

HARINGEY LEASEHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT WOOD GREEN CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 ON SATURDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2018

Present: Nick Martin-Clark (Chair) (NMC), Michael Blasebalk (Vice-Chair) (MB), Margaret Clapson (Treasurer) (MC), Sue Brown (Secretary) (SB) and a total of 41 other members of the Association. Apologies were received from Emilio Zorlakki, Derek Martin, Tina Buckingham, Michael Nazarian and Zenek Henao.

1 Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the AGM and thanked them for attending.

2 Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 9 September 2017

The minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 9 September 2017, which had been made available at the meeting, were read by those attending and were put to the vote by the Chair. The Chair said that 51 leaseholders had attended overall although this had not been included in the draft. The minutes were passed by ca 30 votes to 0, with 0 abstention. The rest of the leaseholders present did not vote.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4 Constitutional amendments

Three constitutional amendments were presented to the meeting. The Chair explained that they were all linked to the fact that the HLA was no longer getting any help from HfH with giving notices of meetings. This meant it was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain quorate meetings. As a result some recent GMs had been inquorate and had been unable to pass the minutes of the previous GM. This had led to a backlog of GM minutes which needed to be passed at some point. The Chair said that the amendment allowing GM minutes to be passed at AGMs might not be enough and that, in the future, it might be necessary to amend the constitution further so that GM minutes could be passed in committee if necessary. This had not been discussed early enough for it to be presented to the current meeting however.

The AGM was being asked to reduce the quorum for GMs from 25 to 15, to allow explicitly for AGMs to pass GM minutes and to restrict the competence of SGMs so that matters of policy that had already been decided could not be revisited at an SGM but would be put on the agenda for the next normally scheduled GM if required.

A question was raised as to whether 20 might not be a better level for a quorum. The Chair responded that there was no magic number but that a significant reduction to 15 gave confidence that the HLA would be able to survive constitutionally in the future.

The amendment to 10 b) was voted on separately. Ca 30 in favour, 0 against, 0 (active) abstentions.

Amendments to 8 d) and 11 a) were then voted on together. Ca 30 in favour, 0 against, 0 (active) abstentions.

5 Minutes of GMs held on 17.10.15 and 26.11.16

The Chair explained that the decision had been taken not to bring these minutes to the AGM after all. Both meetings ran to 4 pages of minutes and it would have meant a lot of paperwork for the attendees to cope with and read. The AGM already had a great deal of business to get through and it was felt that there was a risk of overload. These minutes would not be forgotten about but would probably be passed in committee once it had been possible to change the constitution further to permit this. The meeting accepted this approach.

6 Chair's report

The Chair said that the HLA had done well to regain recognition in the last year but that HfH had responded by removing all of the benefits of recognition so that what was left was recognition in name only. He thanked Dawn Barnes, Lib Dem spokeswoman on housing, for having booked the room at the Civic Centre for the meeting as it would not otherwise have been possible to meet there. This was an example of how HfH had reduced their help as previously even committee meetings were held in the Civic Centre for free.

Instead HfH preferred to exclude the HLA and had not included any mention of the AGM in their newsletter sent out the previous day nor was there any mention of the HLA on the leaseholder page of their website.

This attitude was consistent with their general unsatisfactory approach to consultation as exemplified by what had happened to the Leasehold Panel. But the HLA stood for the hope of meaningful change. We had stood up to HfH by taking them to court in the past and were continuing to do so. This would be further discussed in the confidential part of the meeting.

The Chair explained that he was standing down as he had moved to France with his family.

7 Treasurer's report

MC's report was read out for her by MB as she had a sore throat. The accounts were in reasonable shape and subscriptions were holding up even though the grant had

been drastically reduced. Expenses were as usual apart from the big mail-out cost from October / November 2017 to do with the consultation on umbrella groups. The meeting adopted the accounts ca 30 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

8 Appointment of Qualified Accountant to examine the Accounts

The meeting approved the re-appointment of Dipakkumar Shah of Nielsens as a qualified accountant to examine HLA's accounts. Ca 30 in favour, 0 abstentions, 0 against.

9 Election of officers and committee members

- **Chair**

NMC vacated the Chair, which was taken by MB, Vice-Chair. He called for nominations for Chair of Haringey Leaseholders' Association. Sue Brown was nominated and seconded. There was no other nominee. SB was voted in ca 30 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

- **Secretary**

SB took the Chair and asked for nominations for Secretary. NMC nominated Linda Royles, seconded by MB. Linda Royles was reassured that the HLA was an unincorporated association and not a company. She accepted the nomination. There was no other nominee. In favour 29, against 0, abstentions 0.

- **Treasurer**

Margaret Clapson was proposed, seconded and elected as Treasurer. 31 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

- **Vice-Chair**

Michael Blasebalk was proposed, seconded and elected as Vice-Chair. 28 in favour, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

- **Committee Members**

Volunteers were invited to serve on the Committee. A leaseholder pointed out that the quorum had been reduced to 15 and that the committee had also a maximum size of 15. He asked whether the committee could hijack the Association. SB pointed out that all leaseholders had to be notified of a GM.

7 people volunteered. NMC, Clare Richards, Molly Ejon, Lloyd Grandson, Julie Weir, Ms Chandrika Bheda, Anthony Fordaris. Voted in 27 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions.

