

Tanners Hill TRA AGM 2024 - AGENDA

Introduction:

Welcome

Apologies

Declaration of Interests

Explanation of Tenants/Residents and LTF

Agree Minutes from the AGM in 2023:

We are only confirming the minutes from 2023 and actions arising, not going into specific details about issues from the last General Meeting – that's for the next meeting!

Officers Reports:

Chairs Report

Vice Chairs Report

Secretaries Report

Treasurers Report

Election of Officers:

Brief description of Roles & Responsibilities

The committee stand down

Election of new roles.

AOB:

Tanners Hill TRA - Annual General Meeting

Thursday 26 October 2023, 7pm-8.15pm

Attendees

Officers: Julie Littlejohn, Joy Burnett - Lewisham Tenants Fund (LTF)

Councillors: Cllr Rosie parry Cllr Brenda Dacres, Cllr David Walker

TRA Committee:

Barry Still - Tenant – Chair, Heston Block Rep
Colin Connell - Tenant – Treasurer, Florence Terrace/Omega/Heald St Block Rep
Gillian Lewis - Leaseholder – Secretary and Deloraine Block Rep
Naomi Groves - Leaseholder – Vice Chair, Tanners Hill Block Rep
Nuala Walsh - Leaseholder – Heston Block Rep
Marie M’Pondo - Leaseholder – Heston Block Rep

Residents:

Rufus Graham (Heald St), Becky, Frances Connell, P. Heron, Sue Slade, Vicky Yeardley, (Florence Terr), Gordon Walker, Rachel Haynes, (Deloraine), C Campbell (Omega Odds), Rod Guzman, Alvarez Ossa (Pitman), Robert Percy, Eugenia Barnett, Dagmar, (Heston)

Apologies:

Peter Last, Michelle Hudson, Nigel Bennett, Joe (Deloraine),

Introduction

Naomi: We’re residents who are here to try and make things better on our estate, we’re not representatives of the Council or Lewisham Homes. Some issues are close to our hearts but we need to remember to have mutual respect for each other.

A reminder to the meeting that Council tenant’s have a small contribution of 15p per week included in their rent which goes into the fund for residents associations, leaseholders don’t have this added to their service charges so need to make a payment of £7.80 for the year. A grant is then provided to cover the cost of meetings, equipment etc.

Agree Minutes

Previous AGM of 3 November 2022 & matters arising

TRA Officers Reports

Chairs Report: Appendix 1

Secretary’s Report: Appendix 2

Treasurer’s Report: Appendix 3

Election of Officers

Chaired by Julie Littlejohn (LTF)

Committee:

Chair - Barry Still
Vice Chair - Naomi Groves
Treasurer - Colin Connell
Secretary - Gillian Lewis

Block Reps:

Tanners Hill - Naomi Groves
Deloraine House - Gillian Lewis
Florence Terrace - Colin Connell
Heald/Omega St - Colin Connell
Heston House - Barry Still,
Nuala Walsh, Marie M’Pondo
Pitman House - no candidate

AOB

Rufus: Omega St communal heating not yet on.

Julie: They didn't realise that parts weren't delivered, but I'll contact repairs, and then contact the whole block with an update.

Appendix 1: Chair's Report 2023

Chairs Meetings – have now resumed, they haven't been very well attended in the past, and I was unable to attend the most recent meeting, due to issues with my Computer camera and microphone.

The committee agree that the in-person Resident Engagement Panel (as they were called) meetings were better attended, more effective. Tenants Associations had reps who attended so it wasn't just for Chairs also Cllrs were automatically invited. We're considering asking Cllrs to reinstate now that Housing Management is in-house

Meeting Space – Mandy and Max have made us very welcome here but having no meeting space on the estate continues to hamper TRA activities in a number of ways and seems to have led to lower attendance.

Moving forward the TRA could explore taking back the Pensioners Forum in Pearson's Ave that was handed over to A&S school over 10 years ago. The room remains intact, has it's own entrance off school premises and is not used by the school.

