

Gresse Street Residents' Association (GSRA)
Minutes of Meeting

Date: May 10th 2007

Time: 19.00 – 21.00

Location: Freemantle, Stephen Street

In attendance

C. Howard (Chair)

D. Beech (Deputy Chair)

P. Munro (Sec.)

M. Render

A. Cooke

S. Twickenham

D. McConville

J. Lipman

P. Abraham (Councillor)

M. Wiluszynski (Camden Council)

Apologies

P. Bonner (Patch Manager)

S. Watts (Caretaker Supervisor)

J. McDonald

H. Temple

A. Vohringer

J. Wilks

D. Shekleton

1. Minutes of meeting February 22nd 2007 agreed as accurate. Correction to 3. v. Meant to read 4 hours, not 40 hours. (Lift call out time)

2. Apologies noted

3. Election of Officials

Election deferred to end of meeting to allow arrival of independent observer. All incumbents nominated and re-elected. CH will complete necessary re-registration with the Camden Federation.

4. Financial Report

Last spending was £160.46 for supplies to paint bin rooms. The fund has £1873.56 in credit.

5. Chairman's Updates

5.1 Stage 3 Complaint

A stage 3 complaint has been started over the failure of Patrick Bonner to provide updates to an agreed deadline and despite repeated requests. An earlier stage 2 complaint, taken at suggestion of PA, failed to produce a satisfactory outcome. Awaiting meeting with the Chief Executive's officer.

At the request of MW, meeting was held earlier today between CH, PB, DM & MW in an attempt to make some progress on the outstanding issues.

5.2 Street Parking Restrictions

Original aim for Camden & Westminster Councils to jointly undertake work on new parking restrictions, however not proven to be feasible & therefore work will be done separately. Within the next few weeks (i) the single yellow lines will be replaced with double yellow on all corners; (ii) disabled bay added in Stephen Street & (iii) Doctor only bay removed. Westminster to commence works 29th May 2007. Camden to commence around 2nd week in June 2007.

5.3 Fire Inspection

From MW – unable to determine date of last inspection and agreed that Camden Council had in the past been lax in discharging its duty. However new regulations, charges the landlord / freeholder with an obligation to ensure communal areas meet fire safety standards. The inspection occurs in two ways (I) External contractors carry out work with regard to fire hoses / dry risers etc. and (ii) visual inspection by holders of Head Lease/ Landlord. Currently staff being trained to undertake work, which is planned to occur in the next few months.

The issue of items being stored outside of flats was raised and the potential fire hazard. MW stated that there is an element of judgement in that items which impeded a fire route would have to be removed and this would be enforced via tenancy agreement / lease etc. CH reminded MW that to date Camden Council had not been enforcing the removal of such items. MW stated that Dermott Mullen dealt with issues involving tenants conduct etc. and he would ask DM for update.

5.4 Front Door final repair report statement

Despite several requests this had never been received from Bill Sheppey.

MW agreed to follow-up

5.5 Foyer Ceiling tiles

CH informed the meeting that PB had failed to raise the order as agreed to replace the tiles damaged by floodwater. CH has therefore gone ahead and raised order job ref. 167610/1

5.6 Capital Works programme

Several items raised under capital works programme, including lift replacement, external and internal upgrading & decoration. MW informed the group that there was currently no works planned for Gresse Street but the next round of programme setting would be done in July 2007. He suggested inviting Karen Honey, Capital Works to the next GSRA meeting to discuss the Capital Works programme. The group agreed that this would be useful.

CH will arrange for next GSRA meeting.

5.7 Caretaking & Communal Cleaning

The group expressed continued frustration regarding the lack of co-operation of Camden Council in addressing the numerous and persistent issues surrounding the quality of the caretaking /& communal cleaning to the extent that residents have lost all confidence in the ability of Housing Department to fulfil its obligations. MW responded by stating that he felt the quality of cleaning was satisfactory. MW was reminded that this was not the experience of the residents. The group stressed that without an objective measure and standard against which performance could be measured the issue will never be resolved.

It was also emphasised that the Council has failed to undertake appropriate deep cleaning – this would make day-to-day cleaning more effective (and efficient).

Despite numerous requests PB had persistently failed to provide information of any agreed service level agreement for the hours the caretaker is contracted for Gresse Street. MW did produce a monitoring tool, which had been developed in conjunction with PB, which had a scale of 0 to 10 against which certain elements may be assessed. However, as was pointed out to MW the numerical values lacked any descriptors and therefore the tool was worthless. **MW agreed to provide the GSRA with the required information.**

MW was also informed of the poor quality cleaning of the lifts including ceilings and walls and also the lift shafts. The group was informed that twice yearly maintenance work & insurance inspection on the lift was undertaken although MW did not have record of work to hand. **MW to provide CH with date maintenance and shaft cleaning undertaken.**

Some discussion over the type of materials and cleaning agents being used to clean floors that were ineffective – and in some instances simply ‘sealed’ the dirt on to the floor surface. **MW to discuss with PB / SW regarding review of cleaning solutions.**

5.8 Rubbish rooms, decoration & locks

Residents have now decorated several rubbish rooms. Floor 3 will be decorated as soon as bulk items removed – planned for w/e 12/13th depending on SW making appropriate arrangements. PB yet to make arrangements for separate locks to be fitted to bin room doors to limit access to residents on the floor.

MW to follow-up.

5.9 Mice Infections

Residents reported some improvement however remains a problem due to behaviour of certain residents. MW informed the group that the matter was being dealt with but required that input of other agencies. (If you have a mice infestation please notify Dermott Mullen: 0207 436 6729)

5.10 Block security

MW reminded that it has been agreed to install fob locks on the ground floor access doors to the stairwell. Maintenance Surveyor has measured doors and the order raised for completion this year financed via Community Safety Money.

CCTV with link to Kings Cross Control Room will be part of a larger project and will be submitted to the DMC 19/06/07. (Funding of £10,000 already raised through DMC by CH)

5.11 Building Works for 16-19 Gresse Street

Planning permission has been approved with some minor amendments. Developers have 14 days to inform Major's office of intent to demolish and if no objections [unlikely since plan previously supported] works can commence immediately. **CH will be requesting compensation for disturbances to residents and as a goodwill gesture.**

6.0 Any other business

6.1 Residents record

The apparent increasing number of transient residents in the block was raised as a matter of concern and an enquiry as to whether the GSRA could hold a log of residents. PA & MW informed the group that the council has the names of tenants but leaseholders – who are entitled to sub-let (for >6 months – short lets are not permitted) – are not required to provide information on tenants. If there were

concerns over the behaviour of tenants or over-crowding this may be breach of lease and the council could take action. If concerned advised to liase directly with Housing Department. (Tel: 0207 436 6729)

6.2 Decoration Service Doors

GSRA will be undertaking the decoration of service doors as part of a programme to improve the communal environment. Work has begun on the 3rd floor and will hopefully be completed in the next couple of weeks. Residents are requested to clear any items from the service cupboards to allow work to go ahead. Also if the door needs some repair please submit an individual repair request. PB had agreed to raise bulk order but this has not been done. Any volunteers – please see CH.

6.3 Planning permission for restaurant

Meeting reminded that planning permission still active for restaurant planned in OMK building. This was granted just prior to new zoning regulations. PA apologised as she had not yet checked status as agreed but will do so ASAP.

6.4 Litter bin

CH in discussions with OMK to provide a 'suitable' litterbin for entrance foyer.

6.5 Residents' Parking

The limited number of residents' parking spaces was raised again. PA suggested there might be possibility of increasing number available by reducing number of pay and display bays. She agreed to follow-up.

Meeting closed 20.45
