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Leaseholder Newsletter June 2024



News from the Chair

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Dear Fellow leaseholders,

This is the regular update from the Camden Leaseholders Forum, an independent group of volunteers who represent the interests of Leaseholders to Camden Council. We held our AGM on 28 May and elected our officers. I am your new Chair; Joy Palmer is Vice Chair and Louise Upton is the Communications Member. More about us here: https://www.leaseholdersforum.org.uk

Changes in Housing at Camden Council

Within the Council there is more change. The longstanding Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Meric Apak, has stood down and has been replaced by Cllr Sagal Abdi-Wali. Some of you may recall that earlier this year, Cllr James Slater produced a report on leaseholders with a number of recommendations, which have been adopted by Housing Scrutiny Committee. You can download a copy of his report here.

https://www.leaseholdersforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Cabinet-Advisor-Report-on-Improving-Services-to-Camden-Leaseholders.pdf

One of the recommendations was to appoint an associate Cabinet member for leaseholders. The outgoing leader of the Council, Georgia Gould, confirmed this in a recent article here:

https://www.camdennewjournal.co.uk/article/its-official-leaseholders-get-big-bills-but-badly-done-repairs

Georgia Gould is standing as an MP in the General Election, but the post could be confirmed by the Cabinet meeting in July.

Leaseholder satisfaction survey

At the CLF meeting on 28 May we received the topline results of the independent survey of over 560 leaseholders. The overall satisfaction rating was 30%. This is down on the last survey (2019) when it was 35%. Other London boroughs were in the range 24% to 54% so Camden is well below average. The satisfaction rating for repairs was 24%, also down from 28% in 2019. Leaseholders consistently have lower satisfaction levels than tenants.

CLF had input to the questionnaire and we expect to receive more detailed results next month. These figures are no surprise to us, having heard many of your problems and issues over the last few years. But it demonstrates to Camden that all is not well, and reinforces the action recommended in the Slater report.

Leaseholder Services update

The new Head of Leaseholder Services, Sean Scott, is carrying out a project to review the way services are delivered. CLF have taken part in workshops. On 28 May we had an update on their plans so far, including improving the quality of information on the Camden Account and Service Charge bills. Sean has also promised that the LS team will attempt to contact leaseholders by phone and email before sending legal letters for unpaid service charges.

On Planned Works

Leaseholders have contacted CLF or spoken at meetings expressing dissatisfaction about the quality and accuracy of information about Planned Works at their buildings and estates.

CLF representatives said we would solicit feedback about the amount and the type of information that leaseholders want and pass it on to the head of Major Works. Currently information about Planned Works is made available on the Camden Account or via the Project Manager (once one has been appointed for a project).

Those who have experienced or are going through a Major Works project might be well placed to give us the results of their experience. Our questions:

- How detailed and how succinct should the data about projects and their budgets be?
- Where (in what format, on what platform) should it be provided?
- At what stages should more detailed information be provided and updated?

Please add anything else you would like us to know and send your responses to the CLF email camden@leaseholdersforum.org.uk. Please indicate if you would like to have your feedback posted to the CLF bulletin board, where it might generate responses from other leaseholders.

Resident Action Day 28 September

Date for your diary – Camden are organising an event for interested leaseholders and tenants (free to attend). We will have a small stand so this is your chance to chat informally to us about what CLF does and meet other leaseholders in the borough.
Find out more and RSVP by visiting *our Eventbrite.*

Join us on the Forum

We are looking for new members to join the Forum. We currently have vacancies in Hampstead and Camden Town. You need to be willing to join in person and virtual meetings and contact Camden officers with questions by email or in virtual meetings. If you want to be able to help improve Camden's services and hold them to account email us on camden@leaseholdersforum.org.uk for more details.
We will hold elections for the entire Forum (covering all parts of the Borough) in October this year, and welcome interest from all leaseholders. Email us on the same address for more info.

Leaseholder representative on Housing Scrutiny Committee

Housing Scrutiny Committee is a group of Councillors who meet 7 times a year to hold Camden's Housing teams to account. They have a place for one leaseholder to join the committee meetings. You can apply to join the committee using this link:
Apply online at bit.ly/CamdenScrutiny

Deadline is **Sunday 16 June** so be quick!

Useful resources

We regularly post relevant documents on the CLF website here:
https://www.leaseholdersforum.org.uk/

There is a bulletin board where you can post questions and issues for other leaseholders to reply to. There was recently a discussion about whether leaseholders were subsidising tenants on energy bills. At the last CLF Camden officers explained that they were not. But if you post about issues on the bulletin board it gives us ammunition to raise them with Camden officers.

Plus there's a list of what to do if you have a problem – from contacting your councillor to submitting a formal complaint. CLF members are all volunteers with day jobs, so we cannot take up individual cases, but we can advise on how to tackle your problem with Camden.

Do tell your friends and neighbours who are leaseholders to sign up for our email updates here: https://www.leaseholdersforum.org.uk/mailing-signup/

Whilst I know progress at Camden can seem slow, we can achieve more together.

Kind Regards,
Carolyn Morgan
Chair, Camden Leaseholders Forum

CLF website Discussion Board
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