



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS – BE LEASE-AWARE
Independent group representing leaseholders
in the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust

Officers:

Chair: Tom Watt

Vice Chair: Keith Nials

Treasurer: Rachel Webber

Secretary: James Weston

VAHT Board LH rep.: Christine Campbell

PO Box 898
AYLESBURY
HP20 9FG

Press Announcement 23 Feb 2009

HOUSING TRUST OVERCHARGING LEASEHOLDERS

A VAST AMOUNT OF local leaseholders are being overcharged for services by the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust.

That is the considered professional opinion of the Leaseholders' Representative Group's solicitor Irwin Mitchell, who has been engaged by the leaseholder-elected volunteers to examine the legality and justification for new service charges being imposed by the Trust, which took over all the housing stock of Aylesbury Vale District Council two years ago.

The solicitor is particularly critical of the management and administrative charges being imposed by the Trust. After examining Trust documents, sample leases of several resident leaseholders, and the bills that they have received from the Trust, the solicitor says that it has many reservations about the charges, and for example, calculates that the sum apportioned to leaseholder management should be £16,852 rather than the £29,088 claimed by the Trust.

Full details of the solicitor's observations were reported at last month's committee meeting of the LRG by its chairman Tom Watt. He said that in spite of many meetings with the Trust during the past two years over service charge issues, very few of them had been resolved, and it now seemed very likely that the issues would have to be taken to a Leasehold Valuation Tribunal.

"The gloves are off. We have talked to the Trust for over two years and they are just not listening to us. All we want is a fair deal, and at present we are just not getting one," says Mr Watt.

He reported to the meeting that many leaseholders are blindly paying the large three figure service charges now in addition to the former annual ground rent and insurance premium, which used to be charged by AVDC, simply because they do not understand them. "Be lease-aware. Only pay what is specified in your lease," advised Mr Watt, who estimates that most leaseholder bills have increased by over 200% since the Trust took over from the Council.

At the January meeting he announced a new membership recruitment drive to persuade more of the 600-plus leaseholders in the Vale to take an active interest in the campaign of the Leaseholders' Representative Group; the goal to get a fair deal for all leaseholders. As part of its campaign the LRG has created a website at www.lrg-aylesbury.org.uk where much more information about its activities and meetings can be found.

For further information please contact the LRG Chair or its Press Officers – details below.