

Holly Lodge Tenants Residents Association Committee Meeting, 7 pm, Tuesday, January 17th 2023

Present: Sophie, Josh, Steve, Grace, Simon, Virginia, Jane, Anna, Brendan, Gilly.

Apologies: Judith, Lisa

Josh noted we haven't heard from Luis

Chair: Josh, Minutes: Gilly

Agenda

1. Previous Minutes
2. Gardens - Jane
3. Bike storage-Anna
4. DMC update -Steve
5. Roof Exit update - Grace
6. Walk around Actions List -Josh
7. AOB

1. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Gilly said previous minutes (December 2022) had left out two items, ie that she had joined Jane in gardening group and that had also said that the main reason she had joined the HLRA Committee was to progress the equal representation issue with HLE committee. (This is the situation in which no tenant or leaseholder has any right to be present or vote either in absentia or in person, despite collectively paying over half the annual income received by the Estate Monetary Fund. This had only come to light a couple of years ago, it has been going on for decades and the vast majority of flat dwellers were unaware of this). She said she would like to be included in any communication or meeting with HLE and for it to be a rolling monthly agenda item. She said she'd forward this to Anna to include in minutes and apologised for realising so late.

2. GARDENS AND GARDENING

Jane mentioned that ground is hard and cold at moment . Green manure was sown last year and will be dug in and enhanced with compost after clearing sticks and stones in the spring. Plus seedlings going in poly tunnel. She suggested buying rhubarb sets and onion sets. She mentioned that beans didn't grow well, which was attributed to lack of light.. She said that digging could be tough. Gilly mentioned a tool she highly recommended, called an Azada or

Mattock/ Digging/Grubbing hoe, which redefined digging, especially for a woman, in terms of how it worked with gravity and compensated for less upper body strength. She will forward info on it.

Jane said there had been a few enquiries to join the gardening group.

Josh said that there was money from Mullalley available -£2000 - some of which could be used for above. Several other options were discussed such as fountain plants such as lilies, more barley grass bales for prevention of algae growth (has proved beneficial) and could also be composted, colourful plants near the pond area, putting money aside for centenary celebrations next year, various tools including lighter spades and forks, repair items for fabric of poly tunnel, vegetable plant, seeds and bulk soil delivery for poly tunnel, flowers around 'dog walk' area near poly tunnel. Josh to contact poly tunnel gp to ask them what they want, plus gp email to whole estate. Anna offering trowels. Gilly to forward info re recommended tools.

A few plots in poly tunnel also becoming available.

Plots and areas at back need clearing and digging. Was agreed- Grace suggested a "mass resident event" - to advertise an open day with posters and gp email, with greeters and tools available for people to give a go.

Jane said she thinks better to change time on Saturdays to a 10.30 start. Agreed to advertise each week on the Whats App gp in Spring when starts up again.

It was suggested that might also apply for DMC money. And for a separate grant to Camden, as had been suggested by a councillor 18 months ago.

It was noted that the pond is in Camden area, and therefore under their auspices, rather than HLE.

Simon mentioned that Waterlow Park had started a Gardening group

Grace, Josh and Gilly to meet up on coming Sat a.m to have a look around, to also include finding a way to get hose up the ground

3. Bike storage

a) Anna said she had phoned re the hangars in Swain's Lane and was informed that they were all occupied and had had a huge waiting list since 2021. Nonetheless there appeared to be unused spaces but perhaps this could be accounted for in that people were simply letting their annual subscriptions ride without checking.

She said that there had been an email from Martin Narroway re proposed new Cycle Hoops on Estate - 4 hangars on each avenue with 6 cycles in each hoop. HLE wants to give Camden rights to manage it and is organising with a solicitor to do so. Unclear if then Camden would manage it or Cycle Hoops, the company. HLE will be paying for these. Gilly pointed out that flat dwellers, who pay over 50 percent of the income received into the HLE's annual running costs, were also paying. It was not a gift. Apparently these hoops take 10-12 weeks to get delivered and installed.

How to decide who gets what. Agreed needs to be only for residents of estate, ideally also the ones on Swains Lane- it is the same company who provides both. Need to have a dialogue with company outlining points discussed. Also reasonable to be proactive and ask people if they are still using the ones they are paying for on Swain's Lane. Data protection is another factor to consider re getting hold of addresses to determine if people actually living on estate.

b) Existing bike storage on estate and possible locations for new ones.

Existing ones are in alleyways and need upgrading with new doors and locks. There is now also £4K, separately, available for this. An order was raised some time ago for repairs.

Anna chased up Ian and Nandita about removal of rusted and unused bikes. Section 41- leaflets into every flat warning of removal- issued and will be done again plus putting laminated notices up.

