

Partners' Residents Open Forum Meeting 20 March 2025

Partners' staff: Katrina Dalby, Service Improvement and Engagement Manager, Daniel Miller, Home Ownership Team Leader, Paula Redpath, Head of Operations

Islington Council Representative: Helen McNeill

6 resident attendees

Discussion Item	Response if applicable	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Point Updates Resident issues with Thames Water – as promised the Council's Scrutiny details were shared with resident. Concerns raised about dog mess, noise, messy streets etc – Details of the 'Love Islington' app were shared in Partners Gazette/website, the app allows residents to easily report issues. Cinema club took place yesterday. Thank you to everyone who attended. Massive thank you to a Partners resident for writing a really interesting and useful article to help residents decorate on a budget. Part 2 is coming in the next edition of the Gazette. Contractor parking permits – A resident had raised concerns that someone working on behalf of Partners didn't have a parking permit and was fined. After further investigation it transpired that the contractor had charged Partners for the permits but hadn't bought them. 		

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Partners Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are starting work on the next Gazette. We are finalising last year's annual service plan for the end of the year. We have been meeting with the Council to look at how our services reflect the consumer standards and gathering a bank of evidence to demonstrate what we do and looking to fill any gaps that we identify. One resident has asked for the Open Forum information to be sent as a calendar invitation rather than via email. If other residents would prefer this, please contact Partners. Thank you to the residents who completed the latest Complaint Panel review. We've drafted the report, and it will be shared soon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One attendee had information regarding the government's proposed changes to lease extensions that she will share with Partners for possible inclusion in the next edition of the Gazette. One resident asked for information about the Consumer Standards. A presentation was given at September's Open Forum. Here's a link to the information open-forum-notes-and-presentation.pdf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents to share any ideas for articles for the Gazette Residents to let Katrina Dalby know if they would prefer Open Forum info to be sent as a calendar invitation
Partners Draft Annual Service Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners Annual Service Plan sets out our targets for the year ahead in addition to our KPIs and service we're contracted to deliver. The plan is updated regularly and shared and reviewed with the Council quarterly. We have started drafting a plan for next year using feedback from residents, the Council and staff and items that we know will be impacting us on the year ahead, for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One resident suggested we include the complete roll-out of the email opt-in (at least for leaseholders) across the whole of Partners including all teams, Hyde, Rydon and key subcontractors / associated companies such as Clarke Wilmott solicitors? They felt that leaseholders should be able to opt in to receiving all important communications relating to Partners that normally come in the post, by email as well as by post. The postal method should remain as this would still constitute legally serving notices as required by law in key instances. This task may be more involved than it sounds as Partners would have to achieve this change for groups / teams / organisations over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residents to contact Partners with any feedback on the plan

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<p>example Awaab's law. The draft was shared with residents in advance of the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some items were highlighted in the meeting as areas that residents may particularly be interested in such as beginning the PFI1 handback plan, using information we receive from third parties to understand resident vulnerabilities better and a review of Partners resident engagement strategy Attendees were asked for their feedback on the draft. 	<p>whom it may not have direct control. But these cases (like Clarke Wilmott) may be the most important of all, so at least a review of the feasibility of achieving this change should be carried out.</p>	
<p>Lease Extensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An attendee explained that they had received an update from 'HomeHold' on the Government's proposed changes to lease extensions which she was happy to share with others. Attendees suggested that it would be useful if someone from the Council's Legal Team attended a future Open Forum to answer queries regarding leases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Islington Council's leases originate from the solicitors who drafted them when the original right to buy was completed and this is why you can see different leases. Most Islington properties were originally sold through the right to buy scheme and have a 125-year lease and £10 ground rent. 	<p>Partners to contact Islington Council's Legal team and ask them to attend a future Open Forum.</p>
<p>Repair Guarantees</p> <p>An attendee at the meeting asked whether residents could have a copy of repair guarantees e.g. if a new roof is fitted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners don't receive a paper copy of a guarantee that can be shared with residents. Our systems record what work has been completed at an address. If we have completed a roof replacement, we would not charge leaseholders for any subsequent roof repairs within the life of the PFI contract. Sometimes we will automatically issue a Section 20 notice for work because a scaffold is needed immediately, but if we do this 	<p>Partners to update website to clarify guarantees/repeat works.</p>



