

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD BY ZOOM ON 29TH SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **PRESENT**

Fifty-seven residents attended, exceeding the 35 required to be recognised as a TRA. Twelve residents sent their apologies.

Two councillors: Anna Wright and Oliver Lewis. Sian Berry sent her apologies.

Mike Towers, Manager of the Holly Lodge Community Centre.

Hugh Boatswain, Senior Tenant Participation Officer, as Camden Council Observer.

### **MINUTES OF THE AGM ON 16TH OCTOBER 2019 AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes were approved; Matters Arising are dealt with in this meeting.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

#### **COVID RESPONSE ON HOLLY LODGE**

We would like to say an enormous thank you to all residents who volunteered to help during this pandemic, your generosity and community spirit has been absolutely amazing. Just before the lockdown began, we called for people to act as block reps to help vulnerable and self-isolating people in their blocks. The response was overwhelming and within days we had set up a network of volunteers in every block. We then teamed up with Highgate Newtown food scheme, and our volunteers began to deliver food parcels to residents. We applied for two grants from Camden, totalling £5,000 to pay for the food parcels. We also set up a box for food donations outside the community centre: once again we were overwhelmed with the generosity of the response. Thank you once again to everyone for your neighbourliness during this time of need.

#### **FIRE SAFETY/FIRE EXITS**

With residents, we expressed great concern about the council's proposals to lock the fire exits on the roof. We have held several meetings with councillors and council officers. In response to our concerns, the council is now proposing that the doors will automatically open in the event of a fire, but will be closed at all other times. We are continuing to ask the council for a smash-glass, *manual* emergency opening to the roof doors and access for maintenance work. No work on the roof doors, will start until full consultations take place with residents. These are due to begin in October 2020. (More details on roof exits can be found in the attached report and below).

The council is also about to start general fire safety works in all blocks. This will entail installing hard wired smoke alarms in communal areas and giving all flats new fire-safe front doors. The central evacuation route will be the stairs, so all residents will be asked to remove any items from communal areas (including shoes, bikes, prams, etc). The reason for this is that if these items catch

fire, the corridors will fill with smoke and could endanger any evacuation in the event of a fire. The council is offering to build external pram sheds in blocks where there is need.

### **HEATING AND HOT WATER**

Camden Council has put forward a new proposal for a new heating and hot water system on the estate. (See below). Consultations with all residents on these plans are due to start in October. A group of residents from the Holly Lodge Residents Association and the Holly Lodge Leaseholders Association have been analysing the council's proposals and have a number of concerns about them. (See the report from our Heating and Hot Water Group below).

### **GARDENING GROUP**

Before the pandemic started, we had a weekly residents gardening group on Saturday mornings. They have weeded plots across the estate and have also created four new large plots for vegetable growing between Holly Lodge Mansions and Highgate Cemetery. We were organising a mass residents potato planting day but we had to cancel this when the lockdown was announced. Instead existing members of the gardening group, have been tending the potato and vegetable plants individually and in autumn got a good harvest! There is not enough space to have individual allotments but if any resident would like to help out planting vegetables on the communal plot (watering, digging, planting, whenever they have time), just email us. There might be other spaces on the estate where vegetable growing could be extended.

### **POLYTUNNEL GARDENING**

Gardening spots in the polytunnel are allocated to residents, although at the moment there is a waiting list. Please email [Tamatha@hotmail.com](mailto:Tamatha@hotmail.com) if you are interested.

### **POND FIXING**

We applied for a grant from Camden's district management committee to fix the leaking pond in the gardens between Oakeshott and Makepeace. We aim to fix the pond this winter and replant it with plants in time for the spring.

### **BINS**

We have asked the council to provide more bins and to build a bin shed near the community centre in Makepeace Mansions to prevent rubbish spilling on the road. The response has been very slow, partly because planning permission is necessary. We have also asked the council to look at partitioning off the bins at the end of Oakeshott, so residents do not have the bins right outside their window. We are dissatisfied with the slow response to our concerns on the bins, so we have agreed to invite the council's estate manager to a meeting so we can discuss a way forward together.

### **YOUTH SCHEMES**

We applied for funds from Camden's District Management Committee for a youth scheme project. By partnering with Bloomsbury Football Academy, we were able to offer free football coaching to all young people on the estate and in the local area.

### **HLRA Zoom Account**

We were given a grant by Camden to have a Holly Lodge Residents' Association Zoom account. If any self-employed resident (or any resident) would like to make use of this account which allows meetings for over an hour and of up to 100 people, please email us.

