Is this email not displaying correctly? View it in your browser.

CLF News Update - February 2024

BREAKING... tonight

TONIGHT, Thursday 22 February, CLF is making a deputation to Camden's Housing Scrutiny Committee in respect of Agenda Item 9 – Report by Cllr James Slater on 'Improving Services to Leaseholders'.
You can view this meeting (starts 6.30pm) by live stream on this link :
https://www.civico.net/camden/... and will be later available to view on webcast.



News and notice of CLF meeting on Tuesday 19 March at 7pm

Dear {$firstname}

Content of this Update

The next meeting of Camden Leaseholders Forum (CLF)
Uncensored advance copy of the CLF Newsletter Spring 2024:

- Who we are
- Repairs update
- Leaseholder Services update
- Improving Services to Leaseholders – Report by Cllr Slater to Housing Scrutiny

Keeping in touch
Hampstead membership vacancy
Forum elections
Getting help with my issues

Forum meeting

The next Leaseholders Forum meeting will be held at 7pm on Tuesday 19 March.
It will be a hybrid meeting and you are invited to join other leaseholders online as an observer.
To receive login details, please email us before Noon on Tuesday 19th:
camden@leaseholdersforum.org.uk - CLICK and SEND

The **agenda papers** for this meeting will be available on Tuesday 12 March on the Camden website - linked here.

The **minutes of the last** meeting on 13 December (no webcast) may be found on the Camden website - linked here.

The CLF Newsletter – Spring 2024

NOTE: This was to have been included by Camden in its billing mailing in March, but Camden required edits to which we could not agree.

Who are the Camden Leaseholders Forum?

We are **a voluntary group of 21 leaseholders** (names and districts are on the Forum website) who meet regularly to discuss Camden leaseholder issues – such as consultation on Major Works on properties, Repairs, quality and project management of works, billing, service charges and communication. Members are elected every three years and represent the five districts across Camden, in both estate and street properties. There will be fresh elections next Autumn.

How does the Forum communicate with leaseholders?

There are over 9000 leasehold properties, accounting for about 30% of all Camden-owned properties (the others are council tenants). The Forum holds four public meetings a year, with Forum members, Council officers and Councillors. Any leaseholder can apply to observe virtually. The minutes are published. **The next meetings are at 7pm on 19 March and 28 May 2024.**

What issues are we working on?

Outside the meetings, engagement with Camden is mainly through members in the Forum's working groups, currently Leaseholder Services, Major Works, Repairs, and Energy.

Repairs

The Council's repairs service is not working! Many leaseholders have experienced long delays, contractors not turning up for appointments, repairs falsely reported as completed, contractors arriving without warning at street properties, leaseholders being wrongly told that Camden is not responsible for the repair and too many other examples to list here. CLF has been raising these issues with officers and councillors.

The good news is that the Council is committed to improvement. Some personnel have changed, including a new Head of Repairs: Tony Castle has been in post for a couple of months. Leaks are the biggest demand on the Repairs team and a dedicated "Leak Hub" is now more effectively tackling such repairs. This has also prompted the creation of a "Roof Hub". New repairs technology has been promised, for easier reporting and to enable tracking of repairs progress.

If a repairs operative fails to show up for an appointment you should inform the Repairs Contact Centre. You might also consider making a formal complaint and claim compensation (link here OR google "camden remedies policy").

Leaseholder Services

Leaseholder Services are holding a series of virtual 1-1 surgeries for leaseholders in April (on Thursday 11th, Wednesday 17th & Tuesday 23rd, between 5pm and 7pm). Joining details will be in Camden's Homeowners News mailing.

An independent research firm is conducting a survey of leaseholders in February to get feedback on Camden's service delivery and to evaluate Camden's service. CLF contributed to the questions.

