



## Leaseholders Panel Meeting Minutes

---

**Meeting No:** 5  
**Year:** 2016/17  
**Date/Time:** 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – 7:00PM  
**Venue:** 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW  
**Ref:** LPQM\_05

**Attendees:** Roy Blackmore (RB)  
Jane Elphick (JE)  
Ansy Fields (AFF)  
Aaron French (AF)  
John Lavender (JL)  
Nathan Thompson (NT)

**Apologies:** Jeff Hardman (JH)  
Philip Lervy (PL)

**Distributed by:** Nathan Thompson      Eastbourne Homes Ltd.

**Copied to:** Tony Sayers      Eastbourne Homes Ltd.

---

Item Actions

**1. APOLOGIES**

- 1.1. JH sent his apologies in advance of the meeting.
- 1.2. PL did not attend the meeting. No notice of his absence was received in advance. To be followed up.

**2. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

- 2.1. The Panel welcomed Mr William Lavender. Mr Lavender confirmed he prefers to be called 'John' (JL).
- 2.2. JL confirmed he has reviewed the last Panel minutes and is up-to-date on current matters. He is looking forward to working with the Panel in the future.
- 2.3. PL was the second new member however in his absence a welcome was not possible.

**3. MEMBER VACANCIES: UPDATE**

- 3.1. Interviews held for the new 7<sup>th</sup> member vacancy on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016.
- 3.2. The interviews were conducted by Sheila Roberts, Vice Chair of the Eastbourne Homes (EHL) Board, with NT sitting in. Two leaseholders were interviewed out of three who expressed an interest.
- 3.3. NT to submit details of both interviews to JH, who will make a final decision on the appointment. NT

**4. REVIEW PREVIOUS MINUTES ACTION POINTS**

- 4.1. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> member vacancies have been filled as per the above.
- 4.2. Letters were issued by NT to all leaseholders summarizing the outcomes of the last Focus Group and asking for feedback. These items will form part of the Panel's Annual Work Plan (AWP).

- 4.3. The Leaseholders Surgery Event is currently being planned and is due to take place on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2016.
  - 4.4. The Service Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2016-18 has been implemented and published on the EHL website. It will also be featured at the Leaseholders Surgery Event.
  - 4.5. Senior Management at EHL agreed for the Terms of Reference to be amended and the membership was changed from five to seven voting members.
  - 4.6. NT provided a report to the Panel confirming the density of leasehold properties in EBC blocks across the town. JL has not had sight of the report; NT confirmed he would send a copy to JL and PL. NT
  - 4.7. NT confirmed letters had not been issued in relation to Riverbourne House appointing a nominated person to attend a future meeting. The Panel agreed letters need to be sent for the next meeting. Further details discussed later in the agenda.
  - 4.8. Reserve fund details to be discussed at this meeting, with further details included later in the agenda.
  - 4.9. The last Panel minutes will be available in the report to the Service & Performance (S&P) Committee as standard, even if nothing else is submitted.
- 5. LEASEHOLDERS SURGERY EVENT (7<sup>th</sup> December 2016)**
- 5.1. NT confirmed the details for the Surgery, i.e. the date, the venue, the proposed set-up etc.
  - 5.2. Invitations have been issued by letter and email. Posters are within the reception of the EHL offices, the reception of the Town Hall and are being placed in the notice boards of the blocks of flats by the EBC Caretakers. A copy is also included on the EHL website and details uploaded to EHL's social media accounts.
  - 5.3. JH, RB, JE, AF, JL confirmed their attendance as part of the Leaseholders Panel 'station'. AFF confirmed

she would not be able to attend. Awaiting details from PL.

- 5.4. AFF commented that the attending members would need to be prepared to take potential contentious issues and people may bring their personal issues. It is agreed that these can be helpful to the Panel in understanding wider issues but the Panel understands their remit under the Terms of Reference.
- 5.5. NT confirmed that other departments will be in attendance therefore any individual queries that residents may have can be directed to the appropriate station.
- 5.6. NT also explained that the Leaseholders Panel 'station' would be slightly away from the rest to give an element of privacy should a resident want to discuss personal matters or matters relating to the EHL service. The Panel acknowledged this as a good idea.
- 5.7. A feedback box will be included inviting attendees to leave their comments. As this is the first of this event feedback is welcomed to shape future Surgeries. Feedback will also be received from each station after the event and collated by NT. All feedback to be discussed at the next Panel meeting.

NT

## **6. BLOCK RESERVE FUNDS**

- 6.1. NT presented EHL's proposal for the new block reserve funds. In short the process involves:
- Forecasts of capital works will be generated over a 30 year period, broken down into building elements. Each element includes a year due based on industry best practice and condition. There is no allowance for inflation.
  - The forecast period will start from 2021/2022, allowing time for the reserves to build. In the interim major works will still need to be completed and will be invoiced as they are now.
  - The cost is divided by the year due, producing a cost per annum per element. The funds

should then be available in the reserve at the time the repair is due.

- Demands for the reserves will be included in the service charges as per the lease terms (individual contributions based on service charge apportionments in the leases).
- All funds will be held in an interest bearing bank account. Each block will be accounted for separately. The method of handling funds is based on the RICS "Service Charge Code of Practice".
- The funds will be managed and administered by EHL. Residents will not be able to opt-out or change contributions etc. The funds will run with the property and transfer in the event of sales.
- Reserve contributions will be reviewed every 2-3 years. The reserve contributions will be updated to reflect changes to the forecast.
- Statements will be produced annually.

