

## **Minutes of the joint HLRA and HLCC AGMs 16th October 2019**

### **Attendance**

90 residents attended; 8 residents sent proxy votes; 14 residents sent apologies.  
98 voting residents exceeds the necessary 35 residents for the TRA to be recognised in the coming year.

2 Councillors attended: Sian Berry and Anna Wright. Oliver Lewis sent his apologies.

3 Camden Officers attended: Lavinia Mayer (Neighbourhood Housing Officer, Holly Lodge Mansions), Nandita Chatterjee (Neighbourhood Officer, Langbourne and Makepeace Mansions), Terry Haslam (Community Safety Officer).

Samantha Booth of the Camden New Journal was present.

Hugh Boatswain (Senior Tenant Participation Officer) was present as Camden Council's Observer.

### **Welcome**

Grace Livingstone and Shannon Francis (Co-Chairs) welcomed everyone present, the largest attendance anyone could remember.

### **Elections For HLRA Committee**

The present Committee introduced themselves: Grace Livingstone (Co-Chair), Shannon Francis (Co-Chair), Kim Sutherland (Co-Secretary), Roger Elliott (Co-Secretary), Lana Lewin (Treasurer), Alison David, Danny Gallivan, Josh Cedar, Hertha Koettner-Smith, Judith Walker, Jane Atkinson and Yvonne Coney

This Committee was unanimously re-elected. Jay Levy was re-elected in his absence.

The following absent Committee Members have resigned: George Chaldezos, Bernadette Nwosu, Andy Maidment, Dermot Alexander.

A call was made for new Committee members. The following volunteered: Tamatha Weisser, Saira Malik, Stefi Falco, Grazyna Korbel, Lisa Rose, Rapi Kaure, David Fermer, Sabrina Bordin, Isobel Rogers, Claire Ray.

The new members were unanimously elected onto the Committee.

At the end of the meeting two residents were co-opted onto the committee: Jessica Polowski and Lorna Russell.

### **Elections for Management Committee of the HLCC**

Barbara Smith (Chair), Karen Berges, and Elizabeth Doherty were absent but standing for re-election.

Committee Present: Anne Holve (Secretary), Hertha Koettner-Smith (Treasurer), Camilla Scaramanga, Josh Cedar, Grace Livingstone, Roger Elliott.

The HLCC Committee was unanimously re-elected.

Rapi Kaure volunteered for the HLCC Committee and was unanimously elected.

### **Co-Chairs' Report on HLRA Activities**

See Home Page of [myhlra.org](http://myhlra.org) for Link

### **Finance Report for HLRA**

See Home Page of [myhlra.org](http://myhlra.org) for Link

### **Chair's Report on HLCC Activities**

See Home Page of [myhlra.org](http://myhlra.org) for Link

### **Finance Report for HLCC**

See Home Page of [myhlra.org](http://myhlra.org) for Link.

### **Fire Exits**

Grace outlined the Council's plans to enhance fire safety in the blocks by installing fire doors, hard-wired smoke/fire alarms and fire stopping. The HLRA welcomes these measures but disagrees with the Council that they justify locking the fire exits to the roofs. The fire exits have always been an integral part of the buildings.

Many residents expressed their dismay and their fears about the Council's proposal to lock fire exits. Because of the age of the buildings, they cannot be compartmentalised and Camden agree that in the event of a fire all residents should evacuate immediately. But the Council would only be permitting one way to exit - downwards. Many residents thought this was madness as stairwells could be filled with smoke. With four or five storey buildings, people should have the option to evacuate upwards, especially those living on the top floors. Not one resident at the meeting spoke in favour of locking roof exits but many spoke passionately against.

Grace mentioned that the HLRA has launched a petition to keep the fire exits open which she urged residents to sign. Roger mentioned that Camden is doing a 'Safety in Council Homes Consultation' which includes your views on fire safety - forms with online contacts were available at the meeting.

Grace said that the HLRA is seeking press publicity for our cause. Samantha Booth from the Camden New Journal was present. Louise Lee has volunteered to co-ordinate the press.

The next step is a walkabout with Camden officers to look at blocks on 23rd. A resident said that the council should talk to residents about the specifics of each block.

There is an informal working party on the fire exits. If anyone wants to join please let the Committee know.

Cllr Anna Wright promised to carry the concerned voices of the residents to the officers and cabinet. She said the dilemma the Council faces is that the Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) do not consider the spiral staircases adequate or the roofs safe. London Fire Brigade support Camden's proposals and the Council needs to get the approval of the Fire and Rescue Services for their fire safety measures.

