

Minutes for Leasehold Forum Monday 23 September 6.30 – 7.40pm
Committee Room 3 Civic Centre

ATTENDEES:

There were 8 leaseholders in attendance representing:

Brendon Green, Castle House, Golden Grove, Wadhurst Gardens and Wyndham Court.

Deborah Collis – Tenant Involvement Officer

Rose Dean – Leasehold and Right to Buy Officer

Maureen Whitcombe – Leasehold and Right to Buy Officer

Nigel Mullan – Project Delivery Manager

Des Brown – Project Manager

APOLOGIES: None

Welcome:

Debbie welcomed everyone to the Forum and ran through housekeeping. All attendees introduced themselves.

Minutes of the last meeting:

Debbie read through the minutes – Debbie highlighted two amendments under Training Update. The training cancelled was not Promoting Good Practice in Tenant Participation but was around Understanding the Lease and IT sessions. This was due to lack of interest but can be booked up later. Minutes agreed.

Matters Arising:

Phone Lines: Maureen has confirmed that IT still have the work listed to try to ensure that council phone numbers show on the call log when tenants receive calls from Council staff. Will update again at next meeting.

Health and Safety Group:

Debbie advised that this was crossed out on the Agenda for the previous meeting, as she wanted to check whether leaseholders are able to participate. Debbie confirmed that they are and if anyone would like to sit on the Group, the meetings are 6 monthly with the next meeting on 10/10/2009 between 10-11am. Anyone interested to contact Debbie Collis.

Actual service charge statements for period 2018/19:

Rose confirmed we had been advised by the printers that the statements had been sent for posting on 21/10/2019 and were posted second class. We have been advised that we should allow 2-4 working days for delivery.

Permissions leaflet:

Maureen advised that the permissions information has just been added to the website as it had taken some time to agree with departments involved. Maureen asked if the representative from Castle House would like the information sent to them but they declined.

Insurance:

Rose advised that she had sent copy of Insurance summary to representative from Kingsland House. For information – this is also held on Leasehold webpage.

Water Meters:

Rose confirmed that she had contacted the representative from Canute House to advise that Southampton City Council were unable to help with the installation of water meters at our properties.

Parking Barriers:

Following concerns by a representative from Castle House regarding delays in repairing the parking barrier, Maureen advised that this work has now been brought in house within Parking Services, rather than relying on an outside contractor.

Lease Extensions:

Maureen advised that following the last meeting, she contacted the representative from Castle House to confirm the number of years left on their lease.

Maureen advised that she had approached the Estates and Valuations Team to see if a member would be able to attend a future Forum to discuss extending leases, however, they are unable to do so. All information is on the Leasehold webpage with direct contact details for Estates and Valuations:

commercialproperty@southampton.go.uk, phone 02380 832635.

Airbricks:

Rose advised that she had asked for one of our Property Inspectors to visit the property in Keynsham Road regarding the airbricks. It was found that since the old style gas heating system had been removed, the leaseholder was able to block up the air bricks. Rose has spoken to the leaseholder in question.

Amendment: the block had cavity wall insulation installed which meant that the air bricks are now obsolete.

Reporting Repairs to SCC for Leasehold properties:

As per the previous meeting, we confirmed that following a meeting with the Repairs Manager, changes had been made to the online form to make it easier for Leaseholders to report repairs which need to be carried out by Southampton City Council.

Maureen asked if anyone had needed to use this service and how they had found it. No leaseholders had any feedback on this – Debbie Collis advised that she could put through a test request.

Purchasing the Freehold:

Rose advised that she had spoken to the representatives from Wadhurst Gardens and Fullerton Close directly regarding this.

For information:

In order for the leaseholders of a block to serve an initial notice to purchase the freehold of a block of flats:

-the block must be two thirds leasehold.

-half of the leaseholders in the block must participate in the purchase of the freehold with a nominee purchaser conducting the sale.

There are also other restrictions which can be found on the government's Lease Advisory Website at www.lease-advise.org.

New Roofing Project:

Des Brown, Project Manager and Nigel Mullan, Project Deliver Manager, gave an overview of the new Framework for Pitched and Flat Roof works.

They advised that letters had been sent to all Leaseholders as is required under Section 20. They advised that Southampton City Council has a duty to maintain their stock and ensure that the fabric of the building is sound.

They advised of the Section 20 procedure.

This process is shown on our webpage which gives all documentation provided at each stage of the process or each contract, i.e. flat and pitched roof. <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/housing/home-owners/section-20-consultation-procedure.aspx>

Various representatives wanted to know if their blocks would be having the work completed under this contract. Des advised that Leaseholders who own properties in blocks where work will be undertaken would receive a letter to advise who would be carrying out the work, an overall estimated cost for the block and an estimated cost per property within the block.

A representative from Brendon Green was concerned that leaseholders were paying for the work and council tenants were not. Des advised that once the block cost for the work is known, this is divided against the total number of properties in the block to reveal the charge per leaseholder. For example if there are 16 properties in a block, the total cost is divided by 16 to find the individual cost per leaseholder, the cost for tenants is paid by Southampton City Council.

A representative from Wyndham Court advised that he thought that the guttering and roof was the responsibility of the Council to maintain. We have advised that it is the Council's responsibility to maintain the stock, but that Leaseholders must pay a proportion of the cost as per above and as stated in their lease.

A representative from Wyndham Court asked if a survey had been carried out on the roof.

Nigel Mullan advised that the Asset Management Team have a 5 year cyclical survey program which identifies work that may be required. Information is also taken from the repairs database.

A question was also asked from the same representative for the difference between the work for a pitched and flat roof. Nigel advised that this has been split to request tenders from specialist contractors for each type of roof.

A representative from Golden Grove wanted to know about the blocks which have not currently been identified as in need of work. Nigel confirmed that the 4-5 year framework allows us to include work over the period of the agreement.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Insurance:

A representative from Castle House advised that she had encountered some problems with her contents insurer regarding the sprinkler system now installed in the block. They had requested information from her which she was unable to supply. She has now found alternative cover elsewhere and was not asked to provide any other information regarding the sprinkler system. This was to advise other leaseholders in case they had experienced the same problem.

Block Cleaning:

A concern was made by a representative from Wyndham Court that the walkways around his flat were not cleaned regularly.

Action:

Debbie advised that she will contact the warden service to advise them and also asked if the leaseholder would like to become a cleaning monitor. She will send them the relevant forms.

Maureen advised that she would also bring this to the attention of the Housing Management Officer for Wyndham Court.

FOR INFORMATION:

Date of the next meeting is Monday 9th December, 6.30pm to 8.30pm