the Cabinet report on 10th November.

KL said Ejeifor has agreed to a meeting. HfH have talked about new payment options such as maybe over 25 years or relinquishing part of the ownership or having a charge. It's been a whirlwind. They were aware of Turner Ave l'holders and problems across the UK. Will try to reach out and build coalitions.

Currently NP falls outside the scope of Florrie's law. Could that law possibly be amended? NP l'holders would like help but would also like to help the HLA. The recent committee meeting was an eye-opener.

Tom Jensen mentioned the pilot project. The cost in 2012 was £25,000. Was that the total cost? How could the cost have quadrupled in 8 years. SB said communication has been bad over the years.

Mike Jones was also from NP. In 2009 l'holders had been told the costs would be between £20,000 and £25,000 per bathroom.

Linda Chapple said the prices were not reliable. The question was how to address that.

Navin Haria said the prices were ridiculous as renovating an entire home would not be more than £70,000. L'holders could get quotes to prove that.

Melanie Scagliarini responded to a question about the role of the ombudsman. MS said Navin was right to get quotes. She said that Fol requests were also a good idea. She wanted to highlight what was happening at Turner Ave and to show solidarity. The recession, the pandemic and equalities impact assessment should all be mentioned. S20s reached Turner Ave just a few days after the end of lockdown in July. £50,000 bills are life-changing. They can't sell their properties now. Whatever payment option is offered selling is impossible so l'holders are trapped. Neglect is the underlying problem. No maintenance work has been done for a long time. Currently being stone-walled by everybody. This was why they had contacted the HLA. They would appreciate support. Windows were also included in the Turner Ave s20s so that issue was also relevant. L'holders were stronger together. The risks that HfH are making l'holders run are unacceptable.

PK asked how many l'holders there were in Haringey. SB said about 5,000 l'hold properties. PK said l'holders could join the Labour party en masse. SB said the HLA was apolitical.

Mike Jones said HfH do pay attention to ombudsman rulings. Asked if there were officers who had been helpful when other estates faced major problems.

LG said some Cllrs say they want to help but are powerless. Love Lane was under regeneration and that was his experience there.

KL asked how to get attention from Cllrs. SB said the best was to go and see them.

QC asked if anyone had settled a dispute with HfH. He was entering negotiations with them over work done in Oct-Dec 2018. They were still waiting for the final bill. The cost was due to be finalised at the end of October 2020.

Sujata Haria said Michelle Dunn in the Complaints Team had been helpful. She had also had a good experience with a call-centre worker. Sometimes it was possible to make a connection. But she also remembered the court case in Northumberland Park and the way that Haringey Council had behaved after their win. The way they treated residents was unacceptable.

8. AOB

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 21:18.