



**Holly Lodge Residents Association, [www.myhlra.org](http://www.myhlra.org),  
[hollylodgera@gmail.com](mailto:hollylodgera@gmail.com)**

## **DON'T LOCK OUR FIRE EXITS!**

Camden council are proposing to **LOCK THE FIRE EXITS ON THE ROOFS** of all the blocks in Langbourne, Makepeace and Oakeshott that have doors on to the roof.

The council has not made a final decision yet, so it is vital that residents make their voice heard now.

Here's what you can do:

1) Please write to:

[Georgia.Gould@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Georgia.Gould@camden.gov.uk) (leader of the council)

Copy your email to

[Meric.Apak@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Meric.Apak@camden.gov.uk) (Camden cabinet member for housing)

[Oliver.Lewis@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Oliver.Lewis@camden.gov.uk) (our local ward councillor)

[Anna.Wright@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Anna.Wright@camden.gov.uk) (our local ward councillor)

[Sian.Berry@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Sian.Berry@camden.gov.uk) (our local ward councillor)

[hollylodgera@gmail.com](mailto:hollylodgera@gmail.com) (the holly lodge residents association)

2) Please write to Keir Starmer MP. [Keir.starmer.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:Keir.starmer.mp@parliament.uk) Put your address in the email because MPs only reply to their constituents.

3) Come to our **Annual General Meeting, Weds 16<sup>th</sup> October, 7pm**, Holly Lodge Community Centre, Makepeace Avenue. Make your views known to our local councillors who will be there.

4) Petition. We want all residents to sign a petition. Can you help petition your block? Please email us if you can.

Please email us if you can help in any other way.

We are organising an open meeting with councillors, council officers and all residents to discuss the fire exits. We will give you the date as soon as it is arranged.

The Holly Lodge Residents Association committee met with Council officials on 23 September 2019 to hear their fire safety proposals. The Council is going ahead with the following safety measures which we support:

- Hard-wired smoke alarms in communal areas and flats
- 30- minute fire doors for all flats
- Compartmentation (sealing gaps in cupboards in the communal areas. Sealing off the asbestos which is found in some of these cupboards.)

The council says when the flats have new doors and alarms, it will be safe to lock the roof fire exits. We disagree because:

- Our blocks were built in the 1920s and cannot be fully compartmentalized (sealed off from smoke and fumes). Our blocks are made of timber and brick. Our flats are not 'sealed units'. They have lots of gaps between the floors and in the walls for smoke to penetrate. Fire safety experts have told us that compartmentation is more suitable for modern flats made of concrete.
- The council accepts that the flats cannot be fully compartmentalized. In the event of a fire, its advice will continue to be to evacuate.
- Their fire safety strategy relies on everyone keeping their doors closed, if one person leaves their flat door open, the strategy fails.
- We only have one stair-well
- It is therefore vital that we have two routes of escape
- Compartmentation did not work in Grenfell and it certainly won't work in old blocks like ours which are made of brick and timber.

#### Cost of Making the Roofs Safer

The council also says the roofs are unsafe and it will be expensive to make them safe. Improvements would include: higher railings, new lighting, up-graded bridges between blocks and the removal of spiral staircases to the roofs. The council says residents would be asked to pay for these improvements.

We think it is wrong to ask residents to pay for basic fire safety measures. They are, in effect saying, we will lock your fire exits unless you pay us exorbitant sums

The council has done costings on the basis that the roofs would become 'amenity areas' for residents to use. We explained that residents do not want the roofs to be used for anything other than an escape route. The council are now investigating how much it would cost to close the roofs for general access, but make the fire exits accessible only in the event of an emergency.