

Leasehold Forum Meeting

2 April 2025

Minutes

Present: Faith Elsegood, Housing Management Team Leader (Home Ownership)

Julie Hood, Housing Equalities and Engagement Facilitator

Kate Grandfield, Housing Management Service Manager

Nicola Colley-Samuels, Leasehold Management Officer

Tessa Bentley, Leasehold Management Officer

11 Leaseholders

Apologies: 7 received from Leaseholders

Julie Hood opened the meeting and welcomed everybody. City of York Council Officers introduced themselves.

Julie reminded the meeting that:

- although you are sitting in your home you are in a meeting; please do not do anything you wouldn't do in West Offices e.g. eat
- that everyone is in the meeting for their own reasons
- to treat everyone with respect at all times, this includes staff, attendees and any organisations present/discussed in the meeting.
- let others raise their issues
- Housing issues are the only issues staff may be able to change, they have no influence over other CYC departments e.g. Council Tax, Parking etc
- if it is suggested that your issue will be investigated outside of the meeting do not continue to discuss it
- no items will be discussed in any other business unless they have been sent 7 days prior to the meeting, under any circumstance.

Service Charges

Kate Grandfield

The service charge process has now been completed for this year with the bills and direct debit letters issued.

There have been some unexpected technical issues this year for which we apologise. If anyone has any queries, please contact the Leasehold team by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4

Some issues raised:

- a) Lighting is added to properties with no communal lighting. This has happened three years running. The charge is quickly removed but it is frustrating.

Action The Leasehold Team will investigate why this keeps happening

- b) The direct debit letters were sent before the actual bill

This was one of the technical issues. We are sorry that it happened

- c) The direct debit doesn't equate to the bill. The direct debit is £80 less than the bill

Unfortunately, the bills were not finalised before the notice of direct debits needed to be sent (for those who pay on the first of the month). This meant that the direct debit amounts were not as accurate as they could have been. If a Leaseholder would like a new direct debit letter to be sent please contact the Leasehold team by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4

- d) The service charge bill for my property was much higher than expected. The reason for this was the number of times the communal door had been repaired. The door is often damaged by others living in the block of flats. This usually happens after dark so the resident who damages it can't be identified.

If the resident can be identified they would be recharged the full amount. However we can investigate further. If these incidents of criminal damage have been reported to the Police, there will be a crime number.

We can use this to claim from our insurers. We can also investigate other options.

Action Kate to investigate. To feedback at the next meeting.

- e) There are repeated charges on a service charge bill for replacing the lock on the electric cupboard. This is because the City of York Council Officers keep losing the key. Why are we paying for this?

Kate will investigate this as this cost should not be passed to residents

Action Kate to investigate

- f) The direct debit letters state the schedule is for 2026/27

This is another of the technical issues this year. Our ICT company is working to make sure this is rectified. The information in the letter should be right. If you would like an amended letter please contact the Leasehold team by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4

- g) One of the Leaseholders present has not received their service charge bill.

These were posted last week so if it isn't received in the next week please contact the Leasehold team.

- h) The postal service prioritise business over residential. This means that the postman doesn't deliver to residential properties until after 12 noon. The trade button doesn't work after 12 noon so we often don't have a mail delivery for days at a time.

Action Kate will follow this up with Building Services colleagues

- i) The intercom was condemned last year so we have to use a key. We were supposed to be getting a new fob system. Can we find out when this will be happening

Action Kate will follow this up

- j) 2G and 3G systems will soon not work as this is being turned off. What will happen to the door systems that, currently, use these?

Action Kate will follow this up

- k) The communal lighting seems very expensive and we don't have any green space but are being charged for gardening

Personal information is needed which should not be shared within this meeting. Please contact the Leasehold team by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4 who will be able to provide a full response.

l) Can the service charge bills be sent by email. It would be more efficient

Action This will be investigated but there may be a legislative reason why the letters need to be sent by post

m) The allocation of charges on the bill don't seem to make sense. Some are 25%, some 33.3%

Please contact the Leasehold Team who will investigate

n) There is a lot of anti-social behaviour where I live, who do I report this to?

This should be reported to the Police and the Housing Management Officer. It can also be reported through the Leasehold Team by email housing.leaseholder@york.gov.uk or phone 01904 551550 option 4, option 4. They will then forward the report to the Housing Management Officer.

The new Good Neighbour Scheme has many tools that can be used to address issues.

Updates

Kate Grandfield

Garden Maintenance

The grass cutting standard is:

Between April and October there should be 6 grass cuts and 1 hedge cut.

Lawns and grassed areas are not edged and grass clippings are not collected.

Please send any feedback on quality or missed cuts to Maintenance.publicrealm@york.gov.uk

There are 6 Estate Workers across the city. The work they do is currently under review. Developing their work could include moss removal, cutting shrubs, leaf collection etc to make areas look more attractive.

Any ideas are welcome, please email housing.serviceimprovements@york.gov.uk

We are also developing a programme of Estate Walkabouts. These will include Officers from different departments, other organisations e.g. the Police (if relevant) Leaseholders and tenants. These will be around a defined area and will identify any improvements needed.

Parking on Housing Land

This is an ongoing project working with other departments to develop the scheme. This is progressing, slowly.

Please continue to report any parking that is illegal so that it can be investigated. To report a vehicle which is parked illegally call our **Parking Hotline** on telephone: 0800 1381119.

Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business received from Leaseholders at least 7 days prior to the meeting. As time was available it was agreed to answer an item that was received after the deadline.

Guidelines for using communal spaces

We are currently reviewing the Communal Space Policy. An external company is undertaking a telephone survey with 200 Leaseholders and tenants.

We would welcome your thoughts and ideas to include in the feedback. Please email housing.serviceimprovements@york.gov.uk

It is worth noting that everyone wants to use these spaces differently. For children to play, to grow plants, to sit and enjoy the sun quietly etc. Leaving toys and garden furniture outside can obstruct the grass cutting

Next Meeting

A date in July 2025, to be confirmed.

Agenda items

None were suggested