

Notes from Partners' Open Forum – Thursday 15 January 2026 – 1800-1900

Staff Attendees: Katrina Dalby – Service Improvement and Engagement Manager, Paula Redpath, Head of Operations

Council Attendee: Helen McNeill

Resident Attendees: 6

Subject	Record of Discussion	Action Points	Key
Action updates from November's meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following our conversation regarding cyclical decorations, Paula Redpath is at the meeting as promised to discuss the programme. Due to time constraints at the Residents' Christmas Party the resident volunteer was unable to talk to the room about the benefits of engagement. Partners will ensure that this is scheduled for the beginning of a future event. At the last meeting the Forum provided their feedback on our plans for PEEPS. Partners plans for the change were shared with Islington Council today. Thank you for your contributions which informed our plans. Following issues reported at our last meeting with a resident's stop cock, our surveyor attended and loosened it. 		PEEPS – personal emergency evacuation plans coming into law in April 2026
Information from Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fly tipping at Milner Square – Last summer residents at the Open Forum made helpful suggestions on how we could stop fly tipping in Milner Square. Residents had some constructive ideas which were used by an architect to produce a design which went to the Conservation Team. Unfortunately, the plans were rejected and instead we are now getting a quote from the Council's Greenspace team to add a hedge. Fly tipping continues. We will update the meeting with any progress. 		



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am working on the next Gazette if anyone has anything they'd like to include, let me know. 		
Resident Vulnerability Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners want to ensure that we know about any vulnerabilities a resident may have and how they may impact on their interaction with our service. Where possible we want to adapt our services to meet residents' needs. We are proposing to contact residents with the attached letter and form to ask them about their needs. Residents at the Open Forum were asked for their feedback which included: <p><u>Letter</u></p> <p>The letter is too blunt. It needs a softer introduction. We need to explain why we are asking for the information up front as people may be suspicious about our motives.</p> <p>We need to explain at the beginning why we are asking for the information. We need to say that it is for the residents' safety and to help them not us.</p> <p>Say that it is to help us to help you.</p> <p>We should tailor the letter for different circumstances e.g. if it is because of PEEPs, or information we've been given by a 3rd party etc.</p> <p><u>Form</u></p> <p>Residents suggested trying to reduce the writing to give more space to fill in free text boxes. Need to change to include leaseholders – say resident instead of tenant as this encompasses everyone.</p>	<p>Make recommended changes to form and post to attendees so that they can try to fill it in and give feedback on whether it works and suggest additional changes.</p>	