Grace responded that the regulations state that for buildings that cannot be compartmentalised the authorities need to look at the specific design of the building and carry out compensatory

measures. These can be: secondary fire exits, alarms or sprinklers. The Council has chosen alarms but we do not consider that is adequate.

Cllr Sian Berry said that FRAs before the Grenfell fire had been shoddy and the roofs had been neglected as fire exits. Now the Council is very concerned about fire safety but taking away existing fire exits would be wrong. It would not cost a lot to enhance safety on the roofs and escape onto other buildings is a recognised and common way of escaping from a fire.

Cllr Sian Berry also emphasised this is not a matter for Camden officers to decide but for the Cabinet and the Cabinet should listen to residents' concerns and wishes. She urged the HLRA to check whether the final decision would be taken by the whole cabinet or one cabinet member. Gavin Haynes, (Director of Property Management) had told the HLRA the decision would be taken by the whole cabinet; Sian said the council forward plan said it was just one member.

### **Drug Dealing Issues**

Terry Haslam, the Community Safety Officer, appealed to residents to report drug dealing and anti-social behaviour. At present she is receiving limited reports because of a culture of not 'grassing' and fear of the consequences if you do. However, reports can be done anonymously without risk and reporting criminal behaviour is vital in that every report gives a dot on the map, information to the police. She works very closely with the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), meeting them every day.

There has been a drugs problem by the garages below Langbourne. After reporting this to Terry, the drugs problem there appears to have been solved.

### **Gardening**

John Price introduced the Gardening Group (see website [myhlra.org](http://myhlra.org)). It started this spring and has successfully cleared the pond, restored the polytunnel and some of the vegetable beds producing a fine potato crop. The group also tends plants and does a lot of weeding. It meets on Saturday mornings at the earlier time of 10.30am, communicating by a WhatsApp group, and is flexible and informal. John called for more members and six residents signed up.

Kat Wojnar, who was our full-time gardener for 18 months until the autumn and instrumental in setting up the group, spoke of how it had been quite experimental, discovering residents' interests and sometimes vested interests! But they had managed to bring people together in the common cause of gardening and the frogs especially have thrived! The HLRA owes a lot to Kat but Kat said she owes a lot to us - setting up the group helped her get her dream job of Community Gardener for the Thamesmead development. She received a round of applause.

Kat then introduced our new full-time, or static, gardener, Emma Love who trained and worked at Kew Gardens for three years. She clearly shares Kat's enthusiasm for Holly Lodge and wishes to restore it as much as possible to its former glory. Kat is still working with the Gardening Group on Saturdays and Emma will work closely with her. Emma welcomes ideas from residents and her commitment and enthusiasm earned her a round of applause.

Shannon Francis said that if we start more community vegetable gardens we could have fruit and vegetable swaps. Tamatha Weisser spoke of the £5000 grant that had been received many years ago to set up the polytunnel and revitalise the area behind Holly Lodge Mansions as an edible garden. Fruit bushes had been planted and the vegetable beds established which are now being

restored. There is scope for a Polytunnel Vegetable Group to work alongside the Gardening Group and Tamatha asked for residents to register their interest with her.

Jane Atkinson is the HLRA Gardening Rep. and will work with Emma to sort out problems such as the leylandii and overgrown hedges on Langbourne.

### **Heating and Hot Water**

Judith Walker of the Heating and Hot Water Group (HHW Group) updated the meeting on the current situation. The heating and hot water boiler on Makepeace that serves much of the Estate is a temporary measure. Last year the Council suggested that Holly Lodge be connected to the Whittington Estate's system (see [myhlra.org](http://myhlra.org)). The HLRA rejected this option and now Camden has come up with new options and scheduled a meeting for 13th November. We have asked to see the options before the meeting. Judith asked residents to see her or email [hollylodgera@gmail.com](mailto:hollylodgera@gmail.com) if they are interested in joining the HHW Group.

Sian Berry said the Council's proposals in the past had tried to come up with one system that would fit the different blocks with their different service needs. It is important to have representation from the different types of blocks. The Council must also take into account that it has no right to force changes within leasehold flats and can charge only for plant, not internal works.

### **Community Investment Fund (CIF)**

Cllrs Anna Wright and Sian Berry told the meeting that there are CIF funds available to the HLRA, for instance to repair the pond. Please apply to them for these funds!

**The meeting closed at 9pm.**