

General Committee of Strawberry Vale Residents Association

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 20th February 2016, 10-12.00 Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale, N2 9BA

In attendance:

Laurence Williamson (LW) Chair
 Shona Perkins (SP)
 Minutes taken on behalf of Dylis Dias by Caroline Ball
 Patrice Eriata Senior Neighbourhood Manager Peabody
 Abdul Olaogun Neighbourhood Manager Peabody (AO)
 Arjun Mittra – Barnet Labour Councillor (AM)
 Alison Moore – Barnet labour Councillor (AAM)

SVRA Members – See list for those in attendance (approx. 80 people)

No.	Item	Action
1	Apologies	
	Apologies where noted by LW Dylis Dias unable to attend	
2	Minutes of last meeting.	
	No minutes from previous meeting yet as it was an emergency meeting which the secretary was unable to attend. Minutes will be circulated in due course	
3	SVRA	
	Update on status of SVRA LW confirmed that the SVRA is now recognised by Peabody as an official Residents Association and is a legally recognised body. Will now be able to apply for funding etc.	
4	Question time with Patrice and Abdul	
	<p>Issues brought up by SVRA Members</p> <p>£100 voucher for large families did not go very far perhaps these vouchers could differ in amounts depending on family sizes</p> <p>Baby Belling cookers are unsafe and some residents are getting burns and finding they cannot reach the cookers</p> <p>Members brought up the fact the electricity costs are becoming extremely high and they are worried about the rise in household bills. They said they cannot afford to run electric.</p> <p>Patrice and Abdul confirmed the following:</p> <p>All issued electric cookers are a temporary measure only if you are struggling with the Baby Bellings' you can take one of the bigger electric cookers as a temporary measure they will store your gas cooker while investigating the gas problem this was</p>	

No.	Item	Action
	<p>confirmed verbally by both Patrice and Abdul</p> <p>We asked Patrice to confirm that the electric cookers were temporary WHICH SHE DID. She attempted to suggest that 'many residents' had stated that they would prefer electric. At this point the meeting became quite volatile and residents were angry at this suggestion. They stated that the forms that Peabody were seeking to rely on were a false representation as Peabody 'lured' residents to the Green Man Centre with a promise of a £100 voucher. When they arrived residents were encouraged/forced by Peabody to sign in order to get their £100 voucher. These were not evidence of a preference as residents were told that they had to choose a cooker in case gas was not restored.</p> <p>Patrice and Abdul left.</p>	
5	Status of legal proceedings	
	<p>LW – Forms for Solicitors require signing ASAP SP – Costs for Solicitors discussed with SVRA SP reiterated that HJA Solicitors would not take case on if they did not think they would win as that would mean that they would not get paid.</p> <p>It appears that Peabody may be in breach of gas management regulations and no purging has been completed therefore HJA believe they have a good case</p> <p>Court proceedings were issued & witness statements have been completed by SP LW and some other residents who do not have gas heating or hot water.</p> <p>Circuit judge has been appointed for hearing on the 4th of March at 2pm</p> <p>HJA will be at the Green Man centre on Monday the 22nd of February to collect/sign legal packs and answer any questions</p> <p>Another signing session can be organised if required. If the gas is restored it is confirmed that HJA will agree with Peabody a timetable so that all are informed in advance There is no information yet from HJA in regards to purchasing insurance for legal fees. Alternate funding options are being pursued, including private funders and other organisations AM suggested SVRA uses Crowdfunding website to help raise funds for legal costs If any residents would like to view witness statements please see SP Read following article about Lord Kerslake</p> <p>http://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jan/23/ministers-want-to-get-rid-of-social-housing-former-civil-service-chief-to-say</p>	SVRA members

No.	Item	Action
6	Freer meeting on 10th Feb report.	
	<p>Meeting with Mike Freer (LW & SP) Mike Freer recognised that Peabody are trying to move their estates off gas onto electricity.</p> <p>MF met with 3 families while visiting the estate without any press</p> <p>In a meeting with Steve Howlett CEO of Peabody he was informed that the problem is not with the National Grid Meter and is in fact a problem with the recently upgraded gas ring main however up to now the problem has not yet been identified. Steve Howlett stated that there was a problem with the pressure in the ringmain. He was asked what evidence that he had to support this claim but was unable to provide any.</p>	<p>Meeting with SVRA Mike Freer and Steve Howlett</p>
6	Withhold service charge payments possible action?	
	<p>It was confirmed by Arjun Mittra and the Solicitors that if any residents withhold service charge funds they would not be able to take legal action with the group but on an individual basis. In other words you will have to defend yourself as an individual</p> <p>AM also suggested that the SVRA needs to get or request data on the gas fluctuations and to query why the meter was replaced if the system are not being tested.</p> <p>AM also confirmed that he has asked Andrew Dismore (Labour Councillor) to write to Steve Howlett in regards to his concerns about the current situation for SVRA residents</p> <p>AM suggested that the SVRA look into Crowdfunding website to help with costs for residents</p> <p>Also suggested that we use Social Media as much as possible any statements made on Facebook Twitter etc can be used in the court case.</p> <p>AM suggested that we have the gas expert for Peabody to attend the next SVRA Meeting</p>	
7	Meeting with Abdul 16th of February & other Peabody resident associations	
	<p>(LW) Meeting went well with Abdul. Abdul is very keen to offer different parking options than previous neighbourhood manager Jessica. He is looking into increasing the parking next to the football pitch where currently there is scrubland and to remove concrete dividers on old farm road to increase the number of car parking spaces</p> <p>(LW)</p> <p>Peabody were unhelpful in releasing information in regards to other Peabody estate residents associations however the contact details were on the Peabody website so LW contacted some of the other associations and met up with one in the Camden area. Due to housing Associations being regulated differently from councils Camden council has set up a think tank Group of residents from different housing associations in the Camden area to discuss issues affecting the different estates. We have been contacted by other residents</p>	<p>Progress update from AO will be required before next meeting</p>

No.	Item	Action
	<p>association and anticipate that we will be meeting up with them in due course and may arrange meeting of chairs of all Peabody Tenants Associations. There appear to be similar themes amongst the residents of all residents associations, particularly regarding unhappiness in relation to repairs</p>	