Also Heston Basement – keep chasing Will's promise of refurb. It's spacious and the fabric of the building isn't bad – could be bike storage and/or meeting space.

Bike Racks – earlier this year LBL posted Notices on T Hill saying Racks would be installed, they haven't yet. We feel that siting of racks requires inspection with residents, as a rack can be installed in a way that reduces 3 parking spaces to 1.

Parking – we are aware we'll be affected by Council plans, beyond the George pub at the top of the hill is a different Ward, but what happens there will affect us.

Lifts – no change, still breaking down but no budget to address problem, so firefighting.

Estate Sweeping – still not being done in places, or done poorly, Colin has led our attempts to monitor this paid for service, and I have attended the estate inspections with him on several occasions, but promised improvements have not been seen.

Hoppers – were replaced this year, to comply with Fire regulations brought in after Grenfell – but caused various problems – chutes regularly blocked, but hoppers were also supposed to be removable so that caretakers can unblock, they're bolted in. Colin met with Martin Ryan Head of Environmental Services to inspect. The TRA asked LHomes about the cost, was it one size fits all? Can the added 'lip' at the back of the hopper be removed? Who's paying for Repairs when C/Ts can't unblock?

Caretaking – TRA objected in a consultation, for a 'trial' of new C/T working hours where weekends are covered by a mobile team. We have been monitoring since it began in May, and asked if it's a 'trial' how is it measured? No answer to date.

The quality of service has gone down since the new arrangement, with refuse and lumber building up over the weekends, urine in lifts not being cleaned etc. The TRA have discussed recommending that a Saturday service is resumed as a working compromise

Repairs – ongoing and possibly the biggest problem on the estate: especially flooding usually as a result of stack pipe blockages, mould/damp due to various causes but one cause was discovered this year, to be the removal of lead flashing from around Heston chimneys. Repair of windows also.

What has made these problems so painful for residents though has been lack of communication or effective resolution by Lewisham Homes. No follow up or monitoring of a repair, no IT system that provides a record of what parts have been ordered, how many visits etc, often no action

when official Complaints made, residents holding on the phone for up to 2 hours only to be cut off and leaseholders still having to explain to operatives that they are not responsible for the fabric of the building ie stackpipes. In May the TRA created it's own residents survey to try to get a picture of who was suffering, what the problems were, whether they were being resolved – that's ongoing.

The last TRA meeting of 27 July, Councillors attended and spoke about what they were hoping to improve when the Council took back Housing Management on 1 October. More about that in a moment. Cllrs also spoke to individual residents after the meeting and continued to support them in their attempts to get repairs done.

We have noticed this year that Customer Services were very efficient in compensating residents but often the repair would remain unresolved.

We've been sent a draft **Repairs Charter** by L Homes on 22/9, requesting feedback which you will find a copy of on your table, it has also been posted on the TRA website.

Lewisham Council – the takeover is a process, it can't happen overnight, some existing staff will have moved over to the Council, others won't have eg the LHomes CEO Margaret Dodwell. 2 new senior posts have been created – Dir of Housing Gillian Douglas, responsible for investment, maintenance and repairs, and Dir Housing Quality and Investment. Cllrs stated that Council funding has been halved in recent years which has caused a crisis, but political control will help and they aim to deal with a repair ie once – not keep going back which wastes time and money and leads to ambulance-chasers approaching residents.

The general feeling amongst the TRA Committee and residents is that it's better to have one point of contact rather than 2 or more layers of administration and bureaucracy, and that the councillors will have more direct accountability.

As the chair of the Residents Association, I feel that my main responsibility apart from chairing meetings, is to try and get as many residents involved as possible, and to help communication between the committee members and residents.

I have made a suggestion to the committee that it would be good value for money to buy an ecotank printer for the TRA notices and leafleting, because the initial higher cost is more than compensated for by much lower ink costs, enabling us to create more posters to advertise our presence.

