

Partners Residents Open Forum meeting 16 November 2017

Partners' staff: John Venning, Katrina Dalby

10 Resident attendees

Discussion Item	Response if applicable	Actions
<p>Communal Areas</p> <p>Partners had a managed use approach to communal areas. This meant that where items in hallways were not causing a fire risk or hazard we allowed them.</p> <p>We have now been instructed by Islington Council to move to a safe and clear approach with the only exception being a doormat inside the communal entrance door. This means that residents can't leave items in the shared communal areas.</p> <p>We're communicating this change through Partners Gazette and Partners Managing Director, Sharon Pearce has written to all residents with shared communal areas to explain the change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents should contact us on 0800 587 3595 or via enquiries@partnersislington.net if they have concerns about items in their communal areas. • Islington Council's website has information about bike storage options in the borough: www.islington.gov.uk/roads/cycling/cycleparking • Partners has a Property Risk Assessor who inspects communal areas regularly. If he identify items which need removing he will refer them to our Housing Management Team who will take action. • Partners Housing Management Team will contact all residents at the address and ask them to remove the items within 14 days. We visit the address after 14 days to check whether the items have been removed. If items remain, we give notice that they will be removed and disposed. We may charge the cost of the removal to the resident responsible. • We have added 'Frequently asked questions' regarding the change to our website: https://www.partnersislington.net/keeping-you-safe/communal-area-safety-faqs/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners to provide information on bike storage

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<p>Utility Costs A resident raised concerns about the cost of their utilities and wanted to know if there was anyone who could help him understand the different options available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islington Council operates SHINE (Seasonal Health Intervention Network). It is a one-stop referral system helping to provide affordable warmth and seasonal health interventions to residents in Islington. Our Housing Services team can refer residents to SHINE or residents can contact them direct. The team offer practical advice on a wide range of areas including health and wellbeing, energy efficiency, befriending, fire safety checks, handyperson services and much more. Full details of all their services can be found at www.islington.gov.uk or contact them via shine@islington.gov.uk or 020 7527 2121. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners to refer the resident to SHINE.
<p>Angelic Energy A resident received a flyer regarding Angelic Energy and wanted to know more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angelic Energy was started by Islington Council, in partnership with Robin Hood Energy, to supply energy as cheaply as possible to Londoners. Their energy is supplied by Robin Hood Energy, a not-for-profit energy supplier wholly owned by Nottingham City Council. Robin Hood Energy shares Angelic Energy's ethos and wants to help people to get the best energy deals. For more information go to their website: https://www.angelicenergy.co.uk/ or call 0800 169 0220. 	
<p>Mutual Exchange A resident wanted to know more about mutual exchange and how they could get help to go online to facilitate an exchange.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quickest way to move is often by finding another tenant who would like to swap homes with you. This is called a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners to contact resident and make an appointment.

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	<p>'mutual exchange'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can swap your home with another council or housing association tenant either in Islington, London or anywhere in the United Kingdom. You do not need to be registered on the transfer list or have any points to participate. • First you must find a suitable home to swap with. Then you and the tenant you are swapping with must fill in the mutual exchange application form and email or post this to the Council so that they can register it. The Council then notify us, and we carry out certain checks to make sure that the exchange is suitable. We will reply to you with our decision within 42 days of receiving the form. • We can refuse permission if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The exchange would make a household overcrowded or your home is too big for the incoming tenant. If you owe rent or have broken your tenancy agreement in any other way. • There are several ways that you can find a mutual exchange partner to swap homes with: Smart Move, Home Swapper and word of mouth. • Islington's Smart Move scheme helps match overcrowded families in Islington with tenants who under-occupy their home. Contact Islington Council on 020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Newbold, Partners Housing Manager will be at Partners next Open Forum and will be able to answer any additional questions regarding mutual exchange.

