

Kennington Park Estate Tenants' and Residents' Association Annual Report 2018 to 2019 Annual General Meeting: 24 September 2019

Kennington Park Estate Tenants' Association has undertaken the following activities on behalf of all tenants and leaseholders during the period since the last KPETA AGM in September last year:

- **Kennington Park Community Centre**
- **Community Benefit Society**
- **Cleaning and grounds maintenance**
- **Estate Inspections and Fire Safety**
- **Communal repairs**
- **Lateral mains replacement programme**
- **Pest control**
- **Hangars for bike storage**
- **KPE Housing Office (Magee Street)**
- **Service charge scrutiny and review**
- **CCTV monitoring service**
- **Redevelopment of gas holder/Tesco site**
- **Redevelopment of the TfL/Flo site on Montford Place**
- **SCCC proposal for new spectator stand and Oval House Theatre site**

Community Centre

Over the last three years the Tenants' and Residents' Association has been engaged in the long and painstaking process of discussions with Hyde about the future of the Community Centre

In July 2017 the TA signed a Licence to Occupy the Community Centre for 12 months with the aim of demonstrating that the Community Centre could be operated as a financially viable concern which should continue to operate for the benefit of the local community and must be replaced if/when plans for the redevelopment of the site are proposed.

Last year it was agreed that the community could be given a longer lease on the Community Centre if an independent, formally registered, limited liability community organisation was established to take responsibility. Registration of Kennington Park Community Centre charitable Community Benefit Society was formally confirmed by the Financial Conduct Authority in September 2018.

After a year of negotiations with Hyde on the detail of the terms and conditions of legal agreements, the Lease and Management Agreement between Hyde and the new Community Benefit Society came into force on 1 September 2019.

The Community Benefit Society commissioned two weeks of activities for children in the school holidays in August this year. Some of the funding to pay for this has been raised and further donations would be welcome. The Christmas pantomime arranged and financed by the CBS was also a great success.

Cleaning and grounds maintenance

In the 2018 Annual Report the performance of the cleaning and grounds maintenance contractor was rated as disappointing. The contract for cleaning and grounds maintenance is with Cleanscapes/ Groundscapes. KPETA works very closely with the Property Manager on Estate Inspections. Grounds maintenance has improved significantly over the last year. Regular Estate Inspections focus on the cleaning service. Some cleaners provide a good service and in response, are encouraged and supported by TA representatives and the Property Manager, but improvement is required in other cases. The Property Manager regularly discusses performance with Cleanscapes managers.

Estate Inspections and Fire Safety

Estate Inspections with Matt Hopkins, the Property Manager also focus on ensuring safety on communal balconies. It is essential residents ensure that

balconies are clear of personal possessions, bicycles, etc which present a safety hazard.

Fire Risk Assessments: The TA continues to pursue the production of accurate, up to date fire risk assessments for the Estate. The FRAs undertaken in 2015 were flawed. Hyde has now appointed a different contractor for this critical work and the TA has insisted on a meeting with the new contractor to discuss the fire risk assessments completed in the last few months in relation to Kennington Park Estate

Communal repairs

Repairs required in communal areas are reported on every Estate Inspection. The response to repairs, in some cases requiring urgent attention, has been slow during 2019. Some repairs have been incompetent. The Property Manager and the TA have been in discussion with senior Hyde staff to ensure appropriate action is taken with reference to horizontal drains in court yards.

Communal Lights: Over several years the TA made strong representations to Hyde about the lack of an effective system of regular inspection and repair. It took far too long to resolve the issue. The cleaning contractor is responsible for replacing failed bulbs in balcony lights. However, the new LED balcony lighting recently installed in Key and Sherwin is to be maintained by specialist electrical contractors. As the new LED lighting has been installed partly on the basis that the 'light bulbs' last for years, blown bulbs should be a relatively rare occurrence.

Lateral Mains Replacement Programme

Towards the end of last year the TA intervened in the scheduling of the major works to replace communal electrical wiring in Key and Sherwin Houses. The TA was alarmed at the cost of the works to leaseholders, albeit, essential improvements required under electrical regulations. However, Hyde recently informed residents of Blades and Hornby of the cost of this work in their blocks. Based on the figures given by Hyde in July, the charge to leaseholders was estimated at a figure greatly in excess of the work in Key and Sherwin. The TA immediately made representations to Hyde to challenge the basis on which the same work was anticipated to cost so much more. In response Hyde reviewed the contract figures and reduced the costs to Blades and Hornby. Further discussion with Hyde is in hand.

Pest Control

Residents are aware there was an alarming pest infestation problem on the Estate last year. Very serious pest control measures had to be brought in. Also last year, residents were notified of Hyde's intention to make a separate service charge for the pest control contract. TA Officers investigated the terms of the new contract and were reassured to some extent that charges to residents would be based on pest control work actually undertaken. As it happens, a significant amount of pest control work has been required on the Estate over the last year. This does not apply only to rodents. A wasp nest was spotted and reported during an Estate Inspection and a fly infestation also had to be dealt with.

Hangars for secure bike storage

Residents will be pleased to see that, after a little delay, bike hangars have been installed in three blocks. At the time the Council announced it was to install a bike hangar in Clayton Street, the TA pressed the Council for more than one hangar in the roads serving the Estate. The Council responded by placing two bike hangars in Clayton Street.

