

# BARROW LEASEHOLDERS' FORUM

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday, 18 October 2018 at 1pm  
in the Law Library, Barrow Town Hall

**PRESENT:**

**Leaseholders**

Nine Leaseholders were in attendance

**Council**

Janice Sharp, Assistant Director – Housing  
Nigel Clarke, Senior Projects Officer  
Georgina Bridgens, Business Support Officer

		<b>ACTION</b>
	Janice Sharp introduced herself to the group – she was promoted to the position of Assistant Director – Housing when Colin Garnett retired at the end of July	
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>  Apologies were received from Clive Kitchen (Chair) and seven other leaseholders.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING</b>  The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 March 2018 were accepted as a true and correct record.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Trees at the rear of Pennine Gardens (3.4)</b>  This matter was passed on and being progressed by a member of the Streetcare Team.	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Parking on Griffin (3.5)</b>  With regard to the ongoing problem of parking congestion in this area, Janice will contact Barbara Lavender, the contact for Griffin Community Centre, to request visitors to the centre are encouraged to use the car park.	<b>Janice Sharp</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>MAINTENANCE</b>  Nigel gave an update on ongoing and forthcoming schemes affecting leaseholders:	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Re-roofing programme on Anson Street</b> will start in New Year (phase 2 of the Hindpool Re-roofing Programme). DLP is the contractor (currently working on Greengate re-roofing programme).	
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Damp-proofing and rendering work on Tummerhill</b> will start in the near future – to be completed by the end of March next year.  Nigel confirmed works to two Council-owned blocks have now been completed (with problems having been ironed out) so works will now be rolled out to the remaining blocks all of which have at least one leaseholder.  He also advised at least one leaseholder (in a block which is 50% leasehold) has applied to buy the freehold (under the statutory legislation they may satisfy the necessary criteria). Janice confirmed because of the complexity of leasehold law the Council is currently liaising with a specialist solicitor.	

The group then discussed the issue of the original cost estimate (£4,500 - £5,000) - notified to leaseholders in Spring 2017- having then subsequently doubled (c.£9,000).

Nigel confirmed the increase in cost came about following work on a pilot block having identified additional work required which, unfortunately, was not included in the original estimate. Leaseholders were advised of this cost increase and served with a second Section 20 Notice at the beginning of this year.

Having taken legal advice in response to representations made by some leaseholders, the Council was advised - as the statutory notices were observed - to continue with the works.

A leaseholder (CC), who had purchased her flat in May this year, advised she knew nothing about the increased costings until 27<sup>th</sup> July when she received a letter about the costs/works. She was only aware of the initial £5,000 cost. Nigel advised that in this case, the former leaseholder of the flat who would have received correspondence and notices had passed away. He suggested CC contact her solicitor in this regard to try and establish if he was aware of the increased costs. Georgina also stressed the Council does not expect payment in full straight away – for large works such as these - individual affordable payment plans can be arranged with leaseholders. Janice suggested CC arrange an appointment with her to discuss the matter further in private.

Nigel also confirmed that from the first notification of our intention to carry out works - which invited observations within 30 days – no relevant observations were received. Likewise, no relevant observations were received following the second Notice being sent out.

Leaseholder (DN) suggested CC take her case to the Ombudsman.

RP advised (on behalf of a leaseholder) that he did not receive either of the notices. Nigel reiterated, the requirement is to make observations in respect of the Notice/s. However, the observations which were received from this particular leaseholder were either not relevant to the Notice served or out of time. Correspondence received from this particular leaseholder had been passed on to the Council's solicitor and our responses were as advised by them.

Leaseholder (CC) queried why she hadn't been invited to these meetings. Georgina advised she emails agendas/minutes to all leaseholders who provide an email address (she will add her details to the circulation list). Minutes of every meeting and dates of next meeting are also posted on the Housing Service's Leaseholders' Forum webpage: <https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/get-involved/leaseholders-forum/>

In response to a question regarding the nature of the works required, NC clarified the work involves:

1. Cleaning cavities at ground level to remove debris.
2. Clearing cavities of saturated insulation and replacing with dry insulation. (These particular properties/walls were never designed to be cavity insulated – this came about during a Government-led free cavity wall initiative about 20 years ago when occupants were approached directly).
3. Installation of remedial wall ties.
4. Replacing cavity trays at porch roof/gable abutments.
5. Removal of existing render and re-rendering
6. Rendering over existing facing brickwork.
7. Altering external gas pipework and SVPs to facilitate rendering.
8. Removing asbestos soffit boards and fitting new uPVC.
9. Replacing timber fascias with uPVC.
10. Replacing guttering and downspouts

