

HARINGEY LEASEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT WOOD GREEN CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 ON SATURDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2017

Present: Lloyd Grandson (Chair) (LG), Sue Brown (Vice-Chair) (SB), Nick Martin-Clark (Treasurer) (NMC), Peter Gilbert (Secretary) (PG) and a total of other members of the Association

1 Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed members to the AGM and thanked them for attending. He then introduced the officers to the meeting and reminded members to sign the attendance register.

2 Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 25 June 2016

The minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 25 June 2016, which had been made available at the meeting, were read by those attending and were put to the vote by the Chair. They were passed by 21 votes to 0, with 1 abstention. The rest of the leaseholders present did not vote.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4 Chair's Report

Prior to making an oral report for the period since the previous AGM, the Chair reminded leaseholders that it was important for them to sign in and thereby make their contact details available to the Association.

(A male leaseholder said that last year HfH had been billing his estate for works carried out at other addresses. He had contacted his MP, who had told him that this was a borough-wide problem. He had just received another bill relating to an address outside the estate. The Chair suggested that leaseholders who had problems with their bills should ask HLA for advice. Leaseholders could ask HfH for a detailed itemised breakdown of their repair bills.

In reply to a female leaseholder who asked what an umbrella group was, NMC said that it was a borough-wide organisation (the two terms meant the same) and added that HLA helped local leaseholder groups to get established. SB said that HLA also represented leaseholders. There was just one other umbrella group, for tenants in supported housing. NMC said that the group for supported tenants had been disbanded and was asking to be reinstated. HLA had fought through the courts to oppose de-recognition and HfH had said that it would consult again about whether to

recognise umbrella groups. A male leaseholder commented that HfH could do what they liked. He added that a lady he knew had had to wait three years for a refund.

NMC said that at one time there had been two leaseholder groups. The one which had had Haringey Council's support had fallen by the wayside, while HLA (the other one) was still in existence and, although it had had problems, it still held quorate AGMs.

NMC said that anyone who had any other issues to raise should do so at the end of the meeting.)

The Chair reported that 2016 had been a very difficult year for HLA, during which the Association had been back and forth to the Courts. In 2017 HLA had been granted permission to apply for a judicial review of HfH's decision to discontinue recognition for any umbrella group. The day before the application was due to be heard, HfH had backed down. This was after HfH had spent some £167,000 on legal bills in connection with the action, funds which could have been spent on services for leaseholders. HfH had then mixed up consulting on whether to recognise umbrella groups with a number of other issues so as to improve their chances of getting rid of HLA. He added that HLA could continue only if leaseholders continued to support the Association. The HLA officers wanted to get as many leaseholders involved as possible so that HLA could raise issues to take up with HfH as a group and give the Association a louder voice.

5 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2017, which were tabled at the meeting. He commented that as HLA was not recognised by HfH the Association received no public funds. Another consequence of not being recognised was that it was more difficult to attract leaseholders to support the Association financially. He urged leaseholders to complete the Standing Order mandate, both to provide financial support and to enable HLA to demonstrate an increasing level of support to HfH. In reply to a leaseholder, NMC said that Haringey Council owned the freehold of 4289 leasehold properties.

Derek Martin, the first Chair of HLA, said that Brian Thomas, Estate Agents, had indicated to him that if HLA persuaded leaseholders to use them they would be prepared to help fund the Association. He would be happy to introduce the officers to Brian Thomas. Leaseholders agreed by a vote of 37 to 3 that the HLA should explore the options with Brian Thomas.

A leaseholder said that he had obtained from a councillor Haringey's list of leaseholder associations and their contact details, but had been unable to contact his local association from those details.

Another leaseholder suggested that if HLA Committee members knew who the other leaseholders on their estates were they could pinpoint them and try to persuade them to attend meetings.

In reply to another leaseholder, NMC explained that he and SB had funded HLA's legal expenses from their own resources and had given a guarantee to that effect to the Association.

In answer to Derek Martin, NMC explained that HfH had de-recognised HLA and had been intending to de-recognise all umbrella groups. Following the court case, HfH was consulting on a number of issues. If HfH performed the consultative process better than it had done previously, HLA might not be able to mount another successful legal challenge if HfH then decided to de-recognise umbrella groups.

In discussion on how HfH was consulting leaseholders, only 5 of the leaseholders attending, other than Committee members, said that they had had a survey by email or by post from HfH. A male leaseholder said that in a newsletter HfH had included a link to an on-line consultative survey. Another leaseholder said that HfH appeared to be asking questions which were difficult to understand.

The Chair commented that HfH should have carried out a straightforward consultation about umbrella groups rather than mixing the question of recognising umbrella groups with a number of other issues.

The meeting agreed by 41 votes to 0, with no abstentions, to approve the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017.

