

# NORWICH LEASEHOLDERS' ASSOCIATION

## Minutes NLA General Meeting

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005, City Hall at 7.30pm

### 1. Welcome and Introduction

#### a. Present:

- i. **Leaseholders and leaseholder representatives**, some of whom had come in direct response to the general letter sent out to leaseholders
  - ii. **NLA Committee**: Ken Leggett, Nick Turner, Pauline Walton, Ian Docking, Paul Pearce, Lorna Kirk, Brian May, Mr & Mrs Hammerton
  - iii. **Executive Member for Housing**: Hereward Cooke
  - iv. **Council Officers**: Chris Cox, Paul Sutton
- b. The Chairman especially welcomed new members and expressed the NLA's objective to re-establish the trust with the City Council and to continue our efforts to rebuild an effective working relationship. Brian May will step down from the Committee in March 2006.

### 2. Committee Member Apologies – Richard Essex, Hilary Koe, Sarah Cooper

### 3. Minutes of meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2005: approved and signed

### 4. Matters arising not on the agenda –

- a. City Hall front doors should be open for the next meeting
- b. Charles Thurston has recently left the City Council and leaseholders should contact Paul Sutton until a replacement has been appointed.
- c. CityCare has put Norwich City Council on notice that they are in dispute over the closed Anglian Windows contract, which may have a knock-on effect to NCC

### 5. Chris Cox, Head of the Landlord Service – Service Changes

- a. Chris presented the proposed changes to the CityCare contract now worth £17.4m. The scope of work will be internal works (mainly affecting tenants) and the repairs service (affecting tenants and leaseholders).
- b. NPC (formerly NPS) are overseeing the contractual and cultural changes and CityCare and Norwich City Council are currently in the process of major internal restructure of their organisations.
- c. CityCare have agreed to give up some of the internal work to the new contractor so that costs can be compared between them (and kept down).
- d. CityCare will be expected to sign an agreement of cooperation with the new contractor.
- e. City Council Housing will be geographically located closer together which enable cost savings, and longer working hours for tenant and leaseholder contact (8am – 6pm planned)
- f. Chris expressed his understanding that we might be cynical but emphasised that every effort is being made by all parties to change.

### 6. Quarterly Report against Manifesto

#### a. Major Works, Leaseholder Consultation

- i. External major works (which represent the majority of leaseholder charges for major works) amount to £2.5m and the new windows contract is worth £3m.
- ii. Pauline Walton is representing the NLA on the selection committee and shortlists have been compiled.
- iii. Tenders go out on 20<sup>th</sup> Dec 05 and the public can “meet the Builders” on 9<sup>th</sup> Jan 06 before their tenders have been submitted. The process is rigorous and NPC are extremely professional.

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- b. Management Fees, Payment Methods and Charging Apportionment**
  - i. Ken Leggett has been in consultation with Lease and has communicated with Paul Sutton over the legality of the Management Fees. A response is expected in January 2006
  - ii. Direct debit payment will be available for leaseholders by April 2006
  - iii. A potentially acceptable charging apportionment method has been found and NLA are reviewing it for a response early next year. It is based on new central government property-size categories which have just come out.
- c. Publicity – Ian Docking reiterated that the website is worth visiting for information**
- d. Leaseholder issues**
  - i. We continue to monitor issues raised by leaseholders through the General Meetings and direct contact. Many of them are general issues or have useful general aspects.
  - ii. Several issues raised at the meeting were all related to horticultural maintenance, and Chris Cox agreed to follow up (Mousehold Street, Brewers Court and Bouldon Court). He also agreed to provide a timetable for conversion of TV aerials from analogue to digital (John Alexander).
  - iii. New “hot” issues will be proposed for the 2006/7 Manifesto, covering attribution of charges (ie when is a leaseholder deemed to benefit?); negligence and charges not reasonably incurred; charging and vandalism in public places. NLA would also like to offer guidance to people on low incomes who are unable to afford the reasonable charges legally incurred on their behalf. NLA cannot provide “advice” but will find advisors who can be recommended as “safe”.
- e. Charles Ringwood gave an extremely lucid explanation of the case he has against the Council for unfair charges.**
  - i. He also expressed the concern that the Council is too keen to take court action before seeking other potential avenues for resolution.
  - ii. The NLA will pursue this at the next PAG meeting.

## 7. Financial Report.

Expenses to date amount to £209.57, taken from the original Council grant of £653.00.

**8. Date of next General Meeting:** Thu 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar 06: 7.30pm Council Chambers

**9. Any other business** – none