

**Partners for Improvement in Islington
Residents Forum Meeting**



Minutes of the Residents Forum

Held at 6.30pm on Thursday 24 January 2008

PRESENT:

Forum Members: Susanne Lamido (SL) Interim Chair
Michael Adedeji (MA)
Suzanne Bryant (SuB)
Shirley Bryant (ShB)
Chris Matthews (CM)
Dave Gorman (DG)
Sally Ingrey (SI)
Muriel Duncan (MD)
Georgina Galliers (GG) Interim Vice Chair
Laura Crowley (LC)
Chris Radway (CR)
Laura Young (LY)

Partners: Tom Irvine (TI)
Ami-Anne Spring (AS) Minutes
Liz Voss (LV)
Doug Pope (DP)
Philippa Wooldridge (PW)
John Venning (JV)

HFI: David Selo (DS)
Ivan Willis (IW)

Observing: Ann-Marie Greensmith

Apologies: Chris Graham
Melvyn Holden
Rosemary Hilton
Richard Best

1. Minutes and matters arising from meeting of 24 November

1.1 Minutes agreed

2. ASB Update

2.1 PW introduced item and ran through paper providing an update on ASB, including information on the Respect Agenda. The group were informed that Partners have introduced an ASB Pack for residents; this provides information on what Partners are required

to do, along with what residents should do if they are encountering ASB. There is also information on external agencies that deal with ASB such as Safer Neighbourhood Team, Noise Nuisance Team and the Police.

- 2.2 PW explained that Partners has recently worked with the Fire Brigade on the 'Life Project', where local youths work with the brigade for 5 days and are taught basic skills such as respect and responsibility.
- 2.3 CR raised concerns that issues such as a neighbour flooding his property are not being treated as ASB, when they should be. It was suggested that the definition of ASB in the Tenants Handbook is amended to reflect this.
- 2.4 PW advised that the definition used is the Government's definition, therefore it cannot be changed, however Partners will take these comments on board.

3. Chair's Report

- 3.1 SL introduced the item and ran through the paper.
- 3.2 TI confirmed that Partners will send out a formal response to the issues raised in the Chair's report.
- 3.3 TI explained regarding the Emily Thornberry MP 'survey' that Partners have analysed the data collected and are in the process of contacting 117 from whom Partners had not previously received a complaint.
- 3.4 It was decided that Partners will write to Patrick Langley to thank him for his contribution to the Partners Residents Forum.

4. Tenancy Audit

- 4.1 DP introduced and ran through the item. It was explained that Partners have an obligation to audit 10% of all properties, approx 170 in Round 1 and 290 in Round 2. The reason for this is to ensure that the person named on the tenancy, is the person living in the property. Partners will take action against any person who is not using a property as their sole home, e.g. sub-letting. Visits will be carried out Out-Of-Hours and at weekends.
- 4.2 The issue was raised whether the audit could also be used for checking whether tenants are complying with the other terms of their Tenancy Agreement. It was explained that at the moment this does not form part of the audit, however where there is a reason to, Partners would run checks on tenancy compliance.

- 4.3 It was suggested that Partners need to update their tenancy files as one forum member was audited twice. Due to a name change, which was not updated in the file, Partners questioned whether the resident was authorized to live in the property.
- 4.4 DP advised he would raise this point to the Housing Management Team.

5. LBI Consultation on Housing Strategy

- 5.1 TI introduced the item and explained that a representative from LBI was unable to attend the meeting; therefore he would be presenting the paper on Housing Strategy. It was explained that the council are producing a new Housing Strategy in 2008 and would like to consult residents on this. The consultation will be as wide as possible and the Housing Strategy will apply to all Landlords in Islington, social and private. A questionnaire has been produced which the council would like members to complete and return. The group was then asked if there were any issues they wanted to highlight.
- 5.2 Issues raised within the group, to be considered in the Housing Strategy included:
- More facilities for young people in Islington
 - The need for larger family properties in Islington
 - The need to avoid building more and more properties in Islington. This increases population and reduces green space.
 - The emphasis should be on improving existing properties as opposed to building more.
- 5.3 TI explained that he would feed the information above back to LBI.

6. HFI Consultative Panel Papers

- 6.1 DS ran through paper and asked members if they had any questions?
- 6.2 The issue of Leasehold charges for Digital TV upgrade was raised. DS explained that tenants would be charged a proposed 25p per week for the upgrade and maintenance, and Leaseholders would reimburse the council for this cost within their annual Service Charge.
- 6.3 It was asked what would happen to residents who have their own aerials that pick up foreign channels (e.g. Philippines sky channels). DS explained that residents are welcome to pay for any extra channels that they may want, however channels such as this will not be covered in the upgrade.

- 6.4 It was discussed that Environmental and Capital works should also be considered for the security of Partners street properties, as well as estate properties. The interim chair asked for HFI to look in to this.
- 6.5 TI explained that he would look in to who owns stairwell areas at the front of Partners properties for LY.
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7. Works Team Update

- 7.1 LV ran through paper and explained that the Works team is looking to invest money in local charities/organizations. The group was asked for suggestions.
- 7.2 Suggestions included:
- BTCV.org.uk – conservation trust based in Kings Cross.
 - ANAND MANDA – elderly group for the Asian community.
 - LEAP PROJECT – performance forum for local under-privileged children.
- 7.3 LV explained the Works team key holding procedure.
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8. Performance at a Glance

- 8.1 TI ran through the paper and asked the group if there were any questions.
- 8.2 The subject of telephone calls (D2) was raised; TI explained that Partners recognise call handling as a very important aspect of their service and are continuing to look at ways of improving the service.
- 8.3 Forum members stated that areas of responsibility for repairs need to be clearer; this will result in repairs being completed quicker and more efficiently. TI suggested that a member of the Repairs team should come to the next meeting.
- 8.4 It was suggested that the way the Performance at a Glance report is produced indicates that the Repairs team are 'Patting themselves on the back when they shouldn't be'. TI explained that the report is reporting actual performance and is not intended to come across as self congratulatory. The Forum agreed that future performance reports should not contain graphics and should simply state performance. TI advised that Partners will make changes to reflect this request and confirmed forum members are welcome to make suggestions on how they would like the report to look.
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9. HFI comments on Partners Performance

- 9.1 IW ran through paper. It was suggested that the Works team might want to address the service they provide to Leaseholders in the next meeting.
- 9.2 TI was invited to explain that Partners are intending to commission a survey of Partners residents and are considering what questions might be appropriate to include about major works.

10. Forum Training Needs

- 10.1 TI introduced the item and explained that Partners would like to know what training courses would be most important to forum members. Members were asked to fill in the recently sent out Training Needs Form and return it to Partners if they had not already done so.
- 10.2 Members suggested that a Members Forum Pack, along with the chance for new members to meet Partners staff would be a good start.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 It is discussed that Partners do not have a Leasehold representative on the HFI sub-board. GG agreed to take this point back to HFI.

12. Chair and Vice Chair Discussion and Election

- 12.1 SL (interim chair) introduced the item saying she understood that some members of the old PF11 forum want to split into 2 groups again. The interim chair said that time was now limited and decided to defer this item to the next meeting. Forum members expressed concern that this item was being deferred without the consent of Forum members.
- 12.2 Members were advised that they would be contacted regarding the deferment of this item.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.