

MINUTES OF THE HLRA MEETING ON 9th SEPTEMBER 2019

COMMITTEE PRESENT: Grace (Co-Chair), Danny, Josh, Jane, Judith, Lana, Yvonne, Roger (Co-Secretary)

RESIDENTS PRESENT: Grazyna Korbek, Julia James, Lisa Rose

APOLOGIES: Alison, Hertha, Kim, Saira, Shannon

Hertha has fractured her knee and is unable to leave her flat (205) at present.

Action: Roger to send a card from the Committee. **Lana** to send a gift.

Minutes of the Meeting of 8th July 2019 were approved.

1. Fire Exits

Grace and Roger have checked fire exits to the roofs of all blocks and discovered that three have been radically changed: Makepeace Mansions 29-39, 57-64, 85-92. These blocks have been refurbished, replacing bedsits with larger two-bed flats (hence the non-sequential numbering). Fire safety measures have been upgraded, including 'enhanced compartmentalisation' which theoretically affords one hour safety within each flat in the event of fire. Because of this, Camden has removed the fire exits to the roof; there are now only narrow, inaccessible service hatches locked with Gerda locks. HLRA were never informed of these changes.

The Committee welcomed three very concerned residents from the affected blocks. They, and others, have reported a litany of botched work by the original contractors, Keepmoat, many of which negated fire safety measures such as non-compliant frames to fire-doors and windows, failure to compartmentalise under floors and possibly faulty fire stopping. Engie has bought Keepmoat's regeneration business and are repairing the botched work. Leaseholders have been 'decanted' from one flat to another while this work is being done. Essentially, they have been living on a building site for years.

Residents from these blocks are concerned that there is only one fire exit, the front door, and that the locks to the hatches prevent them from taking action in the event of other emergencies such as flooding. This did occur recently in 29-39 before the hatch was locked. The tank in the roof overflowed and the response from Camden was so tardy that residents took action themselves to prevent further damage. Grazyna insisted that we should be told who are the key-holders to these hatches and they should be available at all times.

An information meeting has been called with Gavin Haynes, Camden Fire Safety Officer, and concerned residents from these blocks on 23rd September in the Community Centre at 6pm. The Committee asked residents to list their complaints to present to Camden. Gavin Haynes will also tell us the council's proposals for roof fire exits on all blocks at this meeting.

ACTION: Roger and Grace to seek advice from London Fire Brigade and legal advice on fire safety regulations.

The committee agreed that after the meeting on 23rd of September, we would inform all residents of the council's proposals and about our concerns about locking the fire exits. We would en-

courage them to write to councilors and Keir Starmer. We will also launch a petition and start to contact the press.

An open consultation meeting for all residents with Camden officials, Councillors and Meric Apak, Cabinet Member for Housing, will be called, date TBC - to discuss these matters. We will urge as many residents as possible to attend.

All the other blocks' fire exits to the roofs were accessible as usual and not locked. However, we are concerned Camden will use the (botched) refurbishment of the three Makepeace blocks as a precedent to lock all fire exits. Any enhancement will never compartmentalise the flats, so in the opinion of the Committee fire exits to the roofs should remain open; safety on the roofs should also be enhanced.

2. AGM

The AGM will be held on 16th October.

ACTION: Grace to design poster.

3. Gardening

Deb has informed us that the RTA of her block, 277-294 HLM, has requested that the garden in front of her block should be taken off Camden's gardening contract. The Committee agreed that it would tell the council it had no objection, provided no residents in that block had no objections.

ACTION: Roger to inform Camden of the HLRA position.

Weeds are proliferating as Glyphosate has not been replaced by any other weed control method.

ACTION: Josh to write to Camden about their proposed alternative methods.

4. Bins

Building a new bin shed by the Sheltered Housing has to go through the Planning Department because the Estate is a Conservation Area.

Jane said that the bin area outside her flat, 205, is a mess. It needs more recycling bins. Also the issue of dumping large items needs to be clarified.

ACTION: Roger to write to Chris Slater.

5. Swish Party

Alison would like to hold another Swish Party which might include children's clothes and possibly other items. Jane thought it needed more publicity than last time and should be linked with Christmas celebrations.

The next meetings will be:

6pm Monday 23rd September with residents from Makepeace blocks 29-39, 57-64, 85-92 with Gavin Haynes

7pm Wednesday 16th October AGM.