

FLAG Committee Meeting

Date: Monday 24th November 2025

Time: 18:00

Location: Lorna Reith and Quentin Given's flat.

Present:

Members: Kathleen Laing (KL), Kath Sims (KS), Lorna Reith (LR), Melissa Carames (MC), Michael Baumgartner (MB), Pelagia Elefthiriades (PE), Quentin Given (QG), Elisa Velkeneers (EV), Samar Jaber (SJ) and Sinan Fahliogullari (SF).

1. **Welcome and introductions:** **LR** shared apologies sent by committee members Sylvia Morgan, Vicky Ladizhinskaya, Paul Collier and Suzanne Robinson. Attendees introduced themselves.
2. **Minutes of meeting held on September 8th.** **KL** requested a correction on page 1: the last paragraph should read 'KS' instead of 'KL', as it had been Kathryn Sims and not her who mentioned the new recycling centre. **MC** to correct and share revised document. Minutes were then agreed.

3. Matters arising:

a. **CCTV update:**

LR reported FLAG were still waiting for one camera to be installed in Armadale Close, on the lamp post which had recently been replaced. **SF** pointed out he had noticed a new camera attached to one of the blocks on Armadale, around the same area **LR** had referred to. **LR** to enquire if that was the outstanding camera.

LR mentioned that area was also the one **EV** had requested the council to install a new bicycle hangar. **EV** pointed out the area was also a hotspot of anti-social behaviour around towpath gate no. 4 and said she had chased the council again. **LR** will add the matter of the new cycling storage request to the follow up FLAG will do in relation to the issues raised by the ward councillor and FLAG during the estate inspection of 20th June.

LR had asked the council how long CCTV footage was kept for, following a resident's query. The answer was 31 days, after which they record over it; the council added that if somebody alerted them of an incident on an area covered by CCTV, they would keep the relevant footage for future needs.

b. **Compost update:**

LR informed the person in charge of the allotments of Jarrow Road was happy to accept small amounts of organic matter for their compost bin but not large bags of leaves.

KS suggested to get residents willing to donate compost bins and place them in suitable areas across the estate. She offered to buy one and place it in the green behind Jarrow Road maisonettes.

PE pointed out that Ferry Lane School would like to have a compost bin to deal with the gardening waste they produce.

SF raised his concern about compost bins being contaminated with rubbish by inconsiderate residents and other members of the public.

QG to follow up with the Estate Services manager and the Parks department to seek permission to place a compost bin in the green behind Jarrow Road.

c. **Police meetings:**

KL couldn't attend the most recent police panel meeting, so no report.

d. **Green areas maintenance update:**

QG informed of the new arrangement with the Parks department to get a monthly visit for the green areas maintenance. Most bushes were trimmed in October and some in mid-November, but the estate is not getting as much maintenance as needed. He explained this was a systemic problem across Haringey: the Parks department is short staffed and also recently discovered that 60% of their equipment (mowers and other electricals) had been stolen. They are trying to put precautions in place to prevent further theft (e.g. fitting tracking devices on equipment). FLAG will continue to monitor their work and ensure scheduled visits/mowing/trimming occur.

LR pointed out the poor maintenance of green areas had been raised at borough-wide meetings and other residents associations had complained. There is a new person in charge and he seems to be committed to improve the service.

SJ asked who was responsible for the vegetation along the railway on Jarrow Road, as overgrown bushes were compromising road safety. **LR** explained the stretch by the fence was railway land and not included on the council's green maintenance schedule.

QG pointed out the brambles had been trimmed by FLAG and could be done again if needed.

SF proposed to debate ideas on how to improve the estate at the next committee meeting. He suggested members to review the council's regeneration plans provided at the AGM and think how they would like the estate to look. We could exchange ideas and send a proposal to the Regeneration team. As an example, he mentioned the green at the top of the estate (between Jarrow Road and Ferry Lane) could be regenerated to make it more welcoming.

MC suggested to request lighting to be installed on the pathway leading from bus stop J (at the top of the green) to Reedham Close.

EV suggested to chase the Regeneration team to confirm the estate will not be built on.

LR, KS, EV and **PE** discussed the architectural significance of the estate and the possibility of having it declared a conservation area by the council. FLAG will ask on the Whatsapp group if any architects living in the estate would be willing to assist in writing a proposal to Haringey. 2027 is Haringey's Year of Culture and 2028 will mark the 50th anniversary of its construction.

e. **Speed limit reduction on Ferry Lane:** **LR** announced the speed limit on Ferry Lane from the retail park/bus station to the border with Waltham Forest had been reduced from 30 down to 20 miles per hour. Signs were being put up.

