

Meeting of the Leaseholders' Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday,
8 September, 2026 at 1pm in Committee Room 4,
Barrow Town Hall and via MS Teams.

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Attendees present

Leaseholders present:

There were 10 leaseholders in attendance – all in person

Killip

Westmorland and Furness Council:

Nigel Clarke, Service Manager of Housing Maintenance

Georgina Bridgens, Case Worker

Cathy Kirk, Performance and Engagement Officer (minute taker)

Meeting minutes

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from four leaseholders.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2026 were reviewed and approved as a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Weeds at Grange and Cartmel Crescent

Leaseholders were advised that concerns raised at the previous meeting regarding weed growth had been addressed and the weeds removed. It was noted that the areas had been sprayed and, with the growing season ending, the issue should now be resolved.

3.2 Item 6.2 Leasehold Information on the Council Website

Following feedback from leaseholders that information was difficult to locate, the leasehold information has been moved outside of the Housing Landlord Service section of the Council website to make it easier to access. This page can now be found under the general Housing section and is titled 'Council flat leaseholders'.

3.3 Item 6.3 Security Concerns at Blake Street

An update was provided regarding security concerns previously raised by a leaseholder at Blake Street. It was confirmed that the matter had been investigated and the required action completed.

4. Maintenance Update

4.1 Planned Maintenance Programme

Nigel advised:

- Planned re-roofing works remain ongoing. Progress has been delayed due to nesting seagulls preventing works from commencing as originally scheduled.
- Contractors have been undertaking works on Walney, which are nearing completion.
- Re-roofing works at Grange and Cartmel Crescents are expected to commence shortly in late September or early October.

4.2 Responsive Repairs Contract (Section 20 Consultation)

Nigel advised the current responsive repairs contract is to be extended for a further 12 months whilst arrangements for a new contract are progressed through the Council's legal, procurement and leaseholder consultation processes. Leaseholders were reminded that a Section 20 consultation will be undertaken later in the year before the new contract can be procured.

Nigel confirmed that leaseholders cannot be charged more than £100 per year towards responsive repairs or services unless the appropriate consultation process has been undertaken.

4.3 Fire Safety and Communal Areas

Nigel provided an update on the Council's fire safety approach following recent communications sent to residents.

Key points included:

- A zero-tolerance approach is being introduced regarding items stored in enclosed communal areas.
- Discussions are ongoing regarding practical implementation and enforcement.
- Officers acknowledged concerns raised regarding parcel deliveries and agreed common-sense approaches would need to be considered; this will also be raised at the next staff training meeting.
- Officers clarified that the fire safety policy applies to enclosed communal areas (internal hallways, stairwells and landings) rather than open communal areas outside the building. Mobility scooters must not be stored or charged in enclosed communal areas due to fire safety and escape route concerns.

A leaseholder who owns and sublets a number of properties advised that she had written to her tenants explaining the requirement to keep enclosed communal areas clear and requesting that any items stored in hallways or communal spaces be removed. She reported that this had resulted in most of the items being cleared.

4.4 Reporting Hazards and Fly-Tipping

A leaseholder expressed frustration regarding the lack of feedback received after reporting issues such as fly-tipping, hazards, refuse and abandoned items. And in particular the lack of a formal reference number.

Nigel acknowledged these concerns and advised that due to current resource and staffing constraints, it's not possible to provide responses for every report. However, he assured the group all such reports are recorded and passed to the relevant service area for investigation

5. Service Charge Update

5.1 Statements

George advised she was currently pulling together September statements which will hopefully be posted out before the end of the month.

5.2 Section 20 Service Charge Query

A leaseholder raised an outstanding query regarding service charges submitted in October 2025. He wondered as nearly 12 months had passed, should he be pursuing a formal complaint to the Housing Ombudsman. Nigel advised that the Ombudsman would only consider a case once the Council's complaints process had been exhausted. It was acknowledged that significant delays had occurred, and he agreed to provide a response regarding the outstanding enquiry.

Action: Nigel will respond to the Leaseholders' enquiry.

5.3 Building Insurance

Discussion took place regarding increases in building insurance costs.

