

**Minutes of the Meeting of the North Lambeth Area Forum
held on Tuesday May 24, 2005 at Pedlar's Acre Hall, 1 Opal Street, SE11 4HQ**

Attendance

Residents

Marjorie Landels, Calais Gate and Coligny Court TRA
Adeline Samuels, Vassall Gardens RA
Roberto Ballardini, Whitgift TRA
Edna Jarvis, Ashmole Estate TRA
Lily McElvogue, Briant Estate TRA
Jim McElvogue, Briant Estate TRA
Julia Amanshia, Dolland House TRA
Bobsy Gordon, Tanswell Estate TRA
A. Early, Matheson Lang Gardens
Gillian Puckey, Munro House
Sylvia Lucas, Matheson Lang and Munro TRA
Ray Puckey, Matheson Lang and Munro TRA
Eileen Tanner, Cotton Gardens TRA
Janet Benjamin, China Walk TRA
Maureen Dulieu, Tanswell Estate TRA
Steve Chinamaya, Tanswell Estate TRA
Becky Payne, Akerman Road
Gordon Smith, Vassall Gardens RA
Barry McCalla, Ethelred TRA
G. Harvey, Ethelred RA
Ruth Brady, Calais Gate
Rosanne, Lambeth Towers TRA
Irene Bateman, Ashmole Estate TRA
Pat Scott, Brook Drive RA
Richard Young, Lambeth Towers TRA

Officers

Bob Keaveney, Major Works Manager
Ian McIntosh, Responsive Repairs Manager
Judith Franklin, Manager, North Lambeth Area Housing Office
Ray Fallon, Deputy Manager, North Lambeth Area Housing Office
Michael Adu, Contracts and Procurement Manager
Debbie Linden, Contracts and Procurement
Heenal Rajani, Executive Support Officer
Sarah Vincent, Resident Participation Officer

Members

Cllr. Marietta Crighton - Stuart, Oval Ward
Cllr. Liz Atkinson, Vassall Ward
Cllr. Geoffrey Bowering, Oval Ward

Apologies

Rita Fitzgerald (Vice-chair)
Elizabeth Brack, Cotton Gardens
Ann Parnell McGarry, Chaplin Close
Jasmine John, Brook Drive
Cllr. Andrew Sawdon
Cllr. Keith Fitchett
Cllr. Alex McKenna

2. Minutes of the last meeting (22 March 2005) and matters arising

2.1 Digital TV (item 2.1)

Judith said that the Programme Maintenance Section in Housing Property Services are still looking into this and more information should be available for the next meeting.

2.2 LSTM for Waterloo (item 2.4)

North Lambeth is looking to take on an LSTM temporarily in Waterloo. The permanent will be filled, but that could take a couple of months yet, because the post holder is still off sick. Ray Puckey suggested that in the case of long term sick leave there should be a contingency budget to hire a replacement temporarily.

2.3 Caretakers (item 2.6)

Judith said that the caretakers are now coming to the end of their training. There is a short initial course, and they can then continue to NVQ level if they choose. A question was asked if caretakers are available to help with lifting heavy items like refrigerators. It was clarified that Connaught is responsible for disposing of bulky items. **It was agreed that a schedule of the caretakers' responsibilities, including times of work, would be distributed.**

2.4 Window cleaning (item 2.8)

The schedule was distributed on the night. Now that this has been published, the service should improve. Delegates were asked to make note of whether the schedule was adhered to. The windows should be cleaned internally on all floors, and externally to the third floor. Barry McCalla pointed out that the Ethelred blocks were not on the schedule. Judith said this would be investigated.

2.5 Window replacement (item 7.2)

It was clarified that the materials for window replacements will be like for like - wooden windows will be replaced with wood; UPVC windows with UPVC.

2.6 Next meeting (item 11.0)

It was clarified that all meetings will take place at Pedlar's Acre Hall.

3. Elections

The following officers were elected nem. con. (without objection):

Chair - Ray Puckey

Vice-Chair - Rita Fitzgerald

Tenants Council (up to 7 reps) - Edna Jarvis, Roberto Ballardini, Marjorie Landels, Barry McCalla, Ray Puckey, Rita Fitzgerald.

Repairs Panel (3 reps) - Rita Fitzgerald, Pat Scott, Steve Chinamaya

Housing and Strategy Group (3 reps) - Rita Fitzgerald, Marjorie Landels, Ray Puckey

Finance and Monitoring Group (3 reps) - Maureen Dulieu, Rita Fitzgerald, Ray Puckey

The purpose of the 3 themed groups is to oversee the service and discuss relevant strategy and policy. The groups meet approximately once every two months.

The Council had also decided to keep the Reframing Advisory Group for the time being. The following reps were elected:

Reframing Advisory Group (2 reps) - Ray Puckey, Rita Fitzgerald, Marjorie Landels (reserve)

4.0 North Lambeth Area Office Report - Judith Franklin

Judith apologised that not all the figures on the performance of the North Lambeth Area Officer were available yet.