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	<p>7527 2000 or islington.gov.uk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HomeSwapper website can help you to find an exchange partner for you to swap with anywhere in the United Kingdom. You do not have to be on the council's transfer list. • You must first register with HomeSwapper on their website: www.homeswapper.co.uk/. HomeSwapper will search for possible new swaps for you. It saves these matches and you can log on at any time to see them. You can also arrange to be sent 'match alerts' by email or by text message to your mobile phone. • The website is for council or housing association tenants only. It is free for council tenants but some housing association tenants may have to pay a small fee to register, if their landlord is not part of the scheme. • We keep our own register of tenants interested in moving via a mutual exchange. We may be able to match tenants up. • If you'd like help registering for a mutual exchange contact your Housing Services Officer to book an appointment at our office. They will be able to show you how to register and look for an exchange. • Before completing an exchange you'll be told how much the rent and any other charges will be in your new home. These could be higher than the amount you pay in your current home. Check the tenancy 	

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	<p>type of the home you want to swap into, and make sure you know yours. If you're not sure, contact us. When you swap homes, you don't take your tenancy with you, so this can be a really important factor as it can affect things like right to buy.</p>	
<p>Leasehold Queries A new leaseholder raised queries relating to their leasehold liability, insurance, building maintenance, fire safety, party walls, noise and alterations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leaseholder's liability is set out in their lease. Although leases can vary throughout Islington, they are generally very similar. • The freeholder (Islington Council, with Partners acting on their behalf) is responsible for maintaining the structure of the building. • Leaseholders are responsible for everything inside the flat up to the plaster finishes. This includes the floor boards but not the floor joists. Glazing is the leaseholder's responsibility, but the frame and putty are Partners responsibility (unless the leaseholder has purchased the windows, which in this case, they would be responsible for the putty and frames). • Partners website contains full details of the freeholder and leaseholder responsibilities https://www.partnersislington.net/leaseholders/your-lease/. • Partners are responsible for enforcing the terms of the lease. • We issue a section 20 notice informing leaseholders of any planned work where the cost will exceed £250. This will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners to respond to leaseholder direct regarding their alteration and noise enquiry. • Leaseholder to report garden concerns to Partners Repairs Team.

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	<p>include details of any deeds of variation for example, if the leaseholder has purchased the windows, these would not be included in the planned work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners has a cyclical maintenance programme. Every 7-10 years properties are inspected and any necessary work required to maintain them is completed. This always includes external decoration. • Residents need to tell Partners if repairs which are our responsibility are required. • We try to minimise inconvenience and cost and where major works are needed where appropriate, we try to combine these with our cyclical maintenance programme. • A party wall is a wall which separates two properties. • If work is planned where a party wall may be affected a party wall notice has to be issued. This goes to the freeholder and any leaseholders involved. • Partners would appoint a surveyor to manage the risk, and would ask any leaseholders if they wanted our surveyor to also represent them. • A party wall notice is not an opportunity for parties to oppose work. It is a statement of intended work and risk. • Partners has produced two leaflets advising residents what they can do if they are affected by noise in their home. These are available on our website www.partnersislinton.net/publications/noise-information-leaflets/ or for a paper 	

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	<p>copy please contact us on 0800 587 3595.</p>	
<p>Buildings Insurance Residents asked questions relating to buildings insurance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings insurance information is available on our website: www.partnersislington.net/leaseholders/buildings-insurance/ • PF11 properties are covered by an Aon policy and PF12 properties are covered by a Zurich policy. • In the event of a fire, a property would be rebuilt as was, but ensuring it complied with modern building regulations. 	
<p>Planning Permission A resident asked whether Partners were aware of building work taking place in Birnam Road.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permission has to be granted before building work can start. • The council will contact local residents and interested parties when they receive a request for planning permission to seek their views. • Partners will also be contacted if properties we manage are in the vicinity of the work. • More information about planning applications can be found at www.islington.gov.uk. • When residents receive information about proposed building works, they should submit their concerns in accordance with the information they'll have received from Islington Council. 	

Date of next meeting – Thursday 18 January 2018 – Islington Town Hall Committee Room 6

