

25 Gresse Street Tenants' and Residents' Association Meeting Minutes - 14 September 2011

Attendees

Gary Comenas (GC, Chair), Eddie Bloch (EB, Secretary), Ezra Benson (EZB, Treasurer DMC2), Paul Stelb (PS, DMC1), Victoria Peppard (VP), Pamela Munro (PM), Angela Cooke (AC), Annie Thomson (AT), David McConville (DM), Danny Gallagher (DG)

London Borough of Camden: Councillor Abdul Quadir (AQ)

Derwent London: Joe McCready (Central Cross Building Mgr.)

Apologies:

GC reported that Cllr Adam Harrison sent apologies and Cllr Abdul Quadir is in attendance in his place.

Corrections:

GC read out corrections to the previous minutes submitted by Carmen Jones, Camden. The full text of the correction appears below.

CCTV removal

- > Carmen Jones from Camden's Housing Patrol service clarified that the
- > system update was not in relation to Data protection. She referred to
- > the letter from Guy Arnold, former Housing Security & Parks Patrol
- > Service Manager, dated March 3rd 2011 which stated, as far as the
- > council is concerned they updated our CCTV system to a more modern and
- > clearer centrally controlled system and the discontinuing of our TV
- > based CCTV pictures (and the removal of the relevant camera) was a
- > by-product of this upgrade.
- >
- > It is possible the system would still work if our old camera is
- > replaced. CJ mentioned that there is a similar residents' system still
- > in operation in a block of flats in Bramber Court.
- >
- > EZB mentioned that the camera was actually paid for by the
- > residents, so
- > it should not have been removed without permission anyway.
- > Action: CJ said she would be passing our information on to Lionel Mead
- > and she would report back to the chair before the next committee
- > meeting. GM said he would contact her if he did not hear from her. CJ
- > agreed to investigate what had happened to the dismantled camera. GM
- > agreed to locate written evidence of the Gresse Street Tenants having
- > paid for the camera that was removed.

Central Cross development

GC reported that according to Camden's website, the amended planning application (which now also refers 25 Gresse Street) has been approved pending conditions of the section 106 agreement being met. **Major construction work is currently due to start circa April 2012 although underground work will begin before then.**

GC stated that during construction all parking bays would be suspended and Derwent has promised to provide alternative spaces. In order to get an idea of how many residents have parking permits, GC will distribute a form to be filled out with their details. The information on the form can be sent by email to GC or by dropping a completed form through the letterbox of Flat

No. 1.

It will be decided at a later meeting how any spaces provided by Derwent will be allocated. It will not be possible to have parking spaces provided on a first come first serve basis. **NB: filling out the form does not guarantee a parking space.**

Regarding the potential repairs liability for the proposed new front entrance to 25 Gresse St, GC reported that there had been some reservations expressed about the design of the new entrance because the glass panels are larger and leaseholders could be charged for vandalism i.e. the repair of the broken glass. Derwent London has confirmed that their building insurance covers our building and if the door is damaged by someone breaking in, then Camden would be able to make a claim on Derwent's insurance. (Derwent purchased our building in 2010). However the policy does not cover general repairs or maintenance which would be charged back to leaseholders, as per the usual procedure. Cllr AQ confirmed that this charge back is the usual procedure.

CCTV removal

GC stated that he has had little joy from Camden in clarifying what happened to the previous system and why it was removed. The reasons given regarding the previous system being obsolete as an analogue system do not appear to be valid as a) the system is still in place in other buildings in Camden (Bramber Court) and b) Analogue signal can be converted to digital if required.

GC reported on a letter received by the previous TRA, in which Camden threatened to remove the system because of threats by the previous TRA to use it to monitor the comings and goings of the building's cleaner.

GC reported that Lakehouse are in the process of doing a preliminary asbestos check in the building with a view to rewiring for a digital roof aerial for the building to comply with the analogue switch off in April 2012. When completed, it will give residents the option to use Sky services if they wish.

Finances

EZB stated that the previous TRA signatory should be going to the bank (Abbey) to remove their name from the existing TRA a/c and complete the changover to the new treasurer/signatories. GC reported that a new TRA community a/c has been opened at Metro Bank. Besides for being better suited to a community a/c and having more user friendly hours, this should help delineate the current TRA finances from the previous TRA accounts which have many undocumented transactions in it.