Anna and Virginia to organise a separate bikes storage meeting

4. **DMC meeting**

Steve updated us on the meeting he and Josh attended. All the Camden groups were invited to the annual review of proposals for cost increases. We are the Kentish Town Group. Feedback was recorded for each group.

a) *RENT*

7 per cent increase: 30 percent of tenants pay full increase and are resentful of the 70 per cent who receive financial aid and so don't. Was agreed 7 per cent would go ahead, but unhappy about it. Seems there is a significant decrease in what National Govt gives to Camden- £6 million. Camden saying nothing can do. Our reps said they would be happy to support Camden to protest to National Govt, via such means as a march on parliament
A hot issue.

b) *CARETAKING/SERVICE CHARGE*

54p per week increase

c) **COMMUNAL LIGHTING**

£1. 64 pw. Our reps voted against, esp as so much wasted electricity, suggested fixing!

d) MECHANICAL MAINTENANCE - lifts etc-increase of 13 per week

e) GROUND MAINTENANCE- increase of 15 p pw, this was agreed with proviso was brought back in house

f) RESPONSIVE HOUSING PATROL-increase of 3p per week

c) GARAGE RENTS

Up by £2 pw.

Points made, living in tiny flat, not commercial amounts, should not be available to plot holders. Also that a garage was not essential. People can apparently keep tenancies on garages if move away- plot holders, leaseholders and tenants!

Rents will likely become over time more commercial.

Was strongly suggested by a few of us that commercialisation of rents should be discouraged by our reps

d) COMMUNAL HEATING

Huge increases in charges

The 3 options were only given on the night

Increase of 175 per cent is £34.49 pw + current = £54.20 for revised total pw

Increase of 150 per cent is £29.57 pw +current = £ 49.25 for revised total pw

Increase of 125 per cent is £24.64 pw +current = £44.35 for revised weekly total

These figures were based on a notional 2 bed flat.

Our reps voted against and Josh following up with emails to DMC chair and Camden. Camden said have no alternative but to go with charges.

Comments in our discussion included that the price of fuel is actually going down and that the energy supply companies routinely contract in for a 3-5 year period in advance with fuel suppliers- and pay for that 3-5 years in advance- so what on earth are they talking about existing price rises! Bulk procurement. Could costs be spread out over years? Camden buy in advance from a company called Laser

There will be a Council cabinet meeting tomorrow night. Deputation not allowed but a proposal can be submitted and then can be read out. Josh read out his draft proposition from DMC outlining issues. He will email later. Agreed to be sent to head of finance and read out at the council cabinet meeting.

Items to be considered for next DMC meeting:

Greater efficiency over eg broken windows, insulation, voids or empty flats, left too long unoccupied.

Appreciations were voiced to both Steve and Josh for attending

5. ROOF EXITS

Grace updated us on the issue of automatic doors with manual opening. She said that there is a new commander in the Fire Brigade in London and all are waiting for him to settle in before having a meeting.

6. WALK AROUNDS

Josh mentioned that some actions need to be picked up and done but first need chasing up. He will do. Was agreed to then put scheduled walkabouts on HLRA website. And to put a link to that on the Whats App group.

Some confusion around who is responsible for weeding in different areas. Josh said that Debbie is now back in post, responsible for caretaking duties, not garden maintenance and that Bill is responsible for 'hard standing' areas. Josh will clarify with Debbie.

7. AOB

- a) Steve said that the Leaseholders Association Meeting is on 24th Jan and they want to work more closely with HLRA. He will attend, as will Josh, who is a tenant. It will be at Joanna's.
- b) Steve also drew attention to what is happening at 32, Langbourne Avenue, who are digging a basement 2.5 metres down and extending significantly out back. The time for objections and appeals to the planning application had passed - and there were many including from their immediate plot 5holder neighbours. It seems that HLE plot holders voted some 12 years ago to only comply with the Conservation area guidelines insofar as they affect that which can be seen from the street and do not extend to back garden or studios. That it is ok to build there.

He said there were various issues:

- movement of ground
- overlooking
- displacement of water
- cracks, subsidence

This will affect garages as will be digging down into clay. Structural engineer has okayed it. There is a sump (water) pump under the house which will go around to the garages and will affect them. There is a thin alley between the house and a mansion block.

Plans have gone in - a ground survey with pylons, but it hasn't yet been approved. It seems it is a lengthy process. It seems ridiculous for houses and mansion blocks built on a hill. . Steve to send us link.

c) Jane said she wanted to thank Grace and Steve and Virginia for all their work as Santa and elves. People talked about how satisfying and fun its was to do and to do on all the avenues.

d) Simon mentioned that there was som anti-social behaviour around his block - last one near Swains Lane on Holly Lodge and that the neighbourhood watch patrol was not so effective. It was suggested to put it on neighbourhood Whats App and to also report to police

e) Josh said no communications from HLE since last meeting

Next meeting 21st Feb suggested as Tuesday seemed good night for people but Josh later realised he might be away working so will contact us with suggestion of date in latter half of Feb.
No minute taker yet