

**LEASEHOLDERS REPRESENTATIVE GROUP**  
**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008**



**Present:** Tom Watt, Chair; Keith Nials, Vice Chair; James Weston, Secretary; Denise Key; Alison Philpot; Michael Young; Paul Baker; John White; Val Scott; J Jin; S Horton.

**VAHT Officers Present:** Jules Goodridge, Resident Involvement Officer.

**Invited Trust Staff:** Maggie Challoner, Interim Head of Tenancy Services.

**Apologies:** Christine Campbell, Leaseholder Board Member; Rachel Webber, Treasurer; Wendy Phipps, Vice Treasurer; Julie Gaisford; Mike Giasford.

**Action by:**

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Welcome and apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tom welcomed all to the meeting.</li> <li>▪ Apologies as above.</li> </ul>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Notes and matters arising from last meeting 10<sup>th</sup> January</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minutes agreed as correct with the exception that Val Scott did attend February meeting.</li> <li>▪ 3.5:01/08 Figures as of December: 53% of Leaseholders are currently paying service charges – this could be as little as £20.00 to full charges being made.</li> <li>▪ 3.34:01/08 cost incurred with 'right to improve' – there would be no admin charge for doors as this is considered to be a minor alteration however windows would incur a cost.</li> <li>▪ 3.40:01/08 This has become an individual complaint and is being responded to. Hoping that these costs will be placed into next years charges due to costs saved by the Trust doing them early.</li> <li>▪ 6.3:01/08 Freeholders do have to pay service charges too. By including them in the constitution you are not excluding them and give them the same arena to talk to the Trust with support from LRG. Tom to raise in discussion with Ian.</li> <li>▪ 5.5:01/08 Gas meter not being earthed. Keith to raise with Laura Moreton and Jonathan Rose.</li> <li>▪ 6.4:01/08 The group feel that it is really important that Paul Yerby attends – Jules to re-invite.</li> <li>▪ 8.5:01/08 This has been raised with ECHarris.</li> <li>▪ 4.8:02/08 Trust has taken the decision to advertise LRG email and website address</li> </ul>	<p><b>TW</b></p> <p><b>KN</b></p> <p><b>JG</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All other action points cleared.</li> </ul>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Finance Update</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rachel has negotiated that the money be transferred. Money will be in the account 10<sup>th</sup> March.</li> <li>2. Accounts will need to be audited.</li> <li>3. All to think about costs incurred and pass to Rachel.</li> <li>4. Agenda item for next meeting.</li> </ol>	<b>TW/JG</b>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Update on LRG Logo and Website</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Letter drafted to Ian to state the committee are happy for Ian to recognise Tom Watt as Chair of LRG.</li> <li>2. Decision taken to have at least (two) Officers signing the letter.</li> <li>3. Logo has been developed</li> <li>4. All minutes are on our website: <a href="http://lrgaylesbury.wordpress.com/">http://lrgaylesbury.wordpress.com/</a> and you can contact us by email at <a href="mailto:lrgaylesbury@googlemail.com">lrgaylesbury@googlemail.com</a></li> <li>5. Press articles and broadcasts are all on the website.</li> <li>6. James showed the group a logo he had designed and all were happy to use it.</li> </ol>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Trust Meeting Feedback</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. After last press release meeting took place, Christine was asked to attend a meeting alone, this was due to data protection. This was to discuss different payments.</li> <li>2. Keith and Tom have had the interview with the press.</li> </ol> <p><b>Outcomes from meeting with Tom and Keith</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Insurance: 5 tenders</li> <li>4. Aquamas is the provider. Tom and Keith feel this is the best option – it is mid priced. There is no excess on insurance claims. There is a government charge. Downside is that this is over 3 years, prices may go up slightly. LH will be approximately £100 better off this year.</li> <li>5. Tom and Keith asked for the groups support.</li> <li>6. Comment made - could there be a clause to not increase more than 5% each year. Tom stated that this was not possible however it should only go up in line with inflation.</li> <li>7. All present agreed that this would be acceptable – <b>motion carried.</b></li> <li>8. Insurance is calculated £1.85 for every 1K of valuation of property at time of purchase.</li> <li>9. There are 596 LH and 90 shared owners and these share the costs.</li> <li>10. Some leases state that they do not need to pay insurance through the list. Ian will look into this as the overall cost will be higher if they are still taken into the calculations.</li> </ol>	<b>IS/TW</b>

	<p>11. Tom to contact Ian re: Service.</p> <p><b>Windows and doors</b></p> <p>12. Approximately 20 of the LH do not have responsibility for their doors and windows - everyone else is responsible for windows and doors</p> <p>13. LH have been written to gauge interest in Windows and doors. Keith stated he has tried to register his interest.</p> <p>14. Maggie Challoner is the contact point for all Leaseholders.</p> <p>15. Ground maintenance – area maps have now been received by contractors.</p> <p>16. Still anger amongst the group about admin charges – specially with regard to all the costs incurred with solicitor.</p> <p>17. Future billing method – General concern regarding when the bills will come out. You will get the estimate as normal – When the actual bill is sent out there will be evidence to support costs. We are informed by Ian that bills for communal lighting etc can be provided, so you are confident that you are paying correct bills.</p> <p>18. Double payments – i.e. Council tax and service charges. Tom stated he now has proof of Council Tax and recommends that they take the Trust to a tribunal.</p> <p>19. A sub group will put something together and bring it back to the group at the next meeting for unreasonable grounds maintenance payments and payments that may be covered by Council Tax.</p> <p>20. Freeholders issue, digital contract and plain English lease.</p> <p>21. Gas servicing - benefiting from the Trusts buying power. TSG have the contract.</p> <p>22. Keith reported that there was an article stating 'register your interest' and when the contractor is in place, you will pay £50.</p>	<b>TW</b>
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Guest Speaker ~ Maggie Challoner</b></p> <p>1. Tom welcomed Maggie to the meeting. Maggie thanked all for their invitation</p> <p>2. Maggie talked all present through the handbook explaining that she wanted the groups views on it. Leaseholder handbook nearly there – Maggie to send all a copy of the final draft. Handbook will be designed so that amendments can easily be replaced.</p> <p>3. Newsletter: a page will be dedicated to Leaseholders. Looking for articles from Leaseholders.</p> <p>4. Service Charges: 1. offer document – tenants who transferred from the Council - no services would be charged for existing service charges. 2. service</p>	<b>MC</b>