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<p>Some attendees felt that the information on Partners website wasn't clear enough regarding repeat works/guarantees.</p> <p>An attendee noted that she had challenged a proposed date for her cyclical work and following this her work was changed.</p>	<p>and then realise that the roof was previously replaced, we will retract the Section 20. If a final account is issued for work that a leaseholder believes was previously completed, they should contact us with the details. This process is called a Final Account Challenge. We will investigate the leaseholder's concerns and if we find that we are charging for repeat works we will withdraw the final account. Full details of the Final Account Challenge process are available on our website: major-works-and-service-charge-challenges-a5-lowres-pages.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damp proofing work comes with a 15-year guarantee, but we have previously honoured longer than this. If a failure is due to defects in previous work that we have completed, leaseholders won't be charged again. • There are caveats to this, for example if a gutter is blocked and it is causing damage, this would be charged to leaseholders in the block as it would be unrelated to a previous roof replacement. • We appreciate that the largest cost to leaseholders is cyclical decorations. We have just started our final round of cyclical decorations before we hand the properties back to the Council in 2033. We will complete 974 blocks over the next 7 years. • During cyclical work look at the whole building, windows, pointing roof etc to ensure that any repairs that are needed or any item will we believe will need repairing in the near future, are completed whilst we have the scaffold in place. • Leaseholders' costs are capped at £10k over a rolling 5-year period. Partners Repairs Team have no knowledge of whether a leaseholder has reached the £10k cap and issue a section 20 notice based on any work required, not on whether the work will be chargeable. When preparing a final account, Partners Home Ownership Team reviews the leaseholder's costs over the last 5 years and if the £10k cap has been reached or will be exceeded by the new bill, they adjust the amount charged. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyclical work is completed every 5-7 years. For this final cycle of cyclical work, we are aiming to work in specific streets and complete all the properties in that street at one time. If a resident is concerned that their work is being completed outside of the target time of 5-7 years they should speak to our Repairs Team. • Full details of this year's programme are available on our website: Partners Provisional Cyclical Decorations Programme 2023 	
<p>Rent Increases</p> <p>In advance of the meeting a resident submitted questions about the annual rent increase which were answered by Islington Council.</p>	<p>Rent increases and works to be completed with said increase.</p> <p>Rent increases are used to help provide all landlord services to council residents. There are increased costs each year, relating to items such as increases to staffing costs (national pay settlements, changes to employer's contributions) and contractual costs (which usually include inflationary cost increases) including Partners, repairs and maintenance contractors and material costs where services are directly delivered. Rent increases help to fund these increasing costs and any additional services, for example the door checks that are required on some properties under building safety requirement. The attached rent increase letters will usually set out areas that the increase will go towards in that coming year and also try to explain additional costs – for instance there has been a lot of work that has gone into our approach to damp & mould in preparation for regulation changes coming into effect in October this year. However, the actual rent increase is based on the guidance we receive from our regulator about the maximum increases that social landlords can apply.</p> <p>Improvements from the last years increase-</p> <p>Islington Council and Partners continuously work on improving services. Some of these improvements do not always cost money and can be achieved by process changes etc. However, Islington Council has invested significant money to improve the fire safety of</p>	



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	<p>all of its buildings including Partners properties. This is an ongoing programme involving installing fire doors, emergency lighting and smoke alarms in communal areas. Some improvement, or legal changes about how we manage properties will lead to additional costs but as set out above, cost rises in employment, material and contracted services, all need to be covered by rent increases. Partners have a programme replacing kitchens, bathrooms and gas boilers.</p> <p>Any improvements noted by residents- Partners publish feedback from their residents including improvements through their newsletter. Our data is published and Partners also report their (TSM's) Tenant Satisfaction Measures and the most recent results are available on Partners website Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2023/24</p> <p>Please use this link which will give you access to the published Annual report – this is a summary of what we are doing each year and the results of our TSM's and resident feedback results. The 24/25 latest addition should come out in May 2025 Housing annual report 2023/24 Islington Council</p> <p>Our senior management including our director Mr Ian Swift meet with Partners on a quarterly basis at Partners Joint Improvement Board (PJIB) to look at our joint improvements and Partners share their recent and intended improvements as they progress for that year.</p> <p>Consolidation opinions of Islington council from other tenants – Please use link as provided for annual report which includes the TSM's feedback from tenants and service area information. We both use feedback from customers, this can be via the various surveys carried out . Partners also carry out a monthly repair's satisfaction</p>	

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	<p>survey and telephone call handling we also learn from our complaints and benchmarking with other landlords to identify areas where we can improve services as a matter of course. Complaints panel, Partners run their own for their residents and Islington Council have one for their residents. Partners run the open forum and the council operate similar for their tenants and leaseholders.</p> <p>Communication from officials to tenants (letters etc)</p> <p>The council and Partners communicate important information to residents using letters, sometimes email notifications, publications on their website.</p> <p>Wider general consultations are held on the Islington consultation platform that is called "Let's Talk Islington".</p> <p>Please use link to access IslingtonLife - Your local online magazine from Islington Council, this is also advertised on Partners website Islington Council Consultations</p>	
<p>Repairs</p> <p>An attendee at the meeting asked whether residents could be given the money that the council uses to complete repairs to carry out their own repairs. They felt that this would be a more efficient system.</p>	<p>This is not possible due legislation around the council's duties, functions, and management of the properties it owns as a landlord. All repairs should be reported to Partners via enquiries@partnersislington.net or by calling 0800 587 3595.</p>	

Date of next meeting –15 May via Zoom