6.2. The Panel agreed overall that the proposal is sensible and necessary to prevent leaseholders periodically facing large bills without the required means to make payment in compliance with the lease terms.

6.3. RB reiterated that residents need to be put in a better position when facing large service charge invoices and agreed the reserves should assist with this, especially in the long term.

6.4. There was a concern about leaseholders having to pay for major works in the "interim period" as well as contributing the reserves for 5 years+. NT explained that EHL is aware this will be a contentious issue but cannot think of an alternative to allow the reserves to build whilst keeping up with the Landlords' maintenance responsibilities.

6.5. AFF believes there may be an alternative that could result in a lesser negative impact. AFF will draft something and send to NT by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2016.

AFF

6.6. JE also suggested an alternative by collecting the amounts due in from leaseholders billed for major

works in the interim period on arrears as part of the reserve funds over, say, 10 years (for example).

6.7. NT explained that the reserve funds are due to be implemented in the 2017/18 financial year. The deadline for costs to be submitted to our Finance Teams is the end of January 2017. All proposals will be reviewed, including any alternatives, and EHL will decide the method to adopt.

6.8. NT also confirmed that the reserve funds will be featured at the Leaseholders Surgery Event and details are included on the invites and posters.

## **7. REPORT TO THE NEXT SERVICE & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE (Due by 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017)**

7.1. The Panel has nothing specific to include as part of the next S&P Committee meeting.

7.2. NT confirmed the minutes would be included as previously noted. Should anyone wish for something to be submitted the deadline for drafting is the end of December 2016.

7.3. NT confirmed he would include details of the Leaseholders Surgery Event to make the Committee aware of its existence.

NT

## **8. REPRESENTATIVE FROM RIVERBOURNE HOUSE**

8.1. NT agreed to send the letter to residents following past confusion.

NT

8.2. The Panel confirmed the purpose of the letter is to ask residents to nominate a single leaseholder/shared owner to attend the next Panel meeting with an agenda item to discuss larger issues relevant to Riverbourne House.

8.3. There is no specific issue to discuss currently. Due to the large proportion of ownership in the block the Panel believes it is helpful to take the wider views where there are significant numbers affected.

- 8.4. It was agreed that the nominated person would provide a summary of the issues to discuss prior to the meeting.

## **9. LEASEHOLDERS' FACEBOOK PAGE**

- 9.1. The Panel discussed the feasibility of having a Facebook page specific for EHL Leaseholders. This was brought up at the last Focus Group.
- 9.2. AF was happy to manage the page however was concerned about controlling the content (i.e. offensive or unrelated posts) and limiting the people who could join the page. Without having all leaseholders names this couldn't be filtered. Due to Data Protection personal names cannot be produced to the Panel without the individuals' consent.
- 9.3. NT confirmed that the page does not have to include EHL, but should logos, company names or individual names be mentioned then approval would need to be run through EHL and a say on content and management may need to be agreed.
- 9.4. The Panel agreed at this stage not to set-up a specific page. The suggestion was included in the letter issued to residents summarising the last Focus Group. We will wait to receive feedback over the next few months and discuss again at the next meeting. To be repeated as an agenda item.

JH

## **10. AOB**

- 10.1. Following the Riverbourne House invite issue AFF brought up the overall concern about the responsibilities and communication in drafting and issuing correspondence to residents. On that occasion a letter did not go out at all due to the confusion and misunderstanding.
- 10.2. NT explained that when he accepted the role of Secretary this was on the understanding with the former Chair that this would be limited to the minutes of the meetings. There is no scope in his role with EHL, as the representative, to be responsible solely for all drafting and issuing on request.

- 10.3. NT agreed the importance of ensuring that in future we carry out all actions agreed in the meetings. NT suggested that all members should have a responsibility for drafting documents to go out and it shouldn't all fall on a single person. NT acknowledged that AFF has drafted many of the documents issued in the past and AF has already been tasked with managing the incoming emails.
- 10.4. All members were in agreement with joint drafting responsibilities. It was agreed the responsible person will be decided at each Panel meeting and the content discussed via the group email. NT confirmed he will always proof read the content before formatting and preparing to be issued.
- 10.5. The Panel confirmed that error messages are being received with any incoming emails to the group distribution email for the Leaseholders Panel. NT agreed to take this up with the EHL IT Department. NT
- 10.6. AF confirmed some feedback had already been received via the group email in relation to the letter recently issued regarding the last Focus Group. AF confirmed some of the issues were specific (i.e. to an outstanding repair). AFF confirmed this was still useful for the Panel to have knowledge of, but the Panel understands they are not responsible to address individual concerns.
- 10.7. The Panel agreed for AF to send a 'thank you' email response, including an assurance that the comments have been added to our database of common concerns, whilst reminding them that they need to contact EHL again if their concern requires further action. The Panel is happy to be updated should the matter remain unresolved. AF
- 10.8. AF will keep hard copies of all emails received and bring to the next Panel meeting for discussion. This will form part of the next agenda. JH
- 11. NEXT MEETING**
- 11.1. The next panel meeting is scheduled to be held on **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017 for 7:00PM** at 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW. NT