GC read the section of the constitution which deals with TRA finances and stressed that the new association would follow them. Members suggested that since the constitution stated that the accounts are open to inspection by members, that GC brings the accounts to the next meeting and set them up on a table so attendees could examine them. GC agreed.

DMC

PS reported that there is a DMC meeting on 20th September where he will endeavor to clarify the concern raised that grants may be charged back (pro rata) to leaseholders.

Olympics

PS reported on a recent Bloomsbury Area Action Group meeting; held every quarter, that he and EB attended by invitation. Councillors, other residents' groups and Camden Council representatives took part, purpose being to discuss Bloomsbury Ward activities; this session the Olympics disruption.

The meeting was addressed (at length!) by various members of Camden's transport department; without much time left for resident's questions/complaints, outlining Camden's powers to limit disruption. These seem to be very restricted; initially Camden will aim to persuade a voluntary

solution by delivery companies with a more flexible attitude. Deliveries throughout the night will be encouraged to reduce congestion during the day.

In addition, for utility road works, Camden can only enforce small fines as a penalty. However, Transport for London (TFL) has the prime responsibility for controlling overall traffic management but is late in finalizing their plans, put back to October. A 24 hour media centre for the Olympics will be based in Russell Square, which could cause quite a bit of noise and disruption in the area as it will be blocked to traffic.

Three Ward councilors were also present as well as representatives of other residents' groups in Bloomsbury; Gresse St. TRA was the most represented.

The minutes for this meeting are yet to be distributed, but will be on Camden's website and will be put on our website when received.

Cleaning/caretaking services

PM reported on the walkabout carried out on 13th September, attended by Cllr Milena Nuti and Dilip Shah from Camden's housing office. The estate caretaker Mary Phee had been due to attend but had to cancel due to a family bereavement.

It was found that while the upper floors were generally in a satisfactory state, the lower larger floors were not. There was also no way of ascertaining a schedule of what or which floors were being done when.

Action:

- A weekly schedule of which floors are being done that week will be delivered to PM
- The below standard floors will be given priority for the moment and will be monitored until they are brought up to an acceptable standard.
- A separate walkabout to identify the service doors which need attention will be organized by PM. These can then be addressed with a block repair request
- A separate walkabout to identify the communal windows which need attention will be organized by AC. (besides for letting in the elements, the inability to open/close windows prevent their effective cleaning). These can then be addressed with a block repair request
- Lift maintenance – more attention required to keep areas like the grooves by the door clean and residents should have access to the lift padding

Meanwhile, voluntary block blitz cleaning and painting weekend/s was suggested by DM and was generally supported. To be discussed further at the next TRA committee meeting.

Noise incident

At about 05.30am on Sept 13th, tenants were awakened by the noise of a large skip being dragged along the ground. GC went into the street to investigate and filmed the vehicle, catching the company's name on camera (which is viewable on our on-line website). He subsequently discovered that it had been a contractor of a business whose entrance is in the cul-de-sac. An apology was received from this business that same morning, with a promise not to repeat. They have issued their contractor with a final warning.

DG asked JM if he could do something about the light pollution his side of the building were getting throughout the night from the Central Cross building.

DM asked if anything could be done about the high pitched squeaking coming from lift No1. GC advised to report to Camden repairs again making sure to get a job No. and he would chase it up if required.

TRA Newsletter

PS reported favourable feedback on the newsletter and that the next issue is scheduled for October and would be increased to 8 instead of the current 6 pages. He also advised that it was printed for free by the Camden Federation.

DG suggested reviews of local facilities and services could be included in line with issue one's piece on Discounted Food.

In response to a request by AT for a reliable handyperson, links and numbers for appropriate services will be researched.

AOB

GC to chase Saleh Kahn about an appropriate sign being erected to notify vehicle traffic that there is no through road from our section of Gresse Street.

EZB to cost a plant to fill the empty flower stand in the lobby. A maximum of £150 was suggested. AC stated that you could get much cheaper plants from Ikea, EZB raised doubts about their longevity. The results will be circulated on the e-mail list before any action is taken.

DG suggested a fundraiser like a jumble sale to raise money for the Fitzrovia News and Neighborhood centre which is threatened with closure by the end of the year due to funding cuts, with say 50% of funds raised going to the centre. GC will approach the Estate Manager Saleh Kahn for permission to hold it on the recessed paved area at the front of 25 Gresse Street. It was also suggested that the blitz cleaning and painting weekend could also be used to raise funds for this purpose.

Next meetings planned:

26 th October	Committee meeting
16 th November	TRA meeting