4. **New Parking scheme:**

LR announced the council had finally agreed to meet with FLAG to discuss the new parking scheme, after a lot of chasing them. It was agreed to propose the 9th of December, to invite residents to attend and to circulate the list of issues FLAG will raise at the meeting. **LR** listed:

- The rule of one permit per household.

- Erskine and Reedham residents to be allowed of apply for permits for Jarrow Road CPZ.
- Garage forecourt charging.
- EV permit rates: no discount for electric vehicles.

SJ raised concerns about the cost of permits for carers and the need for accessible parking. **LR** to send her info on the special arrangements for carers.

KS, EV, PE and **LR** discussed the unfairness of the proposed scheme and the impact on residents with multiple vehicles. **SJ** suggested to enquire a portion of the parking charges income could be directed to local improvements.

LR pointed out FLAG will continue pushing the council for the removal of abandoned/broken vehicles on the estate and the repair of unused garages to free up parking space.

LR and **MC** to update the FLAG website FAQs to include the Jarrow Road CPZ information and ensure relevant leaseholder contact/email addresses are posted.

5. **School Christmas Carol service – December 17th:**

LR and **PE** informed the school was organising a special Christmas carol service for older residents on the estate, with the children performing. FLAG will assist hand-delivering special leaflets inviting residents to the event and the Christmas cards made by the school children to older residents. A call for volunteers will be put on the Whatsapp group and via email.

LR invited members to the winter fair the school and FLAG were organising for Friday 12th December.

PE informed the school had a new PTA (parent-teacher association) which will become a charity.

6. **Finance & Newsletter:**

QG reported there were £1,100 on FLAG's account, enough to carry on for the following year. He will apply the annual council grant (standard £400) and request Haringey consideration for increased funding given our activity. The next newsletter will be printed by the end of this week, with the winter fair as the main feature on the front page and the results of the AGM as second feature. There is a need to recruit additional deliverers.

KS asked what the frequency of the newsletter was and suggested to give plenty notice to ensure more residents could help delivering them.

QG advised FLAG budgeted for 5 newsletters a year: one ahead of the AGM (November-December) and another one ahead of the Eco Day (June); the rest would be in between both events.

7. **Paint give-away and New Year litter picking date:**

QG explained that in the process of trying to locate FLAG's tree watering trolley which went missing twice, he had seen lots of tins of paint in the boiler house on Reedham Close and asked the Estate Services manager if it could be donated to residents. He agreed and the first giveaway was organised last Friday. The remaining paint was advertised on Freecycle and QG will be coordinating collections.

QG announced the intention to organize a community litter pick in early January. It will be advertised in the newsletter to call for volunteers and a date will be decided.

8. **Borough wide residents' meeting report:**

MC informed the next RA Network meeting will be on Monday 8th December. On the RA Network's Whatsapp group other RAs have shared their effort to challenge the council on the increased service charges and insurance charges to leaseholders.

9. **Christmas social event for FLAG volunteers – committee members, newsletter deliverers, litter pickers, tree waterers, etc.:**

LR proposed a similar Christmas social event to last year, inviting committee members, newsletter deliverers and active residents. She suggested using the office for the event, with members bringing their own alcohol and food.

KS offered to host it at her house and mentioned Tom had also offered his. It was decided to have it at KS's on Tuesday 9th December after the Parking scheme meeting with the council.

10. **Date of next meeting and AOB:**

a. **Next meeting:** **LR** to circulate a Doodle poll to fix the next FLAG meeting date in early February (avoid Mondays where possible).

b. **Key for Estate Management Office:** **LR** and **QG** explained FLAG the Estate Management office has two doors at the entrance and the second one hadn't been locked for years and FLAG never had a key for it. This evening they found that door locked and couldn't get in to hold this committee meeting. FLAG will pursue obtaining a copy of the key.
(update: this has been sorted out)

c. **Communal electricity cupboard at Kessock Close block:**

PE asked the committee to establish who has keys to access the communal electricity cupboard at the ground floor of her block. She explained two weeks prior an engineer working for her found the fuses feeding electricity to the extractor fan at her property had been tampered with. In the past she had approached the estate caretakers to establish who holds keys to that cupboard, but to no avail.

LR and **QG** to enquire with the Estate Services manager and clarify responsibility for communal fuses/repairs.

d. **Whatsapp group on Turkish:**

SF proposed to create a Whatsapp group for the Turkish speaking residents to improve engagement in consultations.

QG suggested SF to draft a short blurb in Turkish to advertise the initiative on the newsletter.

LR emphasised the need for moderation to avoid personal conflicts and suggested SF to translate the Whatsapp rules on the FLAG group info into Turkish.

