

# LEASEHOLDER NEWS

June 2011 Issue **8**



## Key Leaseholder Scheme in the spotlight

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473 leaseholders have now joined our Key Leaseholder Scheme since its launch in December 2009. Key leaseholders are volunteers who actively help inspect communal repairs and other works we carry out to their block or estate, and help us correct any issues with service charges.

In a recent survey, we asked key leaseholders what they thought about the Scheme and if they had any suggestions to help us improve and develop it further. We've had an encouraging response – the majority of members said they were happy with how the Scheme was working and generally felt the reports they received were helpful and regular enough.

The Scheme is not just an important way for us to get your feedback. Key leaseholders can get involved in a number of activities. There is a regular group meeting every three months, chaired by leaseholder Ian Lush, to discuss any major issues of concern. One of the main discussion points at the last meeting, for example, was the procedure for reporting insurance claims

resulting from vandalism to communal areas; this is under review at the moment. A number of key leaseholders have also signed up to be trained to become mystery shoppers to tell us about their customer experience when contacting Homes for Haringey with a leasehold related query. Their experience as mystery shoppers will be invaluable in helping us improve our customer service to you.

We are also currently recruiting key leaseholders to become the nominated contact for their block or estate to help raise any communal repairs or major works issues directly with us. Some of you have already signed up but we are still looking for key leaseholders to become a nominated contact, particularly on our estates.

We're still keen to sign up new key leaseholders. Call Nick Claxton or Paul Cox in the Home Ownership team on **020 8489 3021** or **020 8489 3060** to join. You can also email us at: [key.leaseholders@homesforharingey.org](mailto:key.leaseholders@homesforharingey.org)



Homes for Haringey

# News from the Leasehold Panel

## What's the Leasehold Panel been up to?

The Leasehold Panel's main purpose is to update you about recent policy developments and to give you an opportunity to have an input and raise any issues of concern. Here are some of the issues the Panel discussed at its most recent meetings:

### Homes for Haringey Property Services

**restructure:** Earlier this year, the Property Services department, which carries out more than 60,000 repairs (including communal repairs) to the council properties we manage, was restructured. The new department started in April and is expected to deliver an improved and more efficient repairs service.

**Debt recovery procedures:** The Home Ownership team recently explained its new debt recovery procedures to Panel members who noted that we send two reminders before we send a letter saying we are going to take legal action. For details about service charge payment options available to leaseholders, visit our website at:

[www.homesforharingey.org/your\\_annual\\_service\\_charge](http://www.homesforharingey.org/your_annual_service_charge)

**New waste management contract:** Haringey Council has appointed a new waste management contractor, Veolia. They are now responsible for all waste collection, recycling, street cleansing, external cleaning on estates, and clearing weeds on highways in Haringey. They also deal with graffiti and fly-posting except on housing estates (this is done by our own Estate Services). To report a problem, call Veolia on **020 8885 7700** or email them at: **enquiries.haringey@veolia.co.uk**

**Reduced Decent Homes funding:** Due to government changes to funding the Decent Homes programme, the money Haringey has available for Decent Homes work has been reduced. We therefore had to review our priorities for the programme. Find out more on pages 4 and 5 in Homes Zone.

You can find dates of forthcoming meetings on page 4. If you have any questions about the Leasehold Panel, call Bruce Nicholas on **020 8489 3487**.

## Meet new Panel Chair, Piers Johnson

The Leasehold Panel has elected Piers Johnson as their new Chair.

Piers has been a Haringey leaseholder for eight years now and teaches design and technology part-time. As a former head of department at an Islington school, Piers has lots of experience in running successful meetings.

Piers is fully committed to his new role with the Leasehold Panel: "As Chair, I will work strongly to support the Panel in monitoring

the services Homes for Haringey provides. I feel sure the Panel has a very important role to play in addition to the Haringey Leaseholders Campaign Group of which I am a founder member."

Leasehold Panel members thanked Roger Kemp, Piers' predecessor, for all his hard work since being elected in 2009, and wished him all the best on his move to Devon. We would also like to thank Anne Goodhew, Vice Chair, for taking up the role as Chair in Roger's absence.



