

NORWICH LEASEHOLDERS ASSOCIATION

Draft Minutes of General Meeting 25th October 2006: 7.30pm Council Chambers City Hall

1. Welcome and Introduction

- a. Present:
 - i. **Leaseholders & leasholder representatives**
 - ii. **NLA Committee:** Pauline Walton, Nick Turner, Ian Docking, Lorna Kirk
 - iii. **Co-opted Members:** Judy Blyth, Michael Barlow
 - iv. **Council Officers:** Paul Sutton, Gemma Mitchell, Jonathan Smith
- b. Welcome & Introduction
 - i. Ken Leggett is no longer a leaseholder and PW opened the meeting. Judy Blyth was nominated to chair the meeting.
 - ii. PW announced co-opted members above, and Joe Goodwin, unable to attend. She invited any interested parties to come to future committee meetings and form part of the committee.
 - iii. PW explained changes planned for the Constitution, being
 1. a loosening of the restrictions on committee membership to allow any mix of resident/non-resident leaseholders,
 2. to reduce the quorum for committee meetings to 4 (from 5). The committee must have a minimum of 6 members
 3. To reduce the number of General Meetings to 3 from 4
 4. These changes will be ratified through the usual process.
 - iv. A Chairman will also need to be appointed at the AGM.
 - v. It was proposed by Mr Bland that we cancel the December General Meeting and this was seconded by Mr Hoskins

GM

2. Apologies: Hilary Koe, Richard Essex, Joe Goodwin

3. Minutes of PAG Meeting held on 6th June 2006 approved by NT

4. Matters arising not on the agenda

- a. Point 5ei3 – Government Grants: please clarify for Mr Hoskins, copy PW.

PS

5. Presentation from Lovell's: Alan Nuttall, Andy Warman, Trevlyn Potter

Alan Nuttall is Lovell's Project Manager, handing over to Andy Warman for day-to-day operations. Trevlyn Potter is the residents liaison officer. The purpose of the presentation was to introduce the key members of the team and highlight the way in which costs and projects will be managed. We will ask them to speak again in one year to review progress. Major works will start on 30th November 2006. Presentation slides will be made available in digital form to PW for posting to the NLA website

AW/PW
ID

6. Quarterly Report against Manifesto

- a. PW gave a general report highlighting the concerns of the committee
 - i. As an enthusiastic recognised voluntary committee we have been able to talk honestly to the Council about all the Manifesto issues
 - ii. However, we have found that, as a purely voluntary organisation we do not have time to follow through with the issues that we have highlighted
 - iii. We have also recognised that until individual leaseholders feel empowered to tackle the Council for themselves on their own issues, the organisation can only be a "talking shop"
 - iv. The current constitutional objective of the committee does not currently incorporate the ability to support leaseholders on individual issues and we now recognise that this needs to change, and extra funding is needed
- b. Management Fees
 - i. Richard Marshall has consistently questioned the Council's right to levy a Management Fee under the lease, and he is now being threatened with court action. ID asked whether the Council would be prepared to enter LVT for this issue, and PS replied that this would be acceptable.

PS

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- ii. The Committee has taken legal advice and understands that none of the leases reviewed contains a provision for a Management Fee as described by the Council
- iii. PW outlined the current position where leaseholders are all paying £40 flat rate Management Fee, whereas this does not cover the Council costs in running the Home Ownership Section (estimated at £168 per leaseholder), and the Council is now intending to raise the fee.
- iv. PW then explained that if a number of leaseholders initiated cases on this same issue for their leases (ie that the Management Fee is not a liability under the lease), then the LVT should select one as a representative case. PS will check this and discuss with the committee. PS/PW
- v. The purpose of this action would be to obtain a determination on the issue and then further discussion with the Council would be based on fact rather than surmise. The cost for each case would be £50.
- vi. PW will initiate such a case herself, and she asked other leaseholders to consider joining her (we think about five properties will be enough) PW

7. Scope and Purpose of NLA

- i. NT reiterated the expected increase in Management Fee and the fact that at some point every leaseholder will want to take up an issue requiring specialist and (possibly) financial help
- ii. NT suggested that we would need a fighting fund equivalent to at least 35p per week from each leaseholder (ie £17 per annum). This which could be used to buy in help from Citizen's Advice, for example.
- iii. NT described the questionnaire which has been drawn up by the Committee for leaseholders to vote on whether they would be willing to pay a subscription at this level to obtain a specialist support service.
- iv. NT explained that we hoped to be able to obtain charitable status for the NLA as well.
- v. A poll was taken at the meeting and those present agreed unanimously that they would be prepared to pay £17 per year for a service which would help them take a case to the Council
- vi. Paul Sutton offered his support in principle for the proposal
- vii. The questionnaire will be in Tenant Talk in November and a full proposal (including changes to the constitution) will be put before the AGM in March 2007 for ratification PW/NT
All
- viii. Richard Marshall expressed concern that NLA was discussing tactics in front of Council officers. PW acknowledged the concern, and there are times when the Committee meets alone. Nevertheless, the Committee wants to maintain an open and positive relationship with Council members, in order to ensure fair decisions.

8. Any other business

- a. A question was raised over progress on hardship funding (Manifesto point 8)
 - i. PW explained that solutions are being sought to this at national level for those on very low incomes, but that Councils are not ordinarily allowed to enter into credit agreements
 - ii. It was advised that Age Concern and Help the Aged provide some advice on financial options
 - iii. NT is a Financial Advisor and he explained that in some cases the only option is equity release, and that some genuinely good policies are available. He is prepared to talk to anyone who has researched the options and needs further advice.

9. Date of Next Meeting – AGM 8th March 2007