## COMMITTEE

I would like to say an enormous thank you to everyone on the committee in what has been an extraordinary year. A big thank you to our secretary Roger Elliot for overseeing our block rep communications and our email account, which became a full-time job during the lockdown. Thank you also to our co-chair Shannon Francis for all her work on community projects, and to our treasurer Lana Lewin, who oversaw the bank account and grant applications during the pandemic.

Thank you once again to all residents for your community spirit during this year.

Grace Livingstone (Chair)

## TREASURER'S REPORT

1st October 19 to 29th September 20						
Opening balance	£3,016.00					
<b><u>Income</u></b>						
Donations	£56.52					
Camden Council Grants						
Youth Football	£5,890.00					
Christmas Party	£750.00					
Zoom	£490.00					
HLE Corona fund	£750.00					
Highgate Newtown food bank	£5,000.00					
Pond repairs	£4,911.45					
Total	<b>£17,791.45</b>					
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>						

Summer Get Together 19	£458.64		Remaining invoices			
Christmas Community party	£794.52					
Summer Football exp	£5,890.00					
Youth Filming project	£940.00		(Funds used from previously ringfenced monies)			
HLE Corona Fund	£497.01					
Highgate Newtown food bank	£5,000.00					
Office Sundries	£109.29					
Website fees	£15.00					
TRA Meeting expenses	£23.60					
<b>Total</b>	<b>£13,728.06</b>					
Balance carried forward						
	<b>£7,079.39</b>					

Lana Lewin (Treasurer)

## **ELECTION OF THE COMMITTEE**

Sadly, we have lost two much loved residents who did so much for our community. Danny Gallivan was on the Committee for many years, always speaking up for open democracy and every Spring he organised bulb planting sessions for the children. Sabine Trumpa helped set up the Community Centre's highly successful Lunch Club and ran the front of house with professional expertise. They are both sorely missed.

Three members have resigned: Claire Ray, David Fermer and Shannon Francis. We thank all three of them for their valuable contributions, especially Shannon Francis who worked tirelessly on community projects.

The present Committee introduced themselves: Alison David, Grace Livingstone, Grazyna Korbel, Isobel Rogers, Jane Atkinson, Jay Levy, Jessica Polowski, Josh Cedar, Judith Walker, Kim Sutherland, Lana Lewin, Lorna Russell, Rapi Kaur, Roger Elliott, Sabrina Bordin, Stefi Falco, Yvonne Coney.

The Committee was unanimously re-elected. Hertha Koettner-Smith and Tamatha Weisser were re-elected in their absence.

Three new members were elected to the Committee: Anna Parkinson, Lise Gallagher and Steve Barton.

## **ROOF FIRE EXITS**

This paper was presented to residents before the meeting.

### **What is happening to the Roof Fire Exits?**

The London Fire Brigade has advised the Council to close the roof exits and restrict resident access to the roof. It has issued a Notice of Deficiency on one of the blocks, requiring the Council to act.

Over the past two years, the Holly Lodge Resident Association and many residents have expressed deep concerns about the proposal to close the roof exits.

#### **Camden Council's New Proposal**

Camden is now proposing that the doors to the roofs will *automatically open* in the event of the fire. They will be linked to the alarm system. The doors would be locked at all other times.

[The doors will be called automatic opening vents, but they will be the same size and shape as the existing roof doors].

In the event of a fire, residents would have the option of escaping via the roof, although the Fire Brigade and Council strongly advise residents to evacuate downwards through the front door.

The bridges between blocks will remain. The spiral staircases between blocks will remain. The Council will upgrade the lighting and walkways on the roof. They will install alarmed smash-entry emergency handles on the outside of the roof doors so no one can get trapped on the roof.

We believe this compromise proposal is an improvement on the previous plan to lock the roof exits permanently and to remove all access to the roofs and between blocks.

However, we are continuing to ask the council to:

- a. Provide an emergency *manual* opening for the roof doors
- b. Access to the roof for emergency maintenance work (eg for a plumber in the event of a leak)

#### **What happens now?**

From October onwards there will be in-person and online consultations. All residents will have a chance to meet the council's resident safety director and members of the London Fire Brigade. During these consultations, residents can:

- Point out any specific fire safety concerns you have about your block
- Hear the council's fire safety strategy
- Ask questions about the fire safety strategy.

The Meeting discussed this Paper and Fire Safety measures in general.