News from the **Leasehold Panel** (continued)

## Panel agrees new service standard

As a social housing provider, we must meet certain standards for the services we provide to council tenants and leaseholders in Haringey.

As part of these standards we also have to show that we are tailoring our services to meet the needs and priorities of residents. This is why we recently consulted all our resident panels, including the Leasehold Panel, about our service standards, and the Panel agreed a new one as a result. From now on, the Home Ownership team will, when invited, meet with leaseholders locally, for example at estate meetings, to discuss any specific leasehold issues.

## Haringey payment centre has now closed



Haringey Council's Payment Centre on Wood Green High Road has now closed to the public for good. For alternative ways to pay for council services such as parking, go to Haringey Council's website at [www.haringey.gov.uk/parking\\_shop](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/parking_shop). For ways to pay your service charge, see our website at [www.homesforharingey.org](http://www.homesforharingey.org) (go to Information for leaseholders > Ways to pay).

## Selling up without settling up?

Together with our legal team we have recently been successful in tracing a leaseholder who had sold up six years ago without paying his major works invoices. He ended up paying interest on top of the amount due plus our legal costs to trace him. So make sure you settle your account with us when you sell your leasehold property!

## Leasehold Valuation Tribunal decision

In a recent legal challenge to a decent homes bill for £19,300, the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT) decided the bill was "valid and payable in full". The decent homes works included a new roof and installation of windows in Osman Close. We will publish a summary of the decision in the next issue.

## Letting your property?

You must let us know if you are letting out your property. If you do not tell us that you are subletting, your building insurance may be invalid.



When you register your sublet with us, we will send you important information about letting your property. Your new tenant(s) will also get an information pack informing them about their responsibilities as tenants such as how to dispose of rubbish properly, what the parking rules are and about not causing any noise nuisance. This will help get your tenancy off to a good start.

To register your sublet, call the Home Sales Team on **020 8489 3357** or email them at: [right2buy@homesforharingey.org](mailto:right2buy@homesforharingey.org) and they will be able to help you.

## Tell us if you've moved!

You must notify the Home Ownership Team if you have changed your address even if you have already informed another council department such as the Benefits Service or the Council Tax department. We do not share your personal contact details with the Council so you must tell us as well.



# Leasehold Panel meetings

Leasehold Panel meetings are open to all leaseholders. They start at 7pm and are held at the Wood Green Civic Centre.

The next dates in 2011 are:

Monday, 5 July

Thursday, 15 September

Wednesday, 12 October

Thursday, 10 November

If you would like to receive a copy of the minutes, or have anything you would like us to consider at the panel meeting, please email us at

**leasehold.panel@homesforharingey** or call Bruce Nicholas on **020 8489 3487**. Minutes are also published on Homes for Haringey's website at: **www.homesforharingey.org/publication\_and\_minutes**

## Be gas safe

Make sure your gas appliance is checked by a Gas Safe engineer every 12 months. Faulty gas appliances produce carbon monoxide which is a deadly, invisible gas having no smell – it makes people unconscious and kills in a matter of hours. **If you sublet your property, you are required by law to get a Landlord Gas Safety certificate every 12 months.**



## News straight to your email inbox

More and more of you are signing up to our email subscription service. 1,750 leaseholders are now receiving Leaseholder News and other information from us by email. Remember, if you haven't signed up yet, we will take £5 off your service charge.

We are currently piloting sending the annual statements of accounts out by email. We'll let you know of the results in one of our next issues.



## Contact us

### Home Ownership team

13-27 Station Road  
Wood Green  
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N22 6UW

**Team 1** – for leasehold properties in Hornsey, North Tottenham and Broadwater Farm  
Phone: 020 8489 1490,  
020 8489 3486 or  
020 8489 3060  
Email:  
home.ownershipteam1@homesforharingey.org

**Team 2** – for leasehold properties in Wood Green and South Tottenham  
Phone: 020 8489 5976,  
020 8489 5996 or  
020 8489 3042  
Email:  
home.ownershipteam2@homesforharingey.org

**Home Sales** – for resale, re-mortgage and subletting enquiries  
Phone: 020 8489 3357 or  
020 8489 3231  
Email:  
right2buy@homesforharingey.org

### Arabic

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