	<p>LH requested a breakdown of the costs.</p> <p>NC advised this is commercially sensitive information, however, the Section 20 Notice does allow for people to come in to the office to view copies of the estimates.</p> <p>RP felt there were too many things still in the air and this work should not start yet. Nigel advised the budget to carry out these and other planned maintenance works had been agreed by the Council's Housing Management Forum and has to be spent before the end of March 2019.</p> <p>GA queried the Council's policy on asbestos. Nigel advised we have to comply with asbestos management regulations in relation to maintenance works. Our duty involves maintaining a record of where asbestos is present and to advise anyone who may come into contact with it.</p> <p>GA advised he has recently discovered that the roof of the day centre, which is located under the decking area which leads up to his flat, is made of asbestos which was coated in a waterproofing material but which is now flaking away. Janice advised GA he needs to contact Cumbria County Council who own the day centre. He may also wish to contact his local County Councillor Anne Burns (01229) 471824 / <a href="mailto:Anne.Burns@cumbria.gov.uk">Anne.Burns@cumbria.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Post meeting note:</b> CCC Property Team has been asked to contact the leaseholder direct to discuss his concerns.</p>	
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>SERVICE CHARGE UPDATE</b></p> <p>Georgina advised statements will be sent out by the end of November and will show what was charged in April 2017, the actual cost of any variable charges ie repairs, stair lighting, and any major works incurred or maintenance charge changes for 2017/18 and the difference (credit or debit) due.</p>	
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS' FORUM/HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> DN requested copies of Tenants' Forum minutes. Janice felt it wasn't relevant to share Tenants' Forum minutes with the Leaseholders' Forum. Any issues relevant to leaseholders discussed at Tenants' Forum are fed back to these meetings verbally. However, Tenants' Forum minutes are published online: <a href="https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/get-involved/tenants-meetings/">https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/get-involved/tenants-meetings/</a></p> <p><b>6.2 Housing Management Forum – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members agreed that officers could start the process of appointing contractors to carry out improvements works in line with the 2018-2023 Procure Plus Holdings framework. Working with Procure Plus enables the Council to purchase goods more cost-effectively.</li> <li>Members agreed to extend the contract with United Utilities to collect water charges for a further two years.</li> <li>Fire risk assessments are currently being carried out to Council shops. With regard to communal entrances, the Council has zero tolerance to items left in these areas.</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <p><b>7.1 Housing Newsletter</b></p> <p>Janice confirmed <i>Housing Matters</i>, the tenants' newsletter is hand delivered to all tenants and leaseholders (to the property address). Landlords of leasehold properties, can view the newsletters online: <a href="https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/newsletters/">https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/newsletters/</a></p>	

<p><b>7.2</b></p>	<p><b>Anti-Social Behaviour</b></p> <p>Janice stressed any incidents of anti-social behaviour should be logged with the Police via 101 and reported to the Housing Service (01229 876423) or email: <a href="mailto:housing@barrowbc.gov.uk">housing@barrowbc.gov.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>7.3</b></p>	<p><b>Council Tax &amp; Housing Benefit</b></p> <p>The Council Tax and Housing Benefits service formerly provided by Liberata has moved back inhouse. The new offices are located in The Forum (new entrance door opposite entrance to Wilkos).</p>	
<p><b>7.4</b></p>	<p><b>Syrian Refugees</b></p> <p>The two families housed in two-bedroomed flats by the service have been here for 12 months now and are now eligible to apply for accommodation under the Choice-Based Lettings Scheme. A third family is due to be rehoused at the end of October.</p>	
<p><b>7.5</b></p>	<p><b>Wall on High Street</b></p> <p>GA advised when the building located next to his flat was demolished, the wall between the garages was damaged. The Council had advised GA that the wall would be repaired, but now another building is being constructed next to the wall, he is worried that the wall will be left unrepaired. Janice will make enquiries with Building Control/Planning about this.</p>	<p><b>Janice Sharp</b></p>
<p><b>7.6</b></p>	<p><b>Outstanding Repairs</b></p> <p>LT raised issue of outstanding works to his property. Janice will speak to the Maintenance &amp; Asset Manager regarding this matter and respond in writing to LT.</p> <p>Janice took the opportunity to remind leaseholders not to wait for meetings to raise any repair issues – please contact the department directly at any time (01229) 876578 or email: <a href="mailto:housing@barrowbc.gov.uk">housing@barrowbc.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Janice Sharp</b></p>
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on <b>Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 1pm in Committee Room 4, Barrow Town Hall. (Please note this is a change to the date suggested at the end of the meeting).</b></p>	