



Annual Leaseholder Forum

Thursday 26 October 2023

Feedback Information Leaflet

Background

This year, the forum covered a range of topics including planned and ongoing works to our high and low-rise blocks, confirmation of the plans for the four blocks at Horsefair, Pontefract, feedback from the 'On Your Street' project and the outcomes from last year's visits and the role of the Neighbourhood and Customer panels.

Overview

The forum attendees were welcomed by Sally Lister, Home Ownership Manager, who introduced the other speakers for the meeting, who were:

John Scarr – Resident Involvement Manager; and
Natalie Eden – Business Planning Officer.

Leaseholder updates included:

- Planned and ongoing works to high and low-rise blocks.
- Horsefair, Pontefract.
- New leases from June 2018 - legal requirements.
- Extending your lease.
- Leaseholder Survey 2023.

Planned and on-going works – Sally Lister

Leaseholders were informed of the following:

- External window insulation (EWI) and window replacement on the four city centre blocks - Warren, Trinity, Tudor, and Manor House.
- Fire safety works to Greenwood, Primrose and Carr House including sprinkler systems.
- ARC, fault detection device protection, for high-rise blocks, which upgrades the consumer units and will prevent any overheating of socket circuits and add to the fire prevention.

- Works are being planned for fire doors in internal communal spaces, within the next couple of years, which have been identified through 'fire risk assessments' carried out by Savills.
- WDH continues to maintain high-rise blocks through a robust cyclical maintenance program which includes:
 - fire suppression systems;
 - fire detection equipment;
 - passenger lifts;
 - bin chute inspection; and
 - high pressure vessels.
- WDH continues to review leaseholder certification in high-rise to ensure that homes are safe and compliant.
- WDH is looking to invest in new district heating and building management systems (BMS) to provide better economy and performance of systems and passing those savings onto our customers.
- Stock condition surveys are being planned for the next five years and blocks are going to be resurveyed in this period, so they may see non-WDH surveyors, who will be able to provide ID.
- Energy performance certification (EPC) program to all our properties / blocks, which is based on achieving an EPC rating 'C' for as many properties as possible, as part of ours and the UK's Decarbonisation Strategy. Cavity Wall Insulation (CWI) is one way of achieving this.

Horsefair, Pontefract – Sally Lister

Leaseholders were informed that of the 11 blocks, four were to be demolished by the end of Summer / Autumn 2024 and these were:

- Violet Pritchard House.
- Warren House.
- Silkstone House.
- Francis Lane House.

Sally asked if anyone knew who was the local, notorious architect, who had designed Horsefair and if anyone knew who the blocks have been named after?

Architect – John Poulson.

Names – eight were named after 'notable' Pontefract people:

Violet Pritchard- Mayoress.

Francis Lane.

George Wright - Landlord.

Gilbert Wilkinson.

Luke William - two blocks.

Thomas Hill.

Lewis Walsh.

The other two were named after coal seams at the former Prince of Wales Colliery, Pontefract which are Silkstone House and Warren House.

New Leases from June 2018 – Legal Requirements – Sally Lister

Sally reminded the Forum that all Leaseholders who had purchased their properties through either Right to Acquire or Preserved Right to Buy from June 2018 have a legal requirement to provide:

Five-yearly electrical safety certificates and an annual gas servicing safety certificate if applicable.

We will send out reminders and we can offer this service through our current 'Services for Leaseholders' but ultimately, it is their / your responsibility.

Extending your Lease – Sally Lister

Sally explained that although all leases are for initially for 125 years, some of them are now reaching over 40 years old and this could have an implication for reselling, if the new purchaser requires a mortgage.

Currently we advise seek advice from your own solicitor.

Although WDH, have not actually extended a lease yet, we are looking into the procedure, as it is a statutory obligation.

Leaseholder Annual survey 2023 – Sally Lister

It was confirmed that plans are now in place for the survey to be carried out by an external research company, through phone calls, within the next couple of months and feedback will be published on our website, in the New Year.

Customer Panel – John Scarr

John introduced WDH's Customer Panel. This is an opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to take part as a 'critical friend', helping us to review policies, procedures, plans and reports. If you would like to register your interest, please complete your registration here

["https://online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/3481ebaa-4da4-49de-98ce-928bd5e659da"](https://online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/3481ebaa-4da4-49de-98ce-928bd5e659da) The Panel offers mostly online opportunities to have your say but there are also in-person events from time to time.

On Your Street update – Natalie Eden

Natalie Eden, Business Planning Officer explained the On Your Street project and why we had carried it out. Initially it was to reconnect with our Tenants after the COVID-19 pandemic, offering support and to ask what the top priorities were in the neighbourhoods where they live.

This year we visited again to hand deliver our Customer Charters and again reach out to offer support available with the cost-of-living crisis through our Cash Wise Team, help with finding work, wellbeing support or help with adaptations to name a few. We also answered any questions around the steps being taken from the findings of On Your Street 2022.

Natalie explained the role of the Neighbourhood Panel and its attendees. Their main function was to ensure customers' views and input are heard and any queries addressed where possible. They will also play a pivotal role in the development of the new Neighbourhood Charters which will focus on addressing the Top Priorities within their neighbourhood from On Your Street 2022. The action plans on these charters will be reviewed quarterly in each meeting.

Natalie also advised the forum of the external services for Leaseholders, which include:

- Wakefield Council – Moneysmart- moneysmart@wakefield.gov.uk
- Local Welfare Provision (LWP): [0345 8506 506](tel:03458506506)
- Wakefield's Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) - wakefielddistrictcab.co.uk
- NHS and Wakefield Council Partnership - Live Well Team - livewellwakefield.nhs.uk

Also, of our in-house Cash Wise Team, that will assist with aid if you are a leaseholder with a child under 12 years, or if you have damp issues and a child under 16 years.

Questions and answers

Selling your Leasehold property:

Within the first ten years of a Leaseholder purchasing their property from WDH, they have to give us 'first refusal' to purchase it back, in accordance with their lease.

If a Leaseholder wishes to sell within the first five years of purchasing the property from us, they will be required to repay some of the discount, depending on the year, for example:

- Within the first year - 100% repayable.
- Two years – 80%.
- Three years – 60%.
- Four years – 40%.
- Five years – 20%.

All other questions raised on the forum invites have been responded to individually and any other individual / personal questions raised at the forum were either answered then or if further information was required the leaseholder was informed personally later.

We would like to thank those who attended the Forum and we look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting.

Should you require any further information on any of the subjects covered in the Forum, please call our OneCALL Team on [0345 8 507 507](tel:03458507507) or [01977 788 830](tel:01977788830).

Email: leaseholders@wdh.co.uk