6 Appointment of Qualified Accountant to examine the Accounts

The meeting approved the re-appointment of Dipakkumar Shah of Niensens as a qualified accountant to examine HLA's accounts.

7 Election of Officers and Committee Members

- **Chair**

Lloyd Grandson vacated the Chair, which was taken by Sue Brown, Vice-Chair. She called for nominations for Chair of Haringey Leaseholders Association. She reminded leaseholders that Lloyd had said that he was standing down.

Nick Martin-Clark, proposed by Sue Brown, seconded by Derek Martin, was the only nominee as Chair, and was approved by 36 votes to 0, with no formal abstentions.

Nick Martin-Clark took the Chair and moved a vote of thanks to Lloyd Grandson for all his hard work during the past two years.

A female leaseholder asked how much work was involved in being Treasurer.

- **Secretary**

Sue Brown was proposed by Nick Martin-Clark, seconded and elected as Secretary.

- **Treasurer**

Margaret Caplan was proposed, seconded and elected as Treasurer with no votes against.

- **Vice-Chair**

Michael Blasebalk was proposed, seconded and elected as Vice-Chair with 1 vote against.

- **Committee Members**

NMC explained that meetings of the HLA Committee were held every month or two at Wood Green Social Club, normally on a Wednesday evening. Derek Martin suggested that if meetings were held at venues on different estates this would encourage attendance and participation.

Volunteers were invited to serve on the Committee. As the number of volunteers meant that the Committee including the officers exceeded the maximum number of 15 permitted by the constitution, it was agreed that the officers should decide who should be appointed to serve on the Committee.

8 Talk about HDV plans by Phil Jackson

Phil Jackson from the campaign ~~Stop HDV~~ discussed the plans for demolition in Northumberland Park. The company chosen, Lendlease, had a poor record. At the Heygate estate very few tenants had ended up returning to the estate after regeneration.

There was a difference between Council housing and affordable housing. Rents rose sharply following regeneration and people were dispersed to cheaper areas, like the seaside or up north.

It was by chance that he had heard of the HDV at a meeting originally held to discuss the ~~pocket-living~~ proposals. The HDV is broken up into different plans for the different areas. It is important to connect the dots between the different areas. The HDV affects everyone from stall-holders in Wood Green to Council housing tenants. House owners in Caxton Rd are also affected.

Residents in Northumberland Park have nominally been consulted but often people are unaware of what was being suggested. Leaseholders were also affected. In theory Council tenants would get an offer of being rehoused within Haringey. But if they refused one offer then they surrender their rights. Housing association tenants were in an even worse position.

The HDV was being challenged politically, legally and in the media. Political support came from across the spectrum. Some Labour party members, the Liberal Democrats and residents associations were supportive. A demonstration was planned for 23rd September. Thousands were expected.

There was also a legal case going on. Crowd-funding had secured £25,000 for legal fees to pay Leigh, Day. The case was scheduled for 25th and 26th October. The main point was to ask for proper consultation. The scale of the plans was too ambitious.

Susan Smith said she hadn't realised that Broadwater Farm and Wood Green were included. She asked how Love Lane could have started when the HDV hadn't been approved. Phil responded that there were different area plans and that Love Lane was in an earlier phase. HDV was an umbrella for the later phases.

Zenek Henao asked whether Lendlease, who had just been appointed for Love Lane, was a suitable partner. Phil said the campaign was against the HDV and that if it was successful it might be possible to extend it to Love Lane. At present this hadn't been done.

A leaseholder asked how taxpayers as a whole were affected. Phil asked that the tab for schemes that fell through, and some had, had to be picked up by the taxpayer. There was a big risk involved in such a big scheme.

9 Talk from Dan Knowles of Sawyer Fielding

Dan introduced himself as a Chartered Surveyor specialising in helping leaseholders facing compulsory purchase. His own home had been compulsorily purchased. He then realised that there was a lack of good advice for people in that position so he decided to set up a company to fill that gap.

He had also worked for companies that had put together compulsory purchase orders and for local authorities so he knew how things looked from the other side.

When people first get an order they think it will be a quick process but it is not like that. Permission has to be first sought by the local authority from the central government. There is a process to go through. Local authorities start off by offering a low price. There were always some people who were willing to take an early offer for a low price for their own reasons. The Council would then use that valuation to beat down prices for other people.

Dan's firm tried to represent as many people as possible to make sure that everyone gets a better deal. That way leaseholders have more bargaining power. However it is not a good idea to wait for too long. There is a tipping point, a best time to settle.

Susan Smith asked whether Northumberland Park residents should contact Sawyer Fielding as had happened at Love Lane. Dan answered that he had already given a

presentation at Love Lane and that a folder with information was available. He would be happy to give a presentation to a leaseholder group on Northumberland Park.

Freehold properties were valued differently but were also subject to compulsory purchase.

10 Confidential matters