

MINUTES OF THE HLRA MEETING ON 11/03/2019

PRESENT: Grace (Chair), Alison, Hertha, Jane, Josh, Judith, Lana, Shannon, Yvonne, Roger (Secretary)

OTHER RESIDENT PRESENT: Saira Malik

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris Slater (Estate Services Manager)

APOLOGIES: Danny, Deborah

Alison resigned as Co-Secretary with the Committee's thanks. Roger was voted on in her place.

Minutes of the Meeting of 11/02/2019 were approved.

1. Fire Safety

Grace reported that Camden had sent an email informing her that contractors have been appointed to hard-wire smoke alarms and update fire doors on the Estate. A timetable for work will follow soon. A review of the fire escapes to the roof and between the blocks is being drawn up.

ACTION: Grace to check if fire safety work done in the recent refurbishment (smoke alarms, safety strips to doors and cupboards etc.) needs to be replaced and what are the cost implications for leaseholders.

2. Heating and Hot Water (HH)

Judith reported that Camden had not replied to her last email requesting an update. However, at the last District Management Committee (DMC) meeting, a deputation from the Whittington Estate delivered an appraisal of their new communal HH system; this is the same system to which Camden proposed we should be linked. The appraisal spoke of faulty workmanship leading to flooding and pest infestation, gaps and holes left in floors between residents' dwellings that are a fire risk and route for vermin and smells. The resulting supply of both heating and hot water is unreliable and cannot be controlled by residents; the system is noisy and the water pressure is erratic. Hot water has been known to come from toilet cisterns. There is a nearly 50% increase in electricity usage and the costs of installation are extremely high; residents have not been given any guarantees or seen a maintenance programme for this expensive system's projected 30 year life.

The deputation also complained about the process by which Camden managed the project over an eight year period. Residents set up a steering group which argued vigorously against the system with expert advice from architects, engineers and plumbers living on the estate. Despite many meetings and 'options appraisals', Camden imposed its preferred system.

Josh and Roger both spoke of the deep concerns of the Holly Lodge residents at possibly being linked to this flawed HH system. The officer present, (Mick Layhe, Team Manager, Mechanical and Electrical Supporting Communities), sought to allay our fears by promising to present 'options appraisals' before the end of March. The Committee noted Whittington Estate's experience, both the process and the result.

The Committee considered Camden's over-engineered gas powered HH system to belong to the past; individual electrical systems powered by renewables would seem to be the future.

ACTION: Judith to look into the solar panels on the Holly Lodge northern block adjoining Swains Lane. **Grace** to write to Camden asking them to include renewables in their heating and hot water plans. This ought to be one of the 'options appraisals' presented for our consideration.

3. Bins and Recycling

Chris Slater reported that Camden will presently send a letter to all residents on the Estate informing them of changes to bins and recycling. This will attempt to increase the amount recycled and inform residents of where bulk items can be left. He is not proposing to increase capacity but to increase recycling by situating bins in better places. This will include a new bin enclosure on Makepeace by the Sheltered Housing. Bulk items should not be left there but at the bottom of Makepeace by Swains Lane.

The committee was surprised that Camden does not have funding for the construction of this enclosure; we must seek DMC funding. This could have cost implications to Leaseholders. The Committee was also surprised to hear that Camden only have one approved contractor for this work so there will be no competitive tendering.

ACTION: Chris will provide the quote for the work so we can apply for funds from the DMC. **Grace** to check with Councillors why Camden does not pay for this work as a basic service.

4. Drains and Sewage

There has been a bad leak of sewage between Makepeace and Langbourne blocks which was not dealt with promptly. Shannon informed Camden who told her it is the responsibility of sub-contractors, London Drains. When she informed London Drains they queried whether it was an emergency and when they did finally arrive to deal with it they treated her in an aggressive manner, even photographing her and threatening to distribute the photo. Shannon has complained about their intimidating behaviour to Camden. The Committee supports this complaint.

ACTION: Chris to follow up Shannon's treatment by London Drains and report back. Also to check that a thorough clean up has been carried out of the areas affected.

Chris was asked why there was such a delay in dealing with what was clearly a health hazard. He said the system is for Caretakers to report to Camden Repairs but this can sometimes result in long waits on the phone. Roger reported that the last DMC meeting said that Camden is replacing Housing Officers responsible for 800 flats with Neighbourhood Officers responsible for half that number and with a brief to solve problems rather than simply pass them on. The Committee agreed it was vital to have a named and accessible officer to whom we can take problems. The present system is failing.

5. Easter Party

Easter Saturday, 20th April, was considered a good date for the party; there is a meeting before then (on 8th April) to finalise arrangements. Josh said that would be a good day for the Gardening Group to plant potatoes before the event.

6. Gardening Group (GG)

The Gardening Group has got off to an enthusiastic start under the guidance of Kat. She has agreed to come every Saturday at 11.30am and also lead the group on Wednesdays at 10.30am. Meet by the pond.

ACTION: Grace to arrange posters with this new information

A very positive meeting has been held with Peter Freeman, Camden Estates Manager, to clarify what areas the GG should work on. It was also agreed that Deborah's expertise and input is highly valued and she should be kept informed about the garden plans.

ACTION: Peter Freeman will get quotes for repairing the leaking pond and the poly-tunnel. Funds will be sought from the DMC.

Jane will see if the Green Gym or anyone on the estate can re-point the crazy paving on the terrace of the central garden to prevent weeds. **Alison** said she will put up notices about it.

7. Mavis Sullivan

Donations have been given for a memorial to a long-term and much loved resident, Mavis Sullivan. A magnolia tree has been planted at the eastern end of the middle garden. It needs to be marked with a plaque.

ACTION: Grace to arrange.

8. Glyphosate

No reply has been received from Camden to our request to continue suspension of glyphosate spraying on the Estate.

ACTION: Roger to send follow-up letter to Cllr Harrison.

The next meeting is on April 8th at 7pm at the Community Centre.