Judith highlighted some items from her report: rent arrears collection was a high priority and an ambitious target had been set of 102.5%. Collection slipped a bit at the end of the financial year, but has improved.

The turnaround time for void properties has improved and is now very close to the target at just over 30 days.

There was quite a bit of activity from the parking contractors. From Jan. to March, 105 vehicles had been clamped, and 35 removed.

There was also progress on squatted homes which was down to 3.

5.0 **Controlled Parking Scheme Update - Michael Adu**

MICHAEL - what do you think the times of enforcement in North Lambeth are??

Michael Adu clarified that the enforcement of the permit system operates from 8:30 AM to 6:00 PM Monday to Friday throughout North Lambeth. Vehicles causing an obstruction, or parked on hatched areas or double yellow lines, can be clamped or removed at any time.

Michael said that the new parking permits will be available first in North Lambeth. Letters will be sent out in June, and the permits will be available about 3 weeks later. There will be printers in all the areas. The number of permits will be controlled.

Re: abuse of visitors permits, Michael said that the Council is looking at this. They are considering using scratch cards. They will be consulting residents. The options will be presented to a meeting in June.

There was discussion about the number of permits that will be issued and how this will be determined. Michael said that the Council has a rough idea of the number of permits needed. The estates differ - some estates do not allow visitor's permits at all, others allow two residents permits, plus a visitors permit.

Bert Early asked about the garages - how many are empty and not paid for? He said if you call the LSC to hire a garage, you will be told that there are none available, but residents can see that they are not all being used. The letting of garages is done by Area Housing Office and not the Contracts Section which deals with visitor's parking permits. Judith said that the Area Housing Office can identify the garages and spaces which are let, and will report on numbers to the next meeting.

It was noted that the Ethelred blocks are part of the Ethelred TMO parking scheme. Discussions are taking place about whether this arrangement will continue.

Eileen Tanner from Cotton Gardens said that residents were getting blocked in by parked cars. Michael Adu said he would take the details and investigate. Ray Fallon confirmed that the concierge should be reporting cars that are causing an obstruction.

Re: disabled bays - Michael said that, if they display a badge, disabled drivers don't necessarily need a permit, but their cars can be clamped or removed if they are causing an obstruction.

Roberto said that the treatment of abandoned cars is not consistent. MA said that, if the condition is dangerous, they can be served with a 24 hour notice, otherwise a 7 day notice will be issued.

Cllr. Bowring said that there has been a lot of confusion during the switch over to the new system. The information on parking permits should have been collected. MA said that the Council has most of the information, but there are gaps. Cllr. Atkinson questioned whether there was enough information to launch in June. She said it was important to know what parking was available, including garages.

It was clarified that parking enforcement contract doesn't apply to street properties. On-street parking is covered by the Highways Department, not the Housing Department. Adeline said that at Vassall Gardens (street properties), it takes a long time to remove abandoned

vehicles. MA agreed to provide a phone number to get these removed. Ray Puckey suggested inviting someone from the Environment Department to the next meeting to talk about parking and possibly other on-street problems.

Ray Puckey said that the problem of empty parking bays should be sorted out urgently. JF said this was being dealt with. Heenal Rajani undertook to provide a report to the next forum on the number of garages and bays and how many are let. Someone asked why non-residents were using garages. RP said that in the past, Lambeth had trouble renting out the garages to residents, so advertised them publicly. He said he will liaise with Judith about the garage problem. Michael Adu said that garage renters also need permits. There is no charge for the permits.

There will be a special meeting sometime in June which will be notified through the TRAs and in the Area Office. Visitor's permits will be discussed and the parking contract will be reviewed.

6.0 Major Repairs - Bob Keaveney

Bob apologised that the papers were not distributed in the mail out as the programme for 2005-6 was not finalised in time.

Bob explained that under Decent Homes legislation, the Council must ensure that its properties are wind and weatherproof, have reasonably modern facilities and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort by 2010. In order to meet this deadline, it was decided that the major works programme would be agreed centrally. The Council undertook a stock condition survey of all its properties and used this as the basis for a programme of improvements over the next six years known as the 'road map'. It will be necessary to review the programme regularly and amend it accordingly.

In mid - June a special Forum meeting will be organised to discuss the housing opportunities fund and the road map.

Steve Chinamaya and Maureen Dulieu from the Tanswell Estate TRA were concerned that Tanswell was not on the programme for 2005-6. They said that the windows and roofs had been promised for the last five years, and that there was a safety issue with the windows. Lily McElvogue added that the age of the blocks at Tanswell should be taken into consideration. Eileen Tanner confirmed that the issues at Tanswell had been raised many times in the past. Steve said that the works at Cole and Reeves Houses had been done, but there were problems with the contract and they weren't completed. Santley House was started but never finished. Also, the wiring is dangerously old.