It was noted that:

- Insurance premiums have increased significantly across the sector.
- Limited providers operate within the local authority leasehold market.
- Costs have risen nationally following changes to risk assessments and insurance markets since Grenfell.

5.4 Roofing Guarantees and Guttering Repairs

A leaseholder queried proposed guttering replacement works and whether these should be covered under existing roofing guarantees.

Nigel advised that the 15-year Redland guarantee relates to roofing materials only. Guttering may not be covered.

Action: Nigel to look into this matter and establish whether new guttering is actually required and feed back to the leaseholder.

6. Questions and comments

6.1 Grounds Maintenance

Leaseholders raised separate issues:

- Overgrown brambles at Cheviot Green (block 18-24)
- Spraying of weeds at the rear of Cavendish Street – contractor weed sprayed the front but said they weren't allowed to spray the rear.

- Overgrown tree at the rear of Cavendish Street – tree is blocking light into flats and branches are up against the windows

Action: Nigel will look into these issues and feed back to the leaseholders.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Housing Matters Newsletter

A Leaseholder raised the following points about the newsletter:

- Leaseholders should be more prominently referenced – only mentioned three times.
- Performance information should clearly identify where feedback or issues relate specifically to leaseholders.
- Greater visibility of leaseholder engagement activities would be welcomed.

Action: Cathy will take on board this feedback for future editions.

During the discussion, officers confirmed that Housing Matters and other leaseholder communications are issued to the leaseholder rather than sub-tenants. Where a leaseholder has provided an alternative correspondence address, the newsletter is sent to that address. Copies are not sent to sub-tenants as the Council's lease agreement is with the leaseholder. Leaseholders may of course share information from the newsletter with their tenants where they consider it relevant to do so.

7.2 Tenant Voice/Tenant Scrutiny leaflets

A leaseholder commented that the Tenant Voice and Tenant Scrutiny leaflets did not immediately appear relevant to leaseholders, as references to leaseholders were not prominent. Officers were grateful for the feedback and agreed to review the information provided to ensure eligibility and participation opportunities are clearly explained.

Post-Meeting Note: Following this feedback:

- Tenant Voice leaflet and webpage have been updated to reflect that Tenant Voice is a tenant-only initiative.
- Tenant Scrutiny leaflet has also been updated to make references to leaseholders more prominent on the front cover, reflecting that both tenants and leaseholders can participate in the scrutiny process.
- Names of the Tenant Voice and Tenant Scrutiny initiatives have remained unchanged as they are established engagement activities within the Housing Landlord Service and reflect terminology commonly used across the social housing sector. The accompanying information has been amended to provide greater clarity regarding eligibility and participation.

7.3 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

A discussion took place regarding electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Nigel outlined the criteria that must be met before consent can be granted, including:

- Suitable hardstanding.
- Dropped kerb access.
- Adequate electrical supply.

7.4 Community Seating

A Leaseholder advised that some garden chairs left in the communal area at Cavendish Street had been taken and could a bench be provided?

Action: Cathy will look into this and, if suitable, will seek approval at Tenants' Forum meeting next week for the funding of a friendship bench – similar to that provided in Dalton – through the Environmental Enhancement Budget.

7.5 Liaison with the Tenants' Forum

A leaseholder noted that, prior to the forum being re-established, the Chair of the Tenants' Forum had attended Leaseholders' Forum meetings to provide updates on tenant priorities and activities.

Post meeting update: Whilst the two forums have separate roles and memberships, leaseholders wishing to keep up to date with matters discussed by tenant representatives can view Tenants' Forum minutes on the Tenants' Forum webpage:

<https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/get-involved/tenants-forum>

7.6 Large print version of Minutes

A couple of leaseholders requested large print versions of the minutes.

Action: Cathy will ensure large print versions are sent out/available at future meetings.

7.7 Fibre Broadband Installation on Ewan Close

Joint leaseholders requested an update on the installation of broadband infrastructure. Nigel advised he's unable to approve works without seeing details and plans from Open Reach.

Action: The leaseholders will request details and plans from Open Reach.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 8 December at 1pm. All meetings will take place at Barrow Town Hall. Leaseholders should arrive at least 15 minutes before the start: