



Minutes of PBHA Forum
Tuesday 22nd February 2016 at Isledon Canteen
Thursday 25th February 2016 at Kingsland Hub

- 1 Rent Consultation***
- 2 Funding and Support changes***
- 3 CCTV***
- 4 Over 50's Tea Dance – 29th February at Isledon**
- 5 Tenants Committee and IT Volunteer Vacancies**
- 6 Welcome Breakfast Club – 30th March at Isledon**
- 7 Clissold Update**
- 8 Sign outside Kingsland Hub**
- 9 Weekend support***
- 10 Supporting People invited to April's Forums**
- 11 Dates of next meetings**
- 12 AOB***

*Isledon meeting only

Present: Total 18 tenants, 1 participant, Vanessa Morris (Head of Service), Mandy Mansfield (Participation Officer), Clare Norton (CEO, Kingsland mtg)

Chair at Isledon: Phil Jones

Chair at Kingsland: Isaac Bamgbose

Minutes: Mandy Mansfield

1 Rent Consultation

Vanessa explained that in line with the Government's Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015:

- General needs tenants' rent will be reduced by 1%.
- Supported tenants' rent will increase by 1%.
- Service charges will remain the same. However, PBHA will be reviewing service charges, as tenants pay differing services charges.
- Proposed fuel charges of £23.10 for self-contained flats and £10 for shared flats.
- Service charges for PBHA services such as communal cleaning, communal electricity, gardening maintenance was proposed as £20.57 for self-contained and £37.45 for shared.

Please see question and answer sheets for feedback

2 Funding and Support Changes

Vanessa explained that the support people receive is funded by Local Authority Supporting People grants. Islington's contract ends on 30th June. Due to Central Government cuts, the new Islington contract will no longer fund 98 units, but 73 units for 18 months followed by move-on.

In Hackney, the current contract is changing in October 2016, and it is likely that there will be substantial cuts.

PBHA is proposing to develop a new Intensive Housing Management support service. Affected tenants will no longer have a Support Worker in the same way as it is now. However, they will have a named worker who will assist with a broad range of issues (full list attached).

Based on how long tenants have been with PBHA, 25 Islington tenants have received letters and have had 1-1 sessions with their Support Workers outlining the proposed changes. The new service will be funded by service charge.

PBHA will be strengthening the existing peer support/mutual aid groups so tenants can help each other. PBHA will be organising training for peer supporters within PBHA. Mandy is collating a list of names of those interested in getting involved.

Please see question and answer sheets for feedback.

3 CCTV

PBHA has purchased a CCTV system and are temporarily installing it at an identified area where there have been ongoing concerns of antisocial and criminal behaviour. The system was installed with consent of the tenants involved, and will help us improve security as well as deal more quickly with ASB. The CCTV has the potential to move to other properties if the need arises.

In line with legal requirements, PBHA have drafted a CCTV Policy that was distributed to the Forum. In accordance with Data Protection Act, PBHA will display clear notices letting people know that there is CCTV on the premises. Tenants have a right to view any images of themselves and can apply to do so. Images will only be shown to external organisations if there is evidence of any criminal act/s.

4 Over 50's Tea Dance

The monthly Over 50's Club has arranged a tea dance with scones and cupcakes, to be held on **Monday 29th February from 12pm-3pm, at Isledon canteen**. People may invite under 50's to this event.

5 Tenants Committee and IT Volunteer Vacancies

There are two new Volunteer vacancies. The Tenant's Committee meets prior to the Forum to agree Agenda items, discuss new projects and concerns, as well as give tenants help and advice. The IT Volunteer will need to be available Wednesday afternoons at Isledon to help newcomers get on-line, search the Internet or create an email account etc. If anyone is interested, please contact Mandy.

6 Welcome Breakfast Club

PBHA is setting up a new regular, informal social event, to welcome new tenants and introduce them to other tenants, staff and services. Longer term tenants are encouraged to attend to support new tenants and help them settle in. The Welcome Breakfast Club is on **Wednesday 30th March from 11am-1pm at Isledon canteen**. Pastries, tea and coffee provided.

