

CHAIRMANS REPORT

Welcome to the AGM of the Norwich Leaseholders Association.

As I'm sure you all know, the NLA is a voluntary organization whose aim is to help, support and advise people who have a Leasehold on a property where the Freeholder is Norwich City Council.

This is our AGM

This is a meeting we are required to hold under our Constitution, and one of the main points of this meeting is to ensure that the business and organization of the NLA is being carried out correctly and transparently.

In particular we need to report on our financial affairs over the past year, and elect the committee and officers who will carry forward the business of the NLA for the coming year. We are required under our constitution to have a committee and officers, and to hold elections for those positions.

We have just heard the financial report from our Treasurer, Penny Ellis, and thank you for that. Before we move on to putting in place the committee and officers there are a few items worth mentioning.

Meetings with NCC

When we re-started after Lockdown the NLA committee decided not to resume meetings with Norwich City Council.

When we raised concerns, we were generally stonewalled. There was little communication and little transparency.

Moreover, the fact that there were meetings being held, did enable NCC to claim they had an ongoing dialogue with Leaseholders.

So we felt the meetings benefitted NCC more than it benefitted the NLA. As a result, the Committee decided against reinstating these meetings. This can be kept under review, and feel free to let us know your views on this point.

Communication

In general, people complain that:

- It is very hard to contact NCC. They don't answer their phone, sometimes for hours, they do not respond properly to letters.
- NCC do not meet their own timescales for response or action.
- There is a lack of transparency in their responses

Service charges generally

We've reached that time of year when NCC is sending out notices about service charges. We've been in contact with several individuals who feel, for various reasons, that their service charge is unduly high or incorrect.

Specific issues include Public Consultation not being carried out properly, which should preclude a charge above £250, and of course the perennial favourite, disproportionately high charges for building work.

Further specific issues are the high electricity bills and the resultant high management fees. We are interested in pursuing this issue, possibly to Tribunal, but we will need details from others on their experiences. Please contact us if you have had what you feel are unduly high, or incorrect electricity bills.

Drug dealing

We have had several reports of drug dealing within properties, and the emotional and mental strain inflicted on other law-abiding residents as a result of this unlawful behaviour, as well as the physical damage caused by the dealers and the police during raids, with, of course, the financial burden caused by the repeated repairs.

There is a view that NCC are not doing enough to combat this, and are letting council tenants with a history of drug dealing to continue to live there, inflicting misery and expense on law abiding residents.

Complaints procedure

There is a view that NCC does not follow their own Complaints procedure, particularly with regard to timescales. We are interested in pursuing this issue, possibly to Tribunal, but we will need details from others on their experiences. Please contact us if you have had a poor experience in relation to a complaint.

Boiler replacement Normandie tower

You may remember that NCC had been proposing replacing the boilers on Normandie Tower with new oil-fired boilers; the heating system with the worst environmental performance, the worst CO2 emissions, of any.

I wrote to NCC pointing out that it will be illegal to fit oil fired boilers on new build properties from 2025, and any new boilers fitted are likely to be running until the mid-2040's. I also pointed out that fitting oil fired boilers would be in direct contradiction to NCC's own 38-page Environmental strategy. NCC appear to have shelved their oil burning proposals, but won't say what their new proposals are. Maybe they don't have any yet.

Summary

So those are some of the issues which are occupying us at the moment. We can now move to the next item on the Agenda, the Nominations for Committee and Officers,