- There was much disbelief that London Fire Brigade should insist on locking the roofs, leaving only one exit downwards through the front door in the event of a fire. Common sense and common practice has always insisted on two exits. The original design of the buildings provided two exits - roof and front door. What is the reasoning behind LFB's decision?
- Grace replied that LFB says the old design of the roof exits fails to meet current safety standards - access such as circular staircases. Also the roofs are deemed to be unsafe through trip hazards and smoke during a fire. Roofs are not considered to lead to a place of ultimate safety despite the gantries, which are structurally sound, between blocks.
- Izzy Rogers asked whether legal advice has been taken on this and offered to look into it, as did Brendan Gallagher. Grace replied that the Committee had sought legal advice and that, together with the help of our Councillors, compromise had been reached with the AOV system allowing access to roofs in the event of a fire. Also, the circular staircases, gantries etc are to be maintained.
- A lot of unease was expressed at not being able to access roofs through a manual over-ride to the automatic system of the AOVs in the event of a fire.
- Flats cannot be compartmentalised and residents, with experience of how smells and noise travel, expressed alarm at how smoke would invade flats and that stair-wells might not be safe to exit downwards for those on top floors.
- Grace said with this "downwards and out" system it is essential communal areas be kept clear of buggies, shoes and other residents' clutter that could catch fire or impede escape. She said that Camden is looking into this and we have suggested a log book for caretakers in which they and residents can record cleaning and the clearing of impediments.
- Some residents pointed out that currently they compensate for Camden's failure to properly maintain the roofs by clearing gutters, moss etc themselves. If the roofs are locked this cannot take place. Can Camden be trusted to do the work?

Councillor Oliver Lewis said that all these concerns had been put to Camden and there had been substantial movement with AOVs and conserving the look of the blocks. The AOVs will be the same size as present doors, with push bars for opening when alarms go off. They will have battery back-up in the event of power cuts and quarterly checks will be made on the system. He promised to look into maintenance on roofs.

## HEATING AND HOT WATER

### REPORT TO HLRA AGM 29 September 2020

Camden needs to replace the temporary boiler which provides hot water and heating to Makepeace Mansions and Holly Lodge Mansions flats. It intends to also upgrade and modernise facilities. Several consultant reports have been prepared since the proposals were mooted in 2015 (?) and a group of residents under the Holly Lodge Residents Association, has been meeting with Camden to facilitate discussion. The last meeting was on 3 August 2020 led by Suzanne Afra, new Head of Capital Works, and Head of M&E services, Primesh Kalia. The consultant remains Alex Maguire, FLOH.

Notes from Suzanne, our comments and the Group's notes from August are on

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HollyLodgeLeaseholdersAssociation>

#### Next Steps - October

Camden is arranging a 'residents' briefing session' (sometimes called a residents' engagement meeting) based on their report of the 3 August Meeting, with a FAQ document to be sent in advance. Presumably on Microsoft's Team software. Camden intends to use this "to come to a decision regarding next steps".

#### Camden's recommendation is to have:

- A district heating system, supplied from the current location of the boilers with a new energy centre for the supply of the heating and hot water to the blocks on the estate.
- The existing distribution pipework is less than 10 years old and therefore Camden is proposing to reuse this pipework, which has a remaining life of at least 15 years.
- Each flat will have a heat interface unit (HIU) installed to provide hot water 24/7/365 to both kitchen and bathroom (*which will be connected by new pipes if currently separate*) and heating
- Heating flow and return pipework will be connected from the new energy centre (*ie the HIU*)
- The mains water pipework will also need to be renewed for the hot water supply to the HIU.
- Each HIU will be fitted with a heat meter which will measure the heating and hot water usage in each flat. Each resident will be charged

for heating and hot water used in the flat. (*This is an aspiration as does not happen in the Refurbished flats nor yet at the Whittington Estate where HIUs have been recently installed*)

- The proposed option is to deliver option C (*see Notes*) which is to carry out the work in two phases; phase one replace the existing boilers and phase two renew the heating to the blocks and internally within the flats.

The HHW Group has a number of issues with this proposal, for example:

- ★space requirements in small one bed flats
- ★reports from the Whittington Estate of disruption, quality of work, problems with temperature/pressure delivery, absence of individual metering despite HIUs being installed
- ★Group's preference for individual boilers
- ★potential imposition of central heating on tenants and leaseholders who have hot water only and have their own systems for heating.
- ★Cost!! Both capital costs and future running costs – both still to be quantified.

Judith Walker summarised the above Report, stressing that Camden's forthcoming "Briefing" or "Engagement" sessions might not be consultations in which residents are given a choice but presented with a fait accompli. Grace stressed that we must not have the flawed Whittington Estate system imposed on us. The HLRA has adamantly refused to accept the earlier proposal to pump hot water from Whittington down Chester Road to Holly Lodge, an engineering project that would have linked us with a system already fraught with problems.

Both Judith and Grace emphasised that leaseholders are very concerned about costs. How might Camden mitigate these, particularly in light of Covid-19 which has reduced so many household incomes?

Several residents expressed a preference for individual boilers over a communal system. Judith replied that Langbourne Mansions and some other blocks do have fully individual systems and these will remain. The refurbished blocks depend on a communal system so the current inefficient boilers need to be replaced. Camden would like to hook up as many other blocks as possible, including those that currently have communal hot water only, for efficiency reasons.

The question of the HLRA getting independent advice was raised. Judith said we do have an independent engineer advising us but such is the technical complexity of the project that more advice would be helpful and we would look into this.

Environmental issues were raised in light of the Climate Crisis and Camden's resolution to move to a carbon free future by 2030. Are large gas boilers consistent with this resolve? Judith replied that Camden has just moved to proposing air sourced heat pumps which would be more environmentally friendly but we are seeking assurances that these can be made to work on a large communal scale.

Councillor Oliver Lewis said that various options had been put forward by Camden but they were complicated. What should be borne in mind is that the decision making process must be resident driven with proper consultation. Merik Apak, Cabinet Member for Better Homes, insists on this and your Councillors will support you. Environmentally, communal systems are shown to be better than individual ones.

Councillor Anna Wright said they had specifically asked Camden to consider alternative, environmentally cost effective systems. Also to give reassurances on the life-span of proposed systems.

Grace asked residents to email in their questions so we can put them to Camden in the forthcoming "consultations".

## **GARDENS**

Jane Atkinson reported on the Gardening Group which was successfully set up in Spring 2019. Work continued in the gardens every Saturday by the group until Covid-19 made the operation a more individual one. However, being an outdoor activity, it continued with a very successful enlargement of the vegetable patches behind Holly Lodge Mansions. The Polytunnel is also thriving under Tamatha Weisser. Gilly Burke reported that there is still plenty of space for regenerating the land behind Holly Lodge Mansions and other areas of the estate. Emma, our Static Gardener, is being very supportive. Anyone interested in joining the group, please get in touch at [hollylodgera@gmail.com](mailto:hollylodgera@gmail.com).

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Community Infrastructure Fund**

Cllr Anna Wright informed the meeting that the Councillors have control over some £100,000 of Community Infrastructure Funds which we can apply for in grants of usually around £5,000 to £10,000. The vegetable growing initiative of the Gardening Group would likely be eligible. Forms can be obtained from Anna who will help with the applications. The time limit is open but don't leave it too long!

Grace appealed for ideas from residents for this valuable resource.

### **Caretaking**

Yvonne Coney reported that her block had not been cleaned for two weeks. Roger Elliott said that Debbie Marno, the Estate Supervisor, had been on leave and

then ill but she is back now and will be coming to our next meeting to discuss improving caretaking.

There were also complaints about bins and recycling. Elizabeth Doherty complained that people leave large items at the bins by the Sheltered Housing when they should be left at the bin area below by Swains Lane. Could signs be put up? Lise Gallagher complained about the noise in the bin area between the flats on Holly Lodge Mansions, especially banging lids. Could CCTV be installed to discourage fly tipping and large amounts of rubbish left when flats are being totally refurbished?

Anna Wright volunteered to come to our next meeting, (to which Debbie Marno is invited), to look into these complaints. She recommended the Clean Camden website or apps where you can report fly tipping for it to be cleaned up. This does work well: Clean Camden on [play.google.com](http://play.google.com) or [app.apple.com](http://app.apple.com).

### **Cycle Storage**

Karen Berges said there is a huge demand for safe cycle storage that is not being met on the estate. Could some CIL money be allocated for this?

Roger replied that he had talked to Camden about this and four new cycle hoop hangars were about to be installed on Swains Lane. However, as Karen reported, these had been filled very quickly. Roger appealed for someone to take on this campaign to get cycle hoop hangars on the estate and maybe a larger cycle hub by the garages on Langbourne. Isobel Rogers volunteered.

### **Energy Performance Certificate**

Claudia Walters brought to the meeting's notice that the EPC for her flat, and most of the flats in her block, is an E. On a scale of A to F, regulations are due to come into force that flats must be at least a D for letting or sale and this rating is likely to rise. The problem is that most of the improvements that would increase the rating - insulation, energy supply, double glazing - are beyond leaseholders' control. She wants to let her flat. What can be done? Is Camden aware of this problem?

Grace asked her to email [hollylodgera@gmail.com](mailto:hollylodgera@gmail.com) about this and we would investigate.

### **Food Donations**

Finally, Mike Towers, Manager of the Holly Lodge Community Centre, appealed to residents to keep supporting the yellow food donation bin outside the Centre. The need remains great

The meeting ended at 9pm.