7 Clissold canteen update

Clissold canteen is still closed for cooking. The property team is awaiting quotes for essential works, but have had no response. One tenant is not happy that the canteen has remained closed for so long. She has requested a meeting with Clare and Kathryn to begin implementing a strict cleaning and hygiene regime *before* the works are carried out. It was asked that the repair works are treated as priority. **ACTION:** Mandy to follow-up with property team and tenant to follow-up with Clare.

8 Weekend Support

The forum asked whether Hackney tenants can access weekend staff at Isledon for support. It was clarified that Islington team's weekend work is part of their rota, and so they are visiting their clients and working as a normal day etc. Therefore it is not possible for Hackney tenants to see Islington Support Workers. In an emergency, Hackney tenants can use the phone at Isledon to contact the Duty Line.

9 Sign outside Kingsland Hub

It was asked if we are going to put a PBHA sign outside Kingsland Hub. We are, and Zanna has applied for planning permission for this, which usually takes a few months.

10 Supporting People invited to April forums

There will be two forums in April as our funders have been invited.
Islington – Tuesday 19th April at Isledon canteen
Hackney – Wednesday 20th April at Kingsland Hub

11 Date of next meeting.

Tuesday 22nd March at 23a Clissold Road. Lunch 12.30pm, Forum 1pm

12 AOB

- **Open Squares Weekend.** Precious is going to be away for 4 weeks during May and June, so is unable to support this event. **ACTION:** Mandy will liaise with Pam.
- **Contractors.** A tenant asked if they can get letters when contractors are going to be accessing communal areas. **ACTION:** Given the number of questions raised around property and repairs, Nicole will be invited to the next Forum.

QUESTION AND ANSWERS AT FEBRUARY FORUMS

Rent consultation

Q “Can we receive our rent statements monthly instead of quarterly? Quarterly statements can affect Housing Benefit if in arrears, and direct deductions.”

A: Vanessa enquired about this following the meeting. Sending out rent statements by post was changed after consultation to quarterly due to admin cost. Tenants are encouraged to ring the finance department if they want an immediate rent statement, and can come to collect it from Kingsland Hub the following day. When we move to our new database system in a few months we will be able to send out regular statements by email and send balances by text.

Q “Who is responsible for the gardening? This is not being done”.

A: Please check your tenancy agreements as not everyone pays service charge for garden maintenance. Keyworkers will feedback to individuals concerned.

Q: “Our windows haven’t been cleaned for years, but we’re paying service charge for it”.

A: Vanessa encouraged anyone unhappy with this to make a complaint. There have been ongoing issues with the old window cleaning contractor and PBHA is looking for a new contractor.

Q: “I don’t pay this much service charge. Is it being put up to £20.57 per week?”

A: No, this year your service charge will remain the same as it is now. However, service charges are being reviewed as a whole, as people are paying differing rates.

Q: “Can the property team be extended? This would ensure works get carried out”.

A: Vanessa is reviewing property services, to include a good post-inspection regime.

Q: “Can PBHA join with other Housing Associations when it comes to contractors to get cheaper costs?”

A: This is something PBHA is considering.

Support and Funding Changes

Q: "How much will it be?"

A: Approx. £35-£40 per week. PBHA is in negotiations to ensure this charge is covered by Housing Benefit.

Q: "Who can I speak to about this?"

A: You can speak to your Support Worker.

Q: "What is the timetable?"

A: PBHA is expecting a decision from Islington Council in the next three weeks. Affected tenants will receive a new rent changes letter. The situation with Hackney is not clear yet but we will write to tenants when we have more details.

Q: "Can we keep the same Support Worker?"

A: No, as it is not a support service, it's a service to help sustain tenancy.

Q: "Will it affect our tenancy?"

A: Yes, all tenancies have a support clause. A variation will be put into the Tenancy Agreement.

Q: "Can the new worker attend hospital appointments?"

A: The new worker will identify either an external worker to go with you, or a peer supporter.