

Leasehold Forum Meeting

15 October 2024

Minutes

Present:

Peter Holt, Housing Team Leader (Accounts and Assets)

Julie Hood, Housing Equalities and Engagement Facilitator

8 Leaseholders

Apologies: 2 received from Leaseholders

Edward Bland, Operations Manager, Public Realm

Julie Hood opened the meeting and welcomed everybody. Julie and Peter Holt introduced themselves.

Julie reminded the meeting that:

- although you are sitting in your home you are in a meeting; please do not do anything you wouldn't do in West Offices e.g. eat
- that everyone is in the meeting for their own reasons
- to treat everyone with respect at all times, this includes staff, attendees and any organisations present/discussed in the meeting.
- let others raise their issues
- Housing issues are the only issues staff may be able to change, they have no influence over other CYC departments e.g. Council Tax, Parking etc
- if it is suggested that your issue will be investigated outside of the meeting do not continue to discuss it
- no items will be discussed in any other business unless they have been sent 7 days prior to the meeting, under any circumstance.

Peter gave his apologies for not attending the last meeting.

Public Realm

Peter gave apologies as Public Realm were unable to provide representation to the meeting.

He went on to explain that the frequency and standards of delivery of grass cutting etc are a concern. The Head of Housing has raised this with Public Realm. Work is ongoing to agree a terms of reference.

Once this has been agreed it can be published. Until an agreement is made there will be no increase to the service charges.

We will continue to try to have representation at one of these meetings.

One of the reasons the grass becomes long is that the growing season has lengthened is it possible that the grass cuts could start earlier in the year? Peter will raise this with the Public Realm team.

NB this information has been received since the meeting:

'We cut the grass 6 times per year. There would be no benefit to starting to cut the grass earlier than we do because we would complete the last cut well before the grass stops growing and it would be left long over winter. It would collapse and then re-start in the spring. This would leave a very untidy mess that would take much longer to cut.

We started late this year due to the wettest April on record. We were planning on starting at the beginning of the month, but we could not get on. The ground was simply too wet and we would have ploughed the ground up in the process. It would have been a complete waste of time and resource.

All being well, April will be drier next year and we will be able to start in early April.

Insurance

Peter Holt

There is no update available. The number of companies offering this type of insurance is very small (block insurance)

The Leasehold Advisory Service have recently undertaken a survey in regards to insurance. Once they have collated the data it is anticipated that they will make some suggestions as to the way forward.

Please find a link to the Leasehold Advisory Service: <https://www.lease-advice.org/>

Any Other Business

These items of any other business were received from Leaseholders at least 7 days prior to the meeting:

Communal drying areas

Some of the drying areas are completely overgrown. Moss, weeds and in some cases larch bushes are covering the tarmac and surrounding areas. Washing line posts are broken or missing and there are no washing lines.

R -There are a lot of drying areas across the City that have similar problems and need improvement. We are working on identifying them all, along with the work needed. We anticipate work will start early in 2025.

Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act

This is going through Parliament, with Royal Assent anticipated in May 2025.

This Act will enable leases to be extended by a term of 999 years and that they can be extended immediately. There will be no timeframe for extending the lease.

There will need to be a second piece of legislation with further detail, it is expected that this will be Summer 2025.

A question was raised in regards to the cost of extending the lease. The Leasehold Advisory Service as a calculator which will give an indication. It can be found through this link: <https://www.lease-advice.org/calculator/>

Communal bin stores

These communal bin stores attract fly tipping, often not by those living in the flats. Peter is producing a document covering this and will publish it once it is finalised.

Any problems with communal bins e.g. broken glass etc should be reported to the Leasehold Team by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4

Fire Doors

A leaseholder has received a letter regarding their main entrance door. The price quoted was between £1,200 and £1,600. This sits outside of the service charge so will be a separate invoice. Peter will investigate options to pay.

One Leaseholder has been told that they need a fire door, then that it does not need to be a fire door. The door does not open into a communal area. Peter will investigate and feedback outside of this meeting.

Leasehold Forum

This present agreed that these meetings are helpful and useful with a short agenda. They had no suggestions for the next meeting but would like to meet in January.

Next Meeting

A date in January 2025, to be confirmed.

Agenda items

None suggested