

Leaseholders to vote in future board elections

IN an important new step Cross Keys Homes' management board has agreed to approve the right of all leaseholders to vote in future tenant board member elections.

Previously, following advice from the independent tenant advisor Insights, leaseholders have been able to put themselves forward for election on to the board but their fellow leaseholders have been unable to take part in the ballot process.

However, at the board's meeting in August chief executive Mick Leggett backed by the chair Cyril Brown put forward the new proposal.

Mick said: "More than nine per cent of the properties transferring to Cross Keys Homes are occupied by leaseholders. We have listened to leaseholders' views and feel it's important that they have an opportunity to influence future decisions."

Cyril added: "I am delighted the board has agreed to give leaseholders a vote in future board member elections. It will enable this important group to have a fair chance of getting their views across."

The members also agreed to consider at their next annual general meeting the possibility of a leaseholder or shared-owner becoming a permanent member of the board.

In another positive step leaseholder Patricia Nash has been welcomed as a new council representative. Cllr Nash, who represents North Bretton, joins the board alongside Dogsthorpe Cllr Adrian Miners in place of Cllrs Raja Akhtar and Isobel Bain.

- Next month will be the first opportunity for leaseholders to put themselves forward for election on to the board following the recent resignation of Rita Young. Full details of how to apply will be published in the next tenants' newsletter, which will be delivered to leaseholders from October 4.



Mick Leggett
Chief executive



Cllr Patricia Nash

Have your say at new forum



Chair: Rob Hutt



Vice-Chair: Asgar Thaver

LEASEHOLDERS are being invited to voice their opinions at the first meeting of a newly formed group. The leaseholders' forum has been set-up by Peterborough City Council and Cross Keys Homes which will take over the council's housing stock in October.

More than 25 leaseholders attended the forum's inaugural meeting at the Peterborough United Football club in June, to elect a chair and vice chair of the group.

Chair of the forum Rob Hutt, from Orton Malborne, said: "It's important we have a mechanism to get our views across and to keep ahead of what's going on.

"All leaseholders are invited to attend our meetings and in order for democracy to work I would urge them to do so."

Vice-chair Asgar Thaver from Eastgate, added: "I put myself forward as vice-chairman because I wanted leaseholders from black minority and ethnic groups to have a worthy representative."

Councillor John Holdich the council's cabinet member for housing, said: "Some leaseholders have previously raised concerns because under the Government's rules they didn't have a vote in the ballot to elect Cross Keys Homes. This was because the transfer will not affect the terms of their lease.

"Cross Keys Homes is a listening organisation and this forum has been set-up to involve leaseholders and provide them with an opportunity to get involved."

- The first meeting of the forum will take place from 7.30pm on Tuesday, September 14, in the Executive Suite of Peterborough United Football Club, London Road, Peterborough. For further information or to find out how you can get involved contact the involvement team on 01733 425445.

New windows and doors at city market

LEASEHOLDERS are being invited to find out about their new windows and doors at Cross Keys Homes' improvements exhibition.

The market stall in Cattle Market Road in the city centre is now exhibiting the double-glazed windows and external high-security doors which leaseholders will benefit from under Cross Keys Homes.



Claire Pudney
leaseholder officer



Elaine Somers
leaseholder officer

Elaine Seager principal enforcement

officer for leasehold matters, said: "Leaseholders will be able to try out the new doors and windows that they will be offered as part of Cross Keys Homes' improvement programme which is due to be published in late September.

"We would like to advise them that if their lease states they can be charged for improvement works, arrangements can be made for this to be paid in instalments.

"Cross Keys Homes will consult with leaseholders about the windows and doors prior to any works being carried out."

Exhibition manager Laura Nichols will be on-hand at the market stall to answer any queries