

MINUTES OF HLRA COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24.11.2020

PRESENT: Roger (Chair), Grace, Grazyna, Jessica, Yvonne, Josh, Judith, Lisa, Anna, Steve, Izzy, Hertha and Lise (Secretary).

COUNCILLOR: N/A

OFFICER: N/A

APOLOGIES: Lorna, Jane, Jay, Alison, Lana, Tamatha, Sabina.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of 28.10.2020 were approved.

Matters Arising: the three lights on the path at the top of the garden between MM and HLM have been fixed.

CARETAKING

Grazyna reported that the caretaking notice in her block was removed and she will follow up with one of her neighbours to try and re-insert it, otherwise Yvonne will request a new notice from Debbie Marno.

There were several reports that caretaking was still not carried out properly, eg. some blocks being either only vacuumed or not vacuumed at all. Yvonne had mentioned it to Debbie a few times already and Debbie had replied to Yvonne that she was going to inspect the blocks the week before last. It was agreed that a complaint should be filed against Debbie directly with Camden if Debbie carried on being not responsive. However, Roger said he considered Caretaking was improving despite Covid-19 and we should work with Debbie.

CHRISTMAS

At Christmas, the HLRA usually organises a Santa's grotto but due to the COVID-19 restrictions this year it was agreed on Grace's suggestion that Steve will dress up as Santa and deliver gifts on doorsteps for kids and elderly people on the estate. The Committee has Santa and elves suits to borrow. **Grace will ask Lana if she would like to help as an elf.**

Grace spoke to Barbara and Committee members will put some lights on the HLE gardener's buggy to make it look like a sleigh and play music. It was agreed that Sunday 20th December was a good date for the event. **Grace will ask the block representatives to collect a list of residents to whom Santa should deliver gifts.**

Usually Camden council would give donations, Tesco would give boxes of biscuits, the Estate Committee would give around £150. Committee members can add money to the pot for donations from local shops, and anyone is welcome to check locally which other shops are willing to give donations. Committee members are not encouraged to donate gifts directly as these would need to be sanitised individually due to COVID-19. **Lisa will organise the collection of donations.** *Camden New Journal* usually provides hampers; **Grace will organise hampers this year.**

At the moment, group singing of carols is not allowed within the COVID-19 rules. It was agreed to invite residents to sing from their balconies, windows and in the street in a socially distanced way. This will take place just after Santa's gift delivery on Sunday 20th at around 5.30pm. Residents will be encouraged to record themselves and Committee members will record it too to be used for the estate's 100 year anniversary celebrations. **Josh will prepare posters and lyric sheets for everyone to be able to sing together.**

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Roger reported on the DMC meeting which took place two weeks ago on repairs. Councillor Merik Apak, cabinet member for Better Homes, attended the meeting. Kieran Bukowski, for Repairs, complained about people going on the roof with chairs and drinking, however the real issue is about maintaining the building itself. Blaming residents' behaviour is not good enough. The shocking situation of Flat 2, Makepeace Avenue valued at zero GBP because it is too damp to live in, and the fact that there is no way to tell when Camden will address the issue, was also discussed. At the DMC meeting Merik agreed that we need a schedule of maintenance and not just of repairing things as and when we get information that something has gone wrong. Also, Gavin Haynes will send people to Flat 2 and block 149-164 Makepeace in order to get things moving.

Steve mentioned that there are damp issues through walls at Langbourne Avenue and Camden are not replying to individual reports. Steve suggested that all reports from residents with reference numbers on this issue be logged in writing via repairs@camden.gov.uk and collated into a centralised file, and that we need to keep chasing. The issue of the roofs was raised by Josh five years ago at a DMC meeting. Also, the quality of Repairs is poor. Kieran Bukowski speaking for Council repairs said they are carried out to the same standard as they would be in their own homes but this is patently not the case.

It is unclear whether there has been any major roof work in the last 30 years. **Judith will check.**

Grazyna reported on a conversation with Andy Hardwick, who has now left Camden's Repairs and Maintenance team, where he said they did not have the resources to do planned preventative maintenance.. **Roger and Josh will bring this up with Gavin and Merik at the coming DMC meeting.**

Jessica suggested that the caretakers look at the common areas and tick a list of issues they noticed. However, the Committee members agreed the caretakers may not be willing to do this and Health and Safety regulations now mean they are not permitted on the roofs or even up ladders.