Residents should be aware that it is a fire safety risk to store bicycles on balconies and it is, therefore, not permitted in communal areas where it impedes free movement, hampering potential means of escape.

KPE Housing Office, Magee Street

As reported at the last AGM, Hyde implemented a major restructure of housing management in 2016/17. There is no longer a Housing Officer for the Estate. Tenancy issues must be reported via Customer Services 0800 3 282 282 or by email, CustomerServices@hyde-housing.co.uk. Tenancy Advisors deal with tenancy issues on an appointments basis. Other issues, including repair requests can be reported to Customer Services by phone or email.

These changes mean there are now few services available from the Housing Office and Hyde has, therefore, reduced the opening hours. When the Magee Street office is not open during office hours, the Hyde Housing Office in Stockwell is available for purchase of parking permits and basic information.

As the TA is well aware, this modern, digital, on line system sometimes means vulnerable and/or elderly residents are left out. The TA supports residents when required to ensure good communication with Hyde and access to essential services.

Service charge scrutiny and review

The service charge actuals for 2018/19 should be published and issued to residents this month. The Tenants' Association continues to seek clarification and justification in relation to charges for servicing fire safety equipment and emergency lighting, legionella testing, playground safety inspections, communal lighting inspection and repair, and as always the disproportionate cost to KPE residents for closed circuit television monitoring and repair.

CCTV monitoring service

As reported by the TA last year and many times before, the contract for the CCTV monitoring service has cost KPE residents a disproportionately large amount in service charges over nine years, compared with the amount charged to Stockwell properties. At a special TA meeting, Hyde officers discussed a proposal for imposing a new, costly CCTV system on the Estate. Residents challenged the proposal in relation to value for money, justification for a costly, new service, lack of statistical and security impact assessments, compliance with OJEU rules, resident engagement, fair apportionment of charges, management of the service, etc. Little has been heard from Hyde since then and on behalf of residents the TA remains of the view that a costly new system would not be in our best interest.

Development of the gas holder and Tesco sites by Berkeley Homes

Berkeley Homes has now initiated regular community liaison meetings to ensure the community is kept up to date with progress on demolition and construction on the sites.

The temporary Tesco store opened at the end of July and the demolition of the old store is now complete. At the community liaison meeting on 13 August key sub contractors presented details of the imminent demolition work and of the work to dewater, decontaminate, then dismantle the gas holders. Keltbray is the specialist contractor commissioned to work on the gas holders. The Keltbray representative gave a stage by stage description of the work to be undertaken to dewater the gas holders. A detailed plan has to be submitted to the Environment Agency. A commitment was made to produce a notice for display on the hoarding notice boards and in the Tesco store with details of the work stages.

Information was also to be available on the Berkeley Homes Oval Village website.

In the discussion with Keltbray, the KPETA Secretary raised specific concerns in relation to the opening and decontamination of the main gas holder located next to Read and Kilner Houses. In response to concerns expressed on behalf of nearby residents, Berkeley Homes committed to distribute door to door information to Read and Kilner to ensure residents were made aware of the date on which the gas holder was to be opened to reveal the water, sludge, sediment, hydrocarbons etc, so that residents might be prepared for the noise and vibration of the cold cutting required to access the water and for the possibility of odours from the water and sludge which had been in situ for many years. The same applies in relation to Brockwell House and opening of the gas holder on the other side of Vauxhall Street.

There may be concerns for residents of Grace and Brockwell as servicing of the construction site is to be undertaken via Vauxhall Street. There are implications for road safety in this relatively narrow street and Cllr Holland intervened on behalf of concerned residents when the new one way cycle lane was removed to replace it with a contra flow cycle lane. Cllr Holland has asked Berkeley Homes to keep affected residents fully informed about such changes. The work to Vauxhall Street is at the expense of Berkeley Homes, not Council Tax payers.

TfL/Flo site redevelopment, Montford Place

The site is owned by Transport for London. In a partnership with Grainger plc, there is a plan to build some 150 homes including 40% affordable, plus live/work light industrial space/studios. Grainger is a registered provider (the status of a housing association) at the forefront of build to rent. TfL is to remain the freeholder of the site. TfL and Grainger intend to undertake wide, inclusive consultation in October.

Surrey County Cricket Club (The Oval)

Residents in KPE blocks close to the cricket ground have found the level of amplification of the Oval PA system in the last few months of great concern. Individuals have raised the issue with authorities at the Oval. In response to these concerns, Cllr Holland arranged a meeting with Richard Gould, the Chief Executive at the Oval. A KPETA representative attended the meeting. Richard Gould confirmed that further work had been undertaken on the PA system to ensure that the sound is directed into the ground with as little as possible escaping into the surrounding area. Residents have found the sound from the PA system less intrusive as a result.

Richard Gould also confirmed that construction of the new stand and facilities in place of the Peter May stand is scheduled to start in October this year and construction of the new hotel on the Oval House Theatre site in summer next year.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Some transactions relating to the Community Centre pass through the TRA bank account, and Hyde's grant for the Zumba Gold class is administered through it, so it does not accurately reflect transactions carried out solely for the administration of the TRA.

The current account balance stands at **£1,189.99** as at 22-09-19. We received an ex gratia payment of £50, and spent £572.02, £389.90 on poster/leaflet printing and delivery; £106.12 on website maintenance; and £76 on miscellaneous items.

Questions and comments from residents are welcome