	<p>charges for new Trust tenants – the Trust will be looking at introducing service charge. They are slightly different.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Maggie handed out the proposed Admin charges. The LRG requested clarification of the "postponement of charges" charge. If this is on hardship grounds it should be waived. And also *Licence for alterations- should there be two levels of charge depending on whether we need to send a surveyor out or not?</li> <li>6. The LRG made reference to the gas safety checks - quoted cost too high considering the Trust's buying power.</li> <li>7. Maggie stated she would welcome leaseholders involvement in estate walkabouts and monitoring estate services and we would advertise dates in due course.</li> <li>8. Tom and the group expressed their thanks to Maggie. All looking forward to working with Maggie.</li> <li>9. When big changes are about to happen Tom stated he would like this group to be consulted prior to 600 hundred letters going out.</li> </ol>	<b>MC</b>
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Questions and answers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Q: Re-sales costs – do you have to pay solicitor and Trust? A: it does depend when you bought. This will be advertised in the new leaseholder packs and publicised.</li> <li>2. Q: Sub-letting – my lease states that you can not charge anymore than £5. A: Where that is the case we will honour that</li> <li>3. C: It's not clear that these are one off costs</li> <li>4. Q: what constitutes an alteration. A: tenant alteration are structural or significant for example, remove walls, put up a garage</li> <li>5. Q: where a survey is used would the cost be as stated and not go above?. A: there may be some costs that are two tier – this will be further explored.</li> <li>6. C: when all figures are finalised they will be publicised.</li> <li>7. C: Carrots constantly given to tenants but not leaseholders. R: Maggie stated the Trust will look at offering a % discount on service charges to prompt payers in the future. Maggie to get back to the group.</li> <li>8. C: Maggie did say that she felt the Trust has not consistently treated Leaseholders as customers from her observations in her 6 weeks in the Trust.</li> <li>9. Q: in the LH info pack – if spare money, the Trust could look into buying properties back. A: this is something that other associations have looked at to increase stock levels. Maggie to get back to the</li> </ol>	<b>MC</b>

	<p>group</p> <p>10. Q: What is postponement of service charges. A: James explained that this is for anyone in financial hardship. Maggie will get a comprehensive answer</p> <p>11. Q: Do Leaseholder's claim more than tenants on insurance – can you confirm this? A: it may be historical data. Some LA didn't insure all properties. Maggie will look into this.</p> <p>12. Q: What are Shared owners? A: they are people who purchase part of the property and then pay rent on the rest.</p> <p>13. Q: are they liable for insurance? A: yes they are.</p> <p>14. John raised the issue that he is still waiting for contact from the trust regarding his lease?</p>	<p><b>MC</b></p> <p><b>MC</b></p> <p><b>MC</b></p>
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Code of Conduct</b></p> <p>1. Defer to next meeting</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Election to Strategic Umbrella Group</b></p> <p>1. Jules explained that this group will sit above the Area Committees and the LRG. The three area committees will elect 3 members each and the LRG will elect 1 member. The Board members will also sit on this group.</p> <p>2. Mike Gaisford, Rachel Webber and Michael Young interested. Jules to contact to give more information. If more than 1 interested – Jules to forward information to all for election.</p>	<p><b>JG</b></p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Clarification of future LRG meetings</b></p> <p>1. Jules</p> <p>2. At the last meeting Tom explained the importance of knowing when the meetings are held in advance and with that put to the group the following dates for meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>6<sup>th</sup> March 2008</b> – Eskdale Road Community Centre</li> <li>▪ <b>10<sup>th</sup> April 2008</b> – Trust Boardroom</li> <li>▪ <b>1<sup>st</sup> May 2008</b> – Bucks CC Sports and Social Club – open meeting</li> <li>▪ <b>12<sup>th</sup> June</b> – Trust Boardroom</li> <li>▪ <b>3<sup>rd</sup> July 2008</b> - Eskdale Road Community Centre</li> <li>▪ <b>4<sup>th</sup> September 2008</b> – Trust Boardroom</li> <li>▪ <b>6<sup>th</sup> November 2008</b> - Eskdale Road Community Centre</li> <li>▪ <b>8<sup>th</sup> January 2009</b> – Walton Court Community Centre</li> </ul>	
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Any Urgent Business</b></p> <p>1. Contact details for Tom and all other officers to be put into the newsletter to inform all leaseholders</p> <p>2. Give out chair and vice or email James on website.</p>	<p><b>JG</b></p> <p><b>JG</b></p>

	3. If anyone want their leases interpreted - contact Tom who can arrange.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Closing comments / Date of next meeting</b> 1. Date of next meeting <b>10<sup>th</sup> April 2008</b> – Trust Boardroom 7.00pm	