

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

**Minutes of the Residents Forum**

**Held at 6.35pm on Thursday 21 January 2010**

**At the Highbury House, Homes for Islington**



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**Present:**

**Forum members:**

Susanne Lamido (Chair)  
Richard Best (Vice Chair)  
Chris Graham  
Michael Adedeji  
Rose Marie McDonald  
Chris Matthews  
Suzanne Bryant  
Shirley Bryant  
Richard Bunting

**Homes for Islington:**

Simon James  
Ivan Willis

**Partners:**

Liz Voss - Works Team  
John Holman – Managing Director  
Peter Newbold – Housing Management  
Paula Redpath – Repairs Team  
Ed Butler – Quality Team  
Tom Irvine – Quality Team  
Katherine Patterson – Works Team  
Joe Keeling – Works Team  
Katrina Dalby (Minutes) – Quality Team

**Observers:**

Eileen Avis HFI Associate Director  
Brian Potter  
Khalid Waheed  
Councillor Barbara Sidnell HFI Director  
Oriel Hutchinson Secretary of Islington Conservative Association  
Eugen Hockenjos

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**Apologies:**

Muriel Duncan  
Georgina Galliers  
Tim Clarke  
Michael Read resigned

Saeed Abdulrahim  
Lisa Crowley withdrawn

**1. Urgent Business**

N/A

**2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

- |      |   |       |
|------|---|-------|
| 2.1  | EB confirmed that the official feedback from Disability Focus Group will be shared at March's meeting as part of the diversity plan.  | EB    |
| 2.2  | The Forum discussed the allocation of a disabled property to a non disabled tenant and the use of a direct referral scheme for disabled properties. BS confirmed that it is the Council's decision and agreed to investigate and report back. | BS    |
| 2.3  | SL confirmed that the case discussed at the previous meeting under 4.18 has been resolved and wanted to give credit to PR   |       |
| 2.4  | Amendment to 5.13 to show CG has agreed to liaise on behalf of the Forum with HFI regarding the Tenant Compact.   |       |
| 2.5  | Raise issues regarding 5.15 at next meeting (who can speak at meetings and raise issues)  | TI    |
| 2.6  | 6.1 LV confirmed that Partners is waiting for the new kitchen brochure to be printed and it will be available at the next meeting.  | LV    |
| 2.7  | The Forum discussed scaffolding and raised issues regarding notice, access, ladders lifted, damage caused by scaffolding, and netting. EB agreed to take away issues and look at the scaffolding procedures. Will feedback to the Forum.      | LV/PR |
| 2.8  | LV to bring a copy of the scaffolding postcard to the next Forum meeting.   | LV    |
| 2.9  | EA to give SL address of resident with a mobility scooter who has had scaffolding up for 4 months.  | EA    |
| 2.10 | LV to investigate 3 Fonthill Road as ladders just hooked up at night and can be accessed by children.   | LV    |

**Additional items**

- |      |   |    |
|------|---|----|
| 2.11 | SL confirmed that Susan Haskins is happy as items are in progress   |    |
| 2.12 | SL stated that she met with Claire Thorogood (Leasehold Manager) who explained whole leasehold process and offered Forum members a copy of the Leasehold Guide to Major Works. All Forum members would like a copy. | KD |

- 2.13 BP noted that on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month there is a Leasehold meeting in Town Hall. There were over 150 leaseholders at the last meeting.
- 2.14 7.8 RB would also like to attend the lifecycle meeting with SL, JV and PR.
- 2.15 8. The Forum understands that loft insulation was not included in the Round 1 contract and would like feedback on how the subsequent installation and funding of loft insulation is progressing.
- 2.16 SL confirmed that MR has resigned and that LC has withdrawn, possibly temporarily.

JV

### **3. Revenue Account and Rent**

- 3.1 SL suggested that to save time the item was omitted because the rent is fixed by the Council regardless of the Forum's feedback.
- 3.2 EB reminded the Forum that before the meeting started there was a discussion about the Housing Revenue Account.
- 3.3 SJ confirmed that the Revenue Account and how Council housing is funded has been reviewed and there has been a rethink about how it will be funded in the future.  
Currently LBI is a net receiver of grant. At present, all Councils contribute to a pool and then this is shared out. LBI is the 6<sup>th</sup> highest receiver of funding in the country. These changes could affect the amount LBI gets.
- 3.4 LBI has held a focus group for residents.
- 3.5 The Ministers position is that to legislate on this could take 2-3 years and therefore the Government has said that Councils have to agree a settlement themselves.
- 3.6 LBI is expecting to get an offer from Government about a settlement where it no longer receives a subsidy and will get more money to manage its affairs. LBI's debts would be written off and they would get an amount of money to run housing without recourse to a subsidy system. The huge national debt would be redistributed around the country. Discussions are taking place around how much debt each LA will get.

