

## Leaseholder Forum

Monday 8 April 2019

6.30 – 8.00pm Committee Room 1, Civic Centre

**Attendees:** There were seven leaseholders in attendance representing, Castle House, St James Close, Wadhurst Gardens, Barnes Close and Cuckmere Lane

Debbie Collis – Tenant Engagement Officer

Maureen Whitcombe – Leasehold and Right to Buy Advisor

Lynda Matthews – Right to Buy and Leasehold Advisor

Nigel Mullen – Service Manager, Project Management

**Apologies:** Leaseholders from Ridding Close and Meggeson Avenue

### **Welcome:**

Debbie welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through housekeeping, all attendees introduced themselves.

### **Minutes of the last meeting:**

Debbie ran through the minutes of the last meeting – there was one error in the last minutes under car parking, minutes showed Wadhurst Road and this should have been Wadhurst Gardens. Minutes agreed.

### **Matters Arising:**

Brought over from previous minutes Maureen advised that she will check if it is possible to put minutes onto the SCC website.

**Action: Maureen will report at next meeting if this is possible.**

A representative from St James Close asked if we could email all Leaseholders to give the dates of Forum meetings. Maureen and Debbie advised that this could have implications through GDPR as we need to be sure for what reason we are holding the email address. Many leaseholders supply email addresses for emergency contact only do not want correspondence sent by this method. Lyn

pointed out that the system we use would not allow us to mailshot against email address even if it was GDPR compliant.

### **Web Page update:**

Maureen advised that the leaseholder webpage had been updated with information on when service charge statements would be received and links to pay.

There are contact details for housing offices, insurance, CP&D and repairs etc. Also useful information for new leaseholders.

There has also been a tab included to provide advice on how to extend the lease, this is in response to a number of enquiries on this matter.

Maureen also advised that she had completed a piece on buying a leasehold flat on the open market, which was currently going through the verification process.

It was advised that Maureen had looked at doing an article for Tenants' Link on Right to Buy and the effect on benefits. This has not been done as it was felt there was not enough for a full article.

### **Update on Estimates:**

Maureen advised that the estimate procedure had gone well, but due to time constraints we had not had enough time to involve a leaseholder prior to sending out the statements. Representatives from Cuckmere Lane and Castle House advised that they were much happier about the estimates this year. No other comments on estimates.

The representative from Castle House asked a question on behalf of another resident about how the warden's charge had been calculated on the estimated statements. Maureen advised that these had been estimated against the charge for council tenants and would be adjusted as always in the actual figures in September 2020.

A representative who owns 9 properties in the city raised a query in regards to one of his properties in Barnes Close, regarding specific enquiries which had already been raised with Leasehold Services. He also asked about a member of CP&D. Maureen confirmed that Rose (Leasehold Services Advisor), had been dealing with his enquiry and that she would check again and contact him. Maureen advised that CP&D were not represented at the forum, he would need to take any concerns regarding a member of staff to that department. Debbie advised the representative that the forum was not to discuss existing enquiries, or personal issues that are already being dealt with by Leasehold Services or any other SCC department.

## **Webpage FAQ's for section 20**

Maureen asked again if anyone would anyone like to put forward any questions that they may have regarding the section 20 process.

Only one was raised from a representative at St James Close, who asked whether questions during the consultation process were given any consideration. Nigel Mullen confirmed that all relevant concerns/questions were taken on board. Ultimately, SCC are responsible for ensuring the integrity of the housing stock and that the Section 20 process is followed correctly.

There were no other questions on section 20 and so Maureen advised that questions could be emailed in if required.

## **Terms of Reference TPAS extra meeting:**

Debbie explained that the Tenant Participation Advisory Service provide guidance on promoting good practice in tenant participation and engagement. As part of SCC membership they provide an allotted time of free consultancy. Debbie advised that she has booked a meeting with the TPAS representative which will be approximately 2 hours. The purpose of the meeting is to work with the Leaseholders to explain in detail the purpose of a terms of reference and the type of items that need to be included. Debbie asked if leaseholders present would be able to attend. Maureen confirmed that Rose will be attending on behalf of Leasehold Services. The date of this meeting is Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 between 6.30 and 8.30 Civic Centre.

## **Any Other Business:**

Debbie advised asked if any of the Leaseholders present would like to talk at the Summer Tenant and Leaseholder Conference about the Forum. Nobody was interested but a representative from St James Close put forward another leaseholder name.

## **Action: Debbie to contact this leaseholder**

Representative from Castle House advised that she had received the 'Clean and Green' leaflet and regarding installing charging points for electric cars around the city and asked if there could be one installed at one of the unallocated spaces at Castle House. Representative advised that she will also speak to Warden.

## **Action: Maureen will speak to Housing Officer for Castle House**

### **Drying Areas:**

A representative from St James Close wanted to discuss a rebate on electricity for closed drying areas across the city. Maureen advised that he does have particular enquiries regarding this issue with Leaseholders and would not discuss this at the Forum.

The same representative also wanted to discuss a problem with weighting at his block – again Maureen advised that this is being dealt with by Leasehold team who will be in contact with him.

The same representative advised that he had received a letter from DYSON regarding cavity wall insulation in his property. Nigel Mullen advised that he thinks this is a government funded initiative. Maureen confirmed that if government funds had been received to pay for this work, it would not be chargeable. Maureen did advise that there is also a long term agreement in place for energy and insulation for chargeable works.

The representative from St James Close advised that he was considering not paying service charges because of fly tipping around the city. Debbie advised that this would be covered by council tax and that he should contact his ward councillor regarding this issue. He requested again to put up his own camera, Maureen and Debbie reiterated again that he was not able to install his own cameras.

### **Future agenda items:**

Debbie asked if leaseholders could contact her regarding any future items for the agenda – no requests given at this meeting.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2019, 6.30 – 8.30 Civic Centre**