

Crescent House Residents' Liaison Group (RLG) Meeting 23 May 2024

Date: Thursday 23 May 2024 from 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm

Venue: Community Centre at 6.00 pm.

Attendees:

John Muldoon	Your Shout (Chair)
Charlie Drakesmith	Your Shout
Nick Condon	Independent consultant
Jacqueline Swanson	Leaseholder/CoL Officer
Two Leaseholders	
Three Tenants	

This is the seventeenth official meeting for the Crescent House Residents' Liaison Group. The meeting's agenda will be:

1. General Update:
Electric mains testing; Gas Consultant visit; Fire Engineer visit; void flats update
2. Tendering/Contract issues
Picking up from April's meeting
3. Louvres update
4. AOB

If you are unable to attend in person here is a Teams link.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 358 608 386 824

Passcode: zH8FXn

If you are unable to attend at all, let us know and we will record your apologies.

There was a change to the agenda with item 3 changing to 'Concrete cleaning' and 'Louvres update' and 'AOB' moving down to item 4 and 5 respectively.

Apologies: Two Leaseholders, Cllr Dawn Frampton and Cllr Ceri Wilkins.

1. General Update:

Electric supply testing; Gas Consultant visit; Fire Engineer visit; void flats update

Electric supply testing – the electric supply to Crescent House has been tested and we are awaiting a report. This will inform us of how much spare capacity there is in the system.

Note: organising this with UKPN has taken quite a while.

Gas Consultant visit - a Gas Engineer visited a number of flats to assess their gas boiler installations. He will produce a report so we can better ascertain how many properties will require a switch from gas to electric central heating once new windows are installed. This will be cross referenced with the electric supply capacity report.

Fire Engineer visit – a comprehensive fire assessment of CH, include a cladding assessment will be undertaken w/c 28 May. There are a number of unanswered questions, e.g. was the original glass part of the fire rating? The assessment will provide answers for what needs to be done to make sure that the installation of the new glass complies with current legislation.

Void flat update – tests on aluminium windows are being undertaken to establish the original finish. Work to refurbish window frames will start within the next couple of weeks – this will help inform how the project team plan for works across the wider estate. The planners and listed building consultants have been informed about the scope, which currently does not require planning or listed building consents.

The Architect and the Planning Consultant are working their way through all the planning conditions. The Architect has produced a series of booklets which clearly identify what the results are and what the feedback is, and the work they've done.

2. Tendering/Contract

Cost schedule - the cost consultant has been putting together a cost schedule, which will inform the basis of his cost budget. That cost schedule identifies every piece of work that's going to be undertaken under this project in very detailed terms.

As soon as the cost schedule is completed it will be forwarded to City of London Legal Team. They will assess and determine what they think is maintenance and what they think is betterment. From there it then goes to Committee to decide.

Tender – the Project manager is working closely with the CoL Procurement Team. They have suggested that rather than using a JCT (Joint Contracts Tribunal) standard fixed price contract we instead use an MTC (Measured Term Contract) which will allow us to include

fixed price items, like the roof work, but also measurable items like the windows as we won't know the level of work required on each set of windows until work begins.

An MTC also helps resolve another issue: contractually when the contractor starts work in a flat, that flat is effectively deemed the building site and as such, health and safety, insurance and everything else in that flat becomes the responsibility of the contractors. When they move out, before the resident moves back in, a certificate certifying work has been completed is required, signed off by the Architect. This effectively means 154 section completion certificates. The MCT form of contract has a sectional piece within it to enable us to do the above process in a more straightforward way.

We're looking at a completely different form of contract than originally planned so it is requiring extra work and input (Legal Team are drafting a bespoke contract) but we are still working towards the tender being published in July.

Question: is there going to be a penalty clause in the contact if the contractor doesn't deliver the programme?

Penalty clauses can be tricky as contractors can often find their way around them plus a very strong penalty clause may put off effective contractors; it can raise suspicions. For bad contractors, a fine can bring their company down which could result in having to find another contractor to complete a half-done job, which will be a lot more expensive. The right contract is clearly vital.

The key thing is to get the right contractor - make sure they understand that their team has to comply with the specification and their work is to the right standard; they can be trusted to do a good job. It's tempting to go for the cheapest tender, but what's really important is not the price but the final account. The cheapest tender at the start is usually the most expensive at the final point.

As part of the tendering process, there will be an open day for contractors to come and look at the pilot flat, so that they can know exactly what it is that they're dealing with.

3. Concrete cleaning

Concrete cleaning is not in the scope of works for the windows refurbishment. Concrete cleaning should be discussed further and the process established for getting it included in major works schedule.

Clarification: leaseholders have not been charged for concrete cleaning, the charges to date have been for concrete repairs.

4. Louvres update

Louvres are separate from the planning conditions. There needs to be clarification on the premise on which this work was undertaken (providing secure cross-ventilation in vaulted flats).

Investigations have produced various options, before these are presented to residents they need to be costed, viability ascertained (English Heritage) and approved by the CoL.

An informative evening was suggested, for presentation of work done to discharge planning conditions including glass panel under bookshelves, oriel etc plus potential options for louvre. A date and venue will be found.

5. AOB

Last week, Jacqueline gave a presentation to Cripplegate Ward Councillors regarding Crescent House and the wider estate. Jacqueline shared key points from the presentation with the RLG members. Jacqueline has been asked to attend future monthly meetings to update Cripplegate Cllrs on progress.

Other points:

Contractors will pay for any power used whilst working on a particular flat.

Why are first, second and third floor flats paying the same for the works despite having far less windows? Service charges are based on the dwelling % indicated in individual lease agreements and relate to the costs for the whole block. For example, residents on the ground floor of maisonette flats pay for lift maintenance / replacement etc

Jason's replacement was discussed – the role is currently being advertised.

Next RLG meeting Thursday 25 July, 18.00 – 19.00 in the Community Centre.