BP highlighted that the Council's consultation period ends this week and that during the last 12 weeks residents should have been a consulted. BP has only found 2 boroughs that have done this properly. Residents haven't had adequate consultation before council have put in document. Islington may inherit a lot more debt.

#### **4. Amendments to LBI Secure Tenancy Agreement**

- 4.1 SJ introduced this item and stated that LBI are in process of reviewing the secure tenancy agreement to acknowledge problems such as dogs and laminate flooring
- 4.2 The Forum discussed pets and how the existing tenancy conditions should be used to deal with problems.
- 4.3 SJ confirmed that the proposals are an amendment to the tenancy conditions and did not affect leaseholders.
- 4.4 CM suggested that option 4 is not suitable because people may have sole access to part of a garden but this may be part of an overall shared garden.
- 4.5 MA stated that guide dogs should be an exception
- 4.6 CG suggested that we apply the new conditions to existing tenants who want to get new pets.

The Forum were asked to vote on whether the tenancy conditions should instruct residents to seek permission to keep traditional pets.

##### **Vote**

Option 2  
0 votes

Option 3  
8 votes – unanimous

#### **4.7 Decision – option 3**

The Forum were asked to vote on whether the changes should only apply to dogs or include cats.

##### **Vote**

Dogs only 3  
Include cats 5

#### **4.8 Decision – to include cats**

The Forum were asked whether the changes should be introduced retrospectively or applied to tenants who wanted new animals.

## **Vote**

Retrospective

0 votes

Existing tenants with new animals

8 votes – unanimous

### 4.9 **Decision – to enforce on existing tenants who want new pets**

### 4.10 **Floor Covering and Security Grills**

4.11 The Forum discussed the paper

4.12 KW highlighted that the proposed changes could be a problem for people with asthma.

4.13 SA confirmed that leaseholders have taken on a lease and should be bound by it.

4.14 SA stated that Councils have to be more proactive with problem solving e.g. it may be cheaper to buy a carpet for a tenant than take them to court.

4.15 EB confirmed that the tenancy conditions relating to carpet would not be enforced for the ground floor or basement properties.

4.16 RB suggested that there should be separate provisions for security grills and laminate flooring

The Forum were asked to vote on whether the tenancy agreement should be give more information in relation to laminate flooring and security grills.

### 4.17 **Vote**

Option 1

0 votes

Option 2

0 votes

Option 3

8 votes – unanimous

### **Decision – option 3**

4.18 BS requested the dates of the forthcoming Forum meetings

## **5 Chairs Report**

5.1 SL introduced and ran through the paper

- 5.2 The Forum discussed the disparity between peoples experience and the satisfaction figures and the importance of named contacts.
- 5.3 MA raised problems with communication and the complaints system.
- 5.4 PN to speak to MA about problems contacting tenancy officer
- 5.5 IW noted that HFI put a specific officer and contact number on their letters.
- 5.6 SL explained that from feedback that some residents think that if they complaint too much there is a black mark system.
- 5.7 EB confirmed that there is no black mark system.
- 5.8 JH confirmed that for the last 6 months letters have had a name, telephone and fax number included.
- 5.9 OH questioned why completion certificates are issued when properties not finished and who is supervising and paying FFT?

PN

EB

**6. Leaseholder Issues**

- 6.1 The Forum discussed counter battening, safety harnesses used when laying slates and CRB checks. LV/PR to confirm whether sub contractors are CRB checked and whether harnesses should be worn when laying slates.

PR/LV

**7. Resident Forum Members' Expenses**

Deferred until next meeting

EB

Please note that the next meeting is at the Town Hall.

The Forum discussed the lack of time to raise questions and AOB and holding an additional meeting.

**The meeting closed at 8.15pm**

**Minutes Agreed**

Signed...(Chair).....

Date.....