CLF is sending a Deputation to Camden’s February 22, 2024, Housing Scrutiny Committee (HSC) meeting considering Councillor Slater’s report (see below on “Improving Services to Leaseholders”) and other items of interest to leaseholders. You can find the agenda of this and future HSC meetings on the Camden website linked here

Improving Services to Leaseholders

Council Leader Georgia Gould appointed Councillor James Slater as a Cabinet Adviser for the year to take a deep dive into **improving services for Camden leaseholders and advocating for leaseholders**. For several months James researched the problems leaseholders face. He met the CLF chair and vice-chair and joined two CLF meetings. Aiming for the widest possible input, James ran three “Listening to Leaseholders” sessions, to which everyone on CLF’s email list was invited. (That’s why it’s worth signing up for the news updates at www.leaseholdersforum.org.uk/mailing-signup.) James listened to the specific concerns of leaseholders in street properties and reviewed emails direct from leaseholders. The process was thorough and transparent.

Cllr Slater’s report will be presented to Camden’s Housing Scrutiny Committee on 22 Feb and considered by the council’s Cabinet. If you want to see the full report, go to the Camden Leaseholders Forum home page www.leaseholdersforum.org.uk.

The report's recommendations are:

1: Establish a working group to better connect how Housing Repairs (specifically Major Repairs) and Leaseholder Services work with each other and communicate together to resolve queries from leaseholders.

2: Improve how contractors are held accountable for their work, ensuring that quality assurance takes place when necessary, and that leaseholders can have their say.

3: Introduce a Correspondence Management System for Leaseholder Services to better communicate with leaseholders and track correspondence.

4: Review how written communications from Leaseholder Services (particularly service charge bills and consultation documents) can be made more accessible and more transparent, always including an explanation of the process taking place.

5: Evaluate the information on Camden’s website for leaseholders and freeholders and promote this more consistently across different communications to leaseholders.

6: Complete an annual audit of best practice from other boroughs to ensure that Camden’s offer to leaseholders is the strongest it can be.

7: Introduce an additional formal councillor role, in line with the responsibilities of a Deputy Cabinet Member, to work with the Cabinet Member for Better Homes to ensure leaseholders voices are thoroughly represented and heard across council departments.

8: Provide more information online about the roles and responsibilities of different teams within Camden and how to contact them to ensure that queries are directed to the right team, first time.

All of the recommendations appear sensible, none more so than nos. 3 and 7 (Correspondence Management System and installation of a Deputy Cabinet Member).

But it's all about **implementation**. Success will depend on things beyond the project: e.g., staff training and performance, service level standards, organisational culture, and accountability.

This was a serious and thorough project, though, showing encouraging signs of Camden's commitment to improve services to residents, including leaseholders.

I am a leaseholder, how can I find out more/ keep in touch?

Visit our website: www.leaseholdersforum.org.uk
Sign up for occasional email updates: www.leaseholdersforum.org.uk/mailing-signup/
Post on the website discussion board: Please use the link at the end of this Update.
Observe a Forum meeting online (next at 7.00 pm on 19 March and then 28 May).
Email us a question at camden@leaseholdersforum.org.uk

March Newsletter ENDS

CLF member vacancy in Hampstead

If you are a Camden Council leaseholder in Hampstead district we invite you to join the Camden Leaseholders' Forum (CLF) to represent your district. For more information please email us at Camden@leaseholdersforum.org.uk.

Forum elections in Autumn 2024

CLF members are elected for a term of three years. There will be fresh elections in Autumn 2024.

Housing Ombudsman and Service Charges

The Housing Ombudsman Service has published a report on complaints and service charge jurisdiction. See 'Insight Report 16 on service charges and the Ombudsman's jurisdiction' linked here.

How do I get attention for the issues that are affecting me personally?

CLF Representatives are volunteers with day jobs. So, the CLF cannot act as an advice service for leaseholders' individual issues. If you have not got the result you want from Camden then try the following:

- post on website Discussion Board to seek advice from other leaseholders (See below)
- submit an online complaint (linked here)
- ask your Councillor to take up your issue (linked here)
- take a complaint response to the Housing Ombusdman (linked here)

CLF tracks topics on the Discussion Board and will take up with Camden any issues of a generic nature.

CLF website Discussion Board
To keep updated or to post yourself...

CLICK AND COMPLETE THIS EMAIL

Visit us on the Forum website

CLF website

You are receiving this email because you signed up for our occasional mailing

If you want to unsubscribe, click here.

DELIVERED USING
Sender