Naomi and I are keen to resume working on our ICT resources, ie improving our web site and link to other services like instagram, in order to get more residents to contribute to the workload, but pandemics and problems with repairs for example have hampered our efforts so far. Hopefully we will be able to make more progress in the coming year!

I'd like to thank:

- Max & Mandy for their hospitality and use of this meeting space
- The councillors, especially Rosie, for her empathy, having lived on the estate,
- The Lewisham Homes/Housing officers who do their best under difficult circumstances,
- LTF for funding us and providing guidance,
- The committee, who donate their time and work really hard for free,
- and all the residents who have attended and contributed to our meetings.

PS A moment of reflection for Nelson!

Nelson was a fox that got injured one night in 2018, by a resident who dropped a bollard from the balcony of Heston House, which hit him in the face, causing the loss of his left eye.

He hung out in Heston Garden for a while, then the allotments, then in Florence Terrace. He became familiar to quite a few residents - and quite a few vixens too, as he seems to have fathered a whole dynasty!

Unfortunately he was hit by a bus on the main road recently, and he will be sadly missed by those of us who 'kept an eye out for him' over the years. However, his progeny live on!

Appendix 2: Secretary's Report 2023

Meetings, Inspections and other actions:

TRA Meetings 2023: 19 January, 11 May, 27 July, 26 October (AGM)
Committee Meetings 2023: 17 January, 24 April, 11 July, 16 October

Other Meetings:

Estate Inspections 2023: several joint inspections throughout the year with Carol Taylor the Lewisham Homes Environmental Services Mgr to raise the issue of estate sweeping not being done or done poorly, and Lumber not collected. Also with Julie our Housing Officer in August.

Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Meetings: quarterly, attended by Colin and Naomi

Chairs Meetings (Zoom): attended by Barry, have resumed since October '23. They haven't been as well attended as the Resident Engagement Panel in-person meetings that they replaced. 2 REP representatives from the TRA would attend (a leaseholder and a tenant), and Councillors were invited, whereas now it's Chairs only.

Lewisham Tenants Fund: Colin, (Treasurer) attends regular meetings

Resident Scrutiny Panel: Naomi (Vice Chair) attends regular meetings

Supporting residents: committee members have been helping residents most notably with:

- Repairs ie flooding, or damp/mould, usually due to stack/drain pipe blockages
- lack of response from Repairs, or claims that "you're a leaseholder so we can't repair this" when leaseholders aren't responsible for the fabric of the building
- Formal Complaints

Reporting issues: monitoring paid for services on the estate eg Caretaking, lumber collection, estate sweeping, condition of communal areas, management of the Compound, mess left by contractors working in flats. Also reporting ASB including fly-tipping, noise/nuisance.

Responding to Surveys and Consultations: new C/T regime, Chairs meetings, update of Constitution. We also produced a Flood/Damp Mould survey that residents have filled in.

Appendix 3: Treasurer's Report 2023

As of 1 April 2023 we have a grand total of

£ 9,358.30 in the account, of which
£ 2,471.30 restricted funds
£ 146.12 unrestricted funds
£ 6,041.00 Local Assembly Funding

We didn't have an LTF Grant for the previous year.

Leaseholders don't have a contribution towards the TRA automatically collected via Service charges (council tenants rent includes a small levy towards the TRA) so for leaseholders there's an annual contribution of £7.80/15pence per week, which is very good value.

We've built up these funds partly as a result of Covid/lockdown inactivity but now we need to spend money on some good ideas for improvements or activities on the estate.

Moving forward, the TRA needs to find a new bank – HSBC now charges £5 per month and 40 pence per cheque issued. Our branch at Lewisham is now 'digital only' and doesn't deal with cash. We've looked into another account with the Co-op but we don't meet the criteria as we're not a Charity or Community Interest Group. So, any suggestions for a Bank that's decent with a local branch, would be welcome.