10 Speaker – Julie Weir

JW said she had lived in Stroud Green since 2000 and battled HfH over the major works invoice and the lack of consultation. Leaseholders had been shocked to have a bill of about £18,000 and then work had not been done or been done badly. The workmen were rude, arrogant and messy, smoking on the balcony and calling their block a 's**thole'. It had taken over 2 years of fighting and it had been like having kicks in the teeth. JW said she was a northerner had hated losing. A neighbour had been forced to sell her flat and leave after over 30 years to escape the mental torment. JW had also been concerned about the treatment of the elderly while HfH did not care. Fed up with being spoken to badly and fobbed off. Scaffolding had been up for 9 months when it had been supposed to be up only for six weeks.

JW had asked for a breakdown of costs. Scaffolding had cost £40,000 for the block. When they queried this they were told that it was for window replacement but no windows had been replaced on their block. The breakdown can't be understood. The replacement front-door was called an 'FED'. Eventually HfH admitted they were wrong. HfH had also been wrong about 'lightning protection' when none had been done. Overall saving was about £32,000 or about £2,000 per flat. It had been a daily thing for 2 years. It's soul-destroying, exhausting, boring. The left hand doesn't speak to the right hand. HfH doesn't function. JW felt she had been on her own and this was the value of an Association. JW now had an enormous file on this story. A victory was a light at the end of the tunnel. Other leaseholders had not always been supportive.

JW's advice was to be a pain in the neck, be organised, keep your facts and your emails. HfH were not organise. The meeting applauded.

A question was asked about whether JW had spoken to her neighbours. She said she had done. JW said Mike Bester had actually visited the blocks and that this was good.

11 Speaker – Dawn Barnes, Lib Dem housing spokesperson

DB congratulated SB on becoming Chair and the others on coming forward. She said she had come forward to get involved in politics herself because of her experiences in housing as a private leaseholder when faced with extortionate repair costs. DB said she had been pleased to see the spirit of community amongst leaseholders. A meeting between the committee and the new Chief Exec of HfH was important in order to build bridges.

DB was elected in May. Housing and regeneration was a difficult portfolio. In Broadwater Farm there was a big issue with Tangmere block where residents were being evicted. Only 19 out of 87 families had accepted a decant offer of accommodation. Consultation had been inadequate. Leaseholders were also affected and had not been properly included.

DB had met with a new group called TAG for people in temporary accommodation. In Haringey there were over 4,000 such people. The Lib Dems wanted to build Council homes again.

As an opposition Councillor she could sympathise with the difficulty we had in holding the Council to account. DB encouraged leaseholders to communicate by email and said that it was important for the HLA to keep going. She would help the HLA as much as possible.

Linda Royles asked what DB thought the HLA's priorities should be. She answered to re-establish the relationship with HfH. HLA should be included on the website and in packs to new leaseholders. People should be told when the AGM is a part of the democratic process. Secondly she thought that plain English should be used and that this could be a useful focus.

Michael Hardy asked about the long-term contracts that HfH were involved in. DB said she had not gone into this. But she questioned whether the longer term contracts, for instance, with Veolia were properly monitored. She had concerns about whether there was value for money in the longer term. Michael Hardy said that HfH were being robbed blind because of inefficiencies and failing to take advantage of economies of scale. But his experience was that there was no value for money ethos. He pointed out the problem with very expensive fire doors.

Kevin Mann said that two companies had 4 year contracts for major works. He had questioned his works and been told that the contracts were now being extended by a further two years. Who authorises this? DB said it depended on who had taken on the contractor in the first place. The Council's corporate committee had a team to sign off this sort of thing. HfH's processes might be different.

Lloyd Grandson asked for an update on the HDV and the Council being taken to court by Lendlease. DB said the HDV had been cancelled but that Lendlease were taking the Council to court. In some ways this was understandable but it was going to be very expensive. No contract had been signed but pre-contract work had been done and costs incurred.

Peter Gilbert raised the cost of new fire doors following on from Michael Hardy's contribution. The estimate was about £2,400 per flat for his block. The front security doors had been very expensive. Michael Hardy said a fire door could be purchased for £450.

DB said she would join the HLA's facebook group and said she did have a surgery. She said she was the parliamentary candidate for Hornsey and Wood Green and would attend to housing matters across the borough. SB thanked her and the meeting applauded.

12 Confidential matters

13 AoB

Lloyd Grandson came forward to give an update on the Love Lane situation. Damian Tissier would have liked to attend but was unable to. Three things had happened. Haringey Council had applied to the mayor for a grant to continue the regeneration but had been told that they needed to carry out a ballot first. TAG was concerned about the conditions put on the ballot. Temporary accommodation people could only vote if they had been on the estate for over one year. So people were being brought in deliberately to make sure that fewer people could vote.

There was a re-tender operation in place for a new ITLA. Damian Tissier was being campaigned against for having given too much help to leaseholders and tenants. Again this was a way in which residents' voices were being stifled. Damian was not going to resubmit his application as things stood. Consultation should be undertaken before agreeing a re-tender operation.

The third point was that Love Lane was a test case for future regeneration across the borough. Lendlease were the developers for Love Lane. But Lendlease are based in Australia so wouldn't care about a project in North London. He advised any leaseholders on estates subject to regeneration to look very carefully at what the proposals were. It was important to learn from one another.

Linda Royles suggested fixing the date of the next AGM in advance. SB said that flexibility was required and that the AGM should normally be held closer to the end of the financial year anyway. DB said she could hopefully rebook the room.

Michael Hardy asked who owned HfH. SB responded that it was 100% owned by the Council. Peter Gilbert pointed that Easter next year will be the 20th and 21st of April. MC asked when the next committee meeting would be. SB asked new members to make sure they had left their details with MC. NMC would be able to come back over from France in late October.

SB thanked DB again for coming and booking the room and thanked NMC for his work as Chair. The meeting was then closed.