BK said that at Tanswell, Santley House windows and Davidge and Greet House roofs and windows would be done as part of the Decent Homes work.

Ray Puckey asked how the work was scheduled. He regretted that by centralising the decision making, local knowledge could not be taken into consideration. There was discussion about whether the Area Forum could have any influence on the programme or whether the report was for information only. Bob Keaveney felt that the residents should express their views and it may be possible to change the programme.

There was a consensus that the Tanswell windows should be done as a matter of priority. It was agreed that RP and JF would draft a letter.

Cllr. Bowring asked why Foxley Square was included in the programme if it was a TMO and was pursuing the option of a private finance initiative. BK said that he had been advised that, until the PFI is confirmed, it is still Lambeth's responsibility.

Cllr. Bowring pointed out that if Area Fora decided the MRA expenditure, estates which were not represented at the meeting could lose out. RP said that in practice officers have put forward the case for those properties, and the Area Forum would take that into consideration.

Cllr. Crichton-Stuart asked about Wisden House - would front and rear windows, and Little Wisden, be included? BK said yes, it would be the whole block.

Barry McCalla asked if it wouldn't be cheaper to do all three blocks at Ethelred together. BK said that the anticipated cost of the proposed works was too great to be carried in one year, due to the need to deal with other priority blocks on other estates, therefore it had to be done as one block at a time. BK also said there had been a proposal for over-cladding of all three blocks, which would be even more expensive. This is currently being reviewed.

Judith Franklin reiterated that there would be a special meeting to look at the six year programme and the housing opportunities fund.

7.0 Responsive Repairs - Ian McIntosh

Ian went through his report, which had been distributed. He said that generally the trend was towards fewer outstanding jobs and jobs getting done more quickly. He added that he will be getting figures on 'first time fix' - Axis have supplied this for April.

Ian said that budgets had been reduced for 2005-6. Also, void overspends have to be covered by the responsive repairs budget. The target budget is £2000 but the average for the borough is £3300.

Ian said that he was working with Judith to improve the procedures for communal repairs. He was also hopeful that training the caretakers to take on some of the jobs would help.

Cllr. Bowring asked about the target for post inspections. IM said it was complicated - 15% for _____, 25% for telephone and 100% for communal repairs.

Ian said that he is trying to get some work reclassified as planned maintenance. Richard Young said that planned maintenance was not happening at Lambeth Towers resulting in problems including leaks which are harmful to the building. IM and JF said they were happy to meet residents to discuss specific problems.

JF said that new procedures re: communal repairs are being implemented and need to be monitored closely. General dissatisfaction was expressed about communal jobs not getting done. Eileen Tanner said there had been problems with 'cradles' causing a security risk at Cotton Gardens. These had been put in place to deal with a specific repair. Cllr. Atkinson said there were other problems with leaks not being addressed.

RP was worried that the standard for repairs would deteriorate with the budget reduction. IM said that the theory is that, as the Decent Homes work is done, there will be less need for responsive repairs and more planned maintenance will be possible. That's the plan for Lambeth and other Councils. Steve C. said that if repairs are not carried out in a timely way, the problems get worse and more expensive.

IM said it was a mammoth task to draw together information from across the borough. Though the service is centralised, residents input is still very important. There is still some flexibility in the programme. The stock condition survey means that a higher level of information is available.

Richard Young asked if the stock condition survey could be made available. BK said there was a problem with the complexity of information. He said that more information would be available by the meeting in June. Cllr. Bowring suggested that BK meet with residents to discuss the stock condition survey, and Bob said he was very happy to do so.

8.0 Housing Opportunities Fund

Judith presented the report (attached) which had been distributed on the night, dealing with proposals put forward to the Environmental Improvement Budget (one part of the Housing Opportunities Fund) by TRAs and officers.

RP raised a question about noticeboards. Is this a duplication, if the Housing Dept. had already agreed to provide noticeboards ? Sarah Vincent said that some TRAs also wanted exterior noticeboards specifically for the TRA and the residents, as opposed to the Council.

Marjorie Landels asked about deep cleaning. Isn't this part of planned maintenance? Ray Fallon said that the properties where this was recommended were particularly in need and would receive steam cleaning. The budget for Deep Cleaning is reduced this year.

Cllr. Crichton-Stuart said that it was necessary to be clear that the money was going on housing projects. She queried the recommendation to allocate funds to Playspace, which is run by an external agency. JF said this was recommended because it was so close to the Tanswell, and used predominantly by residents.

Cllr. Atkinson said it was difficult to make judgments without seeing the recommendations in the other categories.

The recommendations of the report were AGREED, with the exception of the items in the second table (six in favour, one abstention). JF said that the officers would now proceed to get firm prices for the projects.

Marjorie Landels said that this was an important agenda item and should have been discussed earlier in the meeting.

9.0 Any other business

Irene Bateman requested a 'family tree' of office staff with phone numbers. JF said this would be available for the next meeting.