Steve also suggested creating a leaseholder management pilot on Langbourne Avenue where leaseholders take over management from Camden. Judith mentioned that Joanna Newman might have information on this but there is the complication of having to take responsibility for the tenants. Sally Gibson, previous Councillor, was involved and so perhaps Anna Wright would be interested. Izzy noted that there may be an issue with the fact that costs would need to be re-directed from Camden to the leaseholder management which Camden may be reluctant to agree to. **Steve will contact Joanna.**

FIRE SAFETY

Brendan Gallagher spoke to the fire brigade who said they did not advise Camden on fire risks, although Grace remembered the fire brigade providing reports on the blocks' fire safety. **Lise will ask Brendan to email details to Grace in particular the name of the person he spoke to.**

Jessica mentioned that Langbourne Avenue's leases require leaseholders to maintain the inside of their front doors and are free to decorate them in any way they please, but Camden's fire safety upgrades will provide factory painted doors. John Brett had said that if doors are repainted fire retarding paint must be used. Residents are concerned that the doors in design and colour will not be in keeping with the estate's period architecture. **Roger will email Suket Patel again to try and obtain clarity on doors and door furniture. In parallel, Jessica will reply to John Brett's email and share the Committee's concerns that they have not replied to the HLLA letter about re-decorating requirements on the leaseholders' doors.**

Grace noted that Camden needs to consult residents on the fire safety upgrades as we have not agreed them yet. John Brett has shown a reluctance to put things in writing, especially on locking the roofs. When we have a consultation this will need to be in writing. It was agreed that there should be better fire alarms in blocks, although Roger noted that alarms have been installed in his block and Grazyna noticed that lighting has been replaced to comply with

regulations. **Grace will ask Suket Patel for a progress report.**

HEATING AND HOT WATER

Roger noted that because this issue is so technical it has been left to the Heating and Hot water group and he took the opportunity to recognise that the group has done a great deal of work, particularly managing to stop the linking of the Whittington estate's troubled hot water system to our estate. But Camden has been reluctant to give capital and ongoing costs of their proposed energy options.

Jessica mentioned that according to Camden's climate change report, the energy heating scheme with Air Source Heat Pumps is £4,500 greater than a gas boiler. From Camden's documentation costs seem high. Also, there is nothing in Camden's plans on hydrogen. Camden are suggesting Air Source Heat Pumps but they have never been installed on any estate as large as this.

Roger suggested hitting the pause button on Camden's proposal to install new gas boilers as we should question whether they will be future proof in the rapidly evolving energy situation where Camden has set a target to reach zero neutral carbon by 2030. Judith argued that currently there is no alternative to gas and Camden will go ahead with replacing the rented, expensive boilers anyway.

Roger and Judith will email Camden Councillors saying that only phase 1 should proceed, the installing of new gas boilers, and we should hold on phase 2, connecting the system to individual flats, as these would cause major disruptions. Also, we should ask for a Sustainability Review for the Estate with our Councillors, with Meric Apak, (Cabinet Member for Better Homes), and Adam Harrison, (Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden). We need a holistic view of the energy needs of the estate, taking into account insulation, double-glazing, solar energy and other potential renewable sources.

It was agreed that Roger and Judith will go ahead with Judith's draft email including a request to hold a Sustainability Review in the New Year.

BINS

Yvonne emailed Veolia regarding the fact that recycling bins were overflowing on Friday but she received no reply. For a short time it was getting better. Debbie had said Veolia collected bins three times a week and that Julie from Veolia would send a letter to the residents but this has not happened (Roger has subsequently received the letter but as he was not shown the draft, as requested, it is almost useless in not forbidding dumping at night and insisting on quiet dumping). **Yvonne will add it to her email to Debbie.**

There has not been any update on the planning application for the bin shed by the Sheltered Housing from Oliver Lewis. **Yvonne will also email Chris Slater and ask him about the planning application.**

GARDENING

Josh will arrange a separate meeting regarding the plots around the back of Oakeshott Avenue with Tamatha and Gilly and will report back at the next meeting in January.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 12th January 2021 at 7pm by Zoom.