Partners Repairs Team Presentation	<p>Paula Redpath introduced the discussion by explaining the cyclical decorations process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners has a contractual obligation to complete cyclical decorations to every property no later than ever 7 years. The process includes an external survey where we look at the expected life span of elements of the building such as the roof, to see whether they will last a further 7 years. If we decide that they won't then we arrange for extensive repairs or a replacement. The current cyclical programme is the last that Partners will complete before the properties are handed back to Islington Council in 2033. Last year we worked in Elmore St, Essex Rd and Rotherfield St. This year we are working in Rotherfield, Mitchison, Ecclesbourne and Shepperton Roads. This year's programme is on Partners website: <u>Partners Provisional Cyclical Decoration Cycle 2026</u> The work includes painting of every previously painted surface. We expect work to take between 8-12 week, although this can take longer if planning permission is needed. Partners manage just over 1000 blocks – a block is the whole external envelope. This year we will be completing 156 blocks. Residents have previously told us that they do not want work completed around Christmas and want scaffolding removed before the Christmas period, therefore we must start the programme in January in order to finish by November. We start slowly in January with 8-10 scaffold going up and increase as the months go on and the weather improves with about 20 up during the summer. Once the scaffold is erected, we don't touch the property for the first 4 days whilst the safety manager ensures that the scaffold is safe. Once complete they hand the scaffold over to Partners and our surveyor visits. The surveyor compiles a works specification which then goes 		Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) – Partners staff member who is responsible for liaising with residents about their cyclical decorations work. The RLO is available to answer any questions and deal with any issues that may arise during the work.
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	<p>through our approvals process. 2 weeks later residents will see work starting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the temperature is below 5 degrees or it is raining, we won't carry out painting, rendering or cement works. Instead, we will complete internal communal redecoration works. • We find that towards the end of January beginning of February there are more days where the temperature is over 5 degrees. • We give residents a leaflet as part of the process and the Open Forum were asked for their feedback on it. The leaflet is available on our website: Cyclical Decorations Information Leaflet • Leaseholders are contacted by our Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) slightly earlier than tenants as they have to be consulted on costs. The RLO will contact residents to book in a condition survey where they look at the general condition of the property from the ground. They will introduce themselves to residents, check for any vulnerabilities, look at potential access issues, whether there are toys, pots etc in the garden which will need to be moved and answer any questions a resident has. They will book in a date for the scaffold to be erected. • All being well the scaffold will go up as planned and after handover within 5 days the surveyor will complete their survey. • Work starts with the rubbing down of windows and metalwork ready for them to be painted. • Before the scaffold is removed, the site manager identifies any snagging and work is completed. When the scaffold is taken down we have someone on site to clean off windows and window ledges. • Last year on average work took 8.6 weeks to complete. <p><u>Resident Questions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An attendee asked whether residents could request a copy of the survey once it has been completed. 		
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	<p>Residents are welcome to see the survey and these can be provided on request. It is worth noting that the specification can change during the work if something unexpected is found.</p> <p>2. It was suggested that the leaflet be amended to say that the RLO will visit and also that due to weather conditions the schedule of work can change.</p> <p>We will update the leaflet to include this.</p> <p>3. A resident at the meeting had a text to say that we were going to be coming the next day to complete internal decorations. The resident felt that this was short notice.</p> <p>It was agreed that this was short notice, and it was noted that it was probably due to the weather forecast meaning that external work couldn't be completed. Partners to investigate.</p> <p>4. Is the cyclical programme on the website?</p> <p>Yes, it is. You can see it here: <u>Partners Provisional Cyclical Decoration Cycle 2026</u></p> <p>5. Can residents request specific scaffolding teams? A resident cited previous issues with scaffolders but also teams that worked really well.</p> <p>We do our best to manage scaffolders. They are self-employed and therefore we can't guarantee who will be available in the months ahead. We work with our contractor Griffin to try to maintain a solid team. We have few complaints about scaffolders and would recommend residents speak to their RLO immediately if there are any issues.</p>	<p>Partners to investigate</p>	<p>Update leaflet to add suggestions</p>
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	<p>A resident noted that when she experienced an issue with the scaffolders, she spoke to the foreman who immediately sorted out the problem.</p> <p>6. Can residents take advantage of the scaffolding when it is up to install solar panels.</p> <p>Installation of solar panels would be considered as an alteration, and leaseholders need to request permission to install them via the alterations process. Details are available on our website: Apply to Buy Land/Alteration</p> <p>Islington Council also has guidance on the installation of solar panels on their website: Solar Panels Guidance</p> <p>If a resident would like to use the scaffolding, they need to contact Partners Repairs Contract Manager to request permission.</p> <p>7. Who decides when scaffolding goes up?</p> <p>Partners Repairs Contract Manager decides when scaffolding will go up. If scaffold is ever erected without sufficient notice, this would be due to an emergency repair. Residents can request for communication to be sent via email.</p> <p>One resident noted that their recent S20 wasn't sent by email despite her requesting it. Partners to investigate.</p> <p>8. Can scaffolding be taken down more promptly?</p> <p>We aim to complete work within 12 weeks and once work and snagging are complete, we take down the scaffolding immediately.</p> <p>9. Are gutters inspected as part of the work?</p>	Partners to investigate	
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	<p>It is a standing item on the work specification that gutters are inspected and cleared.</p> <p>10. If vegetation is covering railings, is it removed so that they can be painted?</p> <p>We would take this scenario on a case-by-case basis. Ideally, we would remove vegetation and paint, but we would liaise with residents where necessary.</p>		
Service Charges	<p>A resident at the meeting shared details of their service charge costs and questioned why they had increased by 50%. They also submitted these questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did the charges rise significantly from 2015/6 ending up at £366 in 2017/18, nearly double the £160-187 they had been for all the years 2002-2012 (For example the charges were over 50% more than their estimate in 2016/17) <p><i>The management fee covers the cost of administering and delivering essential services to all properties managed by Partners, including maintenance coordination, financial management, compliance, and resident support.</i></p> <p><i>In recent years, the cost of providing these services has increased significantly. This is due to a combination of factors, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rising inflation and supplier costs</i> • <i>Increased regulatory and compliance requirements</i> • <i>Higher staffing and operational expenses</i> <p><i>To ensure we can continue delivering services effectively and sustainably, it was necessary to adjust the management fee to reflect the actual cost of service provision.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Why did the charges leap up in 2024/25 to £613, more than twice their estimate of £305? 	<p>Resident to contact SC team to discuss their concerns</p>	

	<p><i>As above</i></p> <p>3. Why have the estimates varied rather wildly since 2021/22? <i>Under the terms of a lease, we can only recharge costs that are reasonably incurred in the management and maintenance of the building or estate. We continually review services to ensure they are necessary, delivered efficiently, and represent good value for money. Any increase in costs—such as inflation, contract changes, or essential repairs—will be apportioned fairly and transparently, in line with their lease obligations.</i></p> <p>4. I believe the charges were capped by the Council at £187 from at least 2008/9 to 2011/12. Why did this cap apparently end and how can the much higher charges since then be justified? <i>As above</i></p> <p>5. Please can appropriate refunds to leaseholders be arranged as soon as possible, and, if not, please can the Council arrange an independent audit of the source data with full accountability and transparent reporting back to leaseholders? <i>If a leaseholder believes that they have been unfairly charged, then they can submit a service charge challenge where costs and work completed will be reviewed. Full details of the procedure are on Partners website: www.partnersislington.net/publications/major-works-and-service-charge-challenges-leaflet/ and if charges are found to be incorrect leaseholders will be reimbursed.</i></p>		
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Next Meeting March 19th 1800-1900 Partners Home Ownership and Service Charge Teams