

HARINGEY LEASEHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING HELD AT WOOD GREEN SOCIAL CLUB, STUART CRESCENT, N22 ON SATURDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2016

Present: Lloyd Grandson (Chair) [LG], Sue Brown (Vice-Chair) [SB], Peter Gilbert (Secretary) [PG], Nick Martin-Clark (Treasurer) [NMC] and a total of 8 other members of the Association

Apologies for lateness were received from SB

The meeting began at 10.15am

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed leaseholders to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He said that 2016 had been an eventful year for HLA in its ongoing fight with Homes for Haringey (HfH). The Chair of the HfH Board, Keith Jenkins, had resigned towards the end of September, possibly due to pressure to which HLA's efforts had contributed. Mediation had taken place between HLA and HfH on Friday 22 July. The details remained confidential. It had since broken down.

The Chair added that he did not know why HfH was continuing to be so stubbornly opposed to HLA. HLA had to continue to fight for leaseholders, particularly as HfH would listen to leaseholders only if leaseholders stayed together. He concluded by reiterating his thanks to those who attended the meeting.

2 Minutes

Leaseholders read the minutes of the General Meeting held on Saturday 17 October 2015, which had been tabled. PG reminded the meeting that, as a quorum was not present, the minutes could not be formally approved, but would have to be put to the next quorate General Meeting.

3 Matters arising on the Minutes

NMC said that Catherine West, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, who had spoken at the General Meeting on 17 October 2015, had since said that she would attend a GM, but unfortunately was unable to be present at the meeting in progress. She had been very helpful in the focus which she was placing on housing and in the way she wanted to make affordable housing available for everyone. HLA welcomed her support.

4 Update on the progress of Legal Challenges to HfH

5 Any other Business

SB urged leaseholders to attend the Leasehold Panel meeting at the Civic Centre on the evening of Monday 5 December. NMC said that the Panel was run by HfH and was not an independent body. However, leaseholders had a chance to ask questions of HfH officers. The Panel had the potential to be a useful forum, but officers had refused to allow certain issues to be discussed, for example that

according to the rules annual elections should be held for the Chair. LG encouraged leaseholders to make their voices heard. NMC added that at a Panel meeting towards the end of 2015 a proposal to change the agenda had been defeated by a margin of only 13-8.

A leaseholder commented that she had never had a decent cleaning service. Her complaints to HfH had not done any good. NMC suggested that she forward them to the HLA Committee and added that, if she wanted to complain to the Complaints Panel and would like HLA to help, the Committee would be happy to take an interest in the matter. The leaseholder said that her councillors had been %useless+ and that she was waiting for a response after having seen HfH at their offices. LG added that it was her right to ask HfH for comments. SB advised her to contact HfH's feedback team, who would advise her on the proper procedure. SB added that the complaint should be made in writing, and said that she had taken photos showing the standard and frequency of the external cleaning of her own block.

SB commented that other issues of general concern to leaseholders were the annual charge (or a higher one-off charge) to pay to HfH for permission to rent out a leasehold property and that the management fee was far too high.

A leaseholder referred to a parking dispute where HfH had used photographic evidence and said that a lot of things HfH did were wrong. He had spoken to someone in Haringey Council's legal department who had said that, by the rules, he could not be taken to court unless his parking permit had expired. However, it was very hard work to find the time to mount a challenge to the Council or to HfH.

A leaseholder commented that the number of HfH staff on the second floor of their offices was %incredible+.

Another leaseholder said that the management charge on his property included a sinking fund. NMC commented that a sinking fund was a big rip-off and that HfH appeared to assess contributions to the sinking fund without rhyme or reason. SB said that at the Leasehold Panel meeting HfH's Executive Director of Operations, Astrid Kjellberg-Obst, would be talking about the new Resident Engagement Strategy. SB was planning to ask her why a sinking fund was being levied on new leases without good reason.

LG commented that in his experience service charges were often over-estimated, and whereas HfH would immediately recoup a mistake which had been made in the leaseholder's favour they would take as long as they possibly could to refund a leaseholder who had been overcharged. He asked leaseholders with problems to contact HLA so that HLA could try to help.

There being no further business, the Chair thanked leaseholders for attending and closed the meeting at 11.35am.