PE offered to send an email to parents of the school to help promoting the group once it is set.

e. **Farmers market:**

SF suggested organising a farmers' market within the estate to increase footfall and connect it with the rest of the Tottenham communities: it would cater not only for the estate residents but for Hale Village and people walking along the river. He shared examples of successful farmers' markets in other areas. Residents could sell homemade food or homegrown produce.

KS, LR and **PE** joined the discussion about the feasibility, including potential sites and challenges. There had already been a food market within the school premises; it was linked to the estates convenience store's old owner and it didn't succeed.

QG mentioned the development being built by Tottenham Hale station had a potential site for a market.

SF discussed to contact organisers of market at Stroud Green.

LR suggested to contact Lock 17.

11. Leaseholder issues – insurance & service charges:

LR explained the letter of complaint FLAG wrote to the council's chief executive (CEO) had been shared on our website and also with other Haringey residents associations. The CEO referred the matter to the head of Leaseholder Services, who responded unsatisfactorily; Vicky (FLAG's assistant secretary), SF and LR met to discuss a reply and SF was asked to draft it. She also mentioned the head of Leaseholder Services had not responded yet to the second-stage complaint from August, which involved charges for fire extinguishers and other issues.

SF discussed the idea of creating a headache for the council to ensure they address the issues properly and shared the main items to be included on FLAG's reply:

- The first main issue is the building insurance costs, which increased by 40% and then decreased after switching providers. He questioned why the council did not reduce costs earlier and pointed to potential maladministration in contract management and procurement. The council also dismissed comparisons with other councils, arguing that housing stock differences made comparisons impossible. SF highlighted the inconsistency in how building insurance charges are distributed among leaseholders, with some paying significantly more than others. The council uses the most recent valuation for insurance charges, which creates discrepancies based on when flats were valued. FLAG will argue that the council's method is against the contractual terms and questions the legal and technical basis for it.
- The other main issue is the council's lack of accountability on service charge estimates. FLAG's point is that sending inaccurate bills to thousands of people has become their business-as-usual practice. There is inaccuracy on the small amounts (e.g. entry systems) but also in big amounts. FLAG's intention is not to be Haringey's quality assurance officers, but they don't proactively do it. There is also their lack of transparency, as they don't engage, don't share the documentation.

PE shared her experience of dealing with service charges and estimated bills, expressing frustration with the process; she mentioned contacting the mortgage company to backdate service charges to 2004. She described a negative experience with a council telephone adviser, who was rude and patronising. She suggested that the council should provide better online tools for leaseholders.

LR explained that estimates are sent in advance, and the actual bill is sent at the end of the year, based on actual costs. She discussed the broader issue of customer service at the council, including long wait times on the phone and lack of transparency. The council is facing a recruitment freeze, which is affecting their ability to improve customer service. She mentioned the council is now hiring to address these issues, which should improve service in the future.

EV discussed her interaction with a council officer at the last Estate surgery, where she raised the errors in the council's calculations and questioned the council's process for correcting these errors. Together with the officer, they went through the invoice and found many errors (e.g. pest control, controlled entry system, graffiti). The officer acknowledged those errors and said it would be fixed. However, it wasn't clear if they would fix it for all the relevant properties; she will follow up this with the council. She also raised the sharp increase on insurance cost: the

officer was not able to address that, but told EV the calculations were based on the property's latest valuation figures per flat. Prior to the surgery, EV had already contacted the Leaseholders team requesting information to support their calculations and had received two fire reports and been referred to the Insurance team, who first refused to share information with her and even asked the Leaseholders team to stop referring that type of queries to them. The head of the Leaseholders intervened to remind the Insurance team it was their duty to provide the information EV had requested. She is still waiting for a reply. She will follow up with the council and share any outcomes with FLAG.

LR suggested to approach the head of Leaseholders at the next Continuous Improvement meeting [a borough-wide residents group both LR and SF are part of] and discuss all these issues with her and to send the drafted response directly to the CEO.

EV raised the council's plan to replace fire doors in 2027 and the council's responsibility for their maintenance. **LR** explained the council did an inspection of all doors and corrected some errors, but still insists on replacing certain doors. **PE** noted that leaseholders have had to pay extra for door replacements multiple times. **LR** to chase the council for documentary proof and certificates for communal fire doors and request any missing fire-door test records. This is to ensure leaseholders are not unfairly burdened

SF discussed the service level agreements for cleaning and maintenance in the buildings and suggested to request a refund for inadequate service. **LR** mentioned that the council had recognised the need to improve service levels in other estates.

EV, SF and **LR** discussed the best way to keep each other informed on the progress of individual queries and it was decided to always copy the FLAG email address on leaseholder correspondence so all communication is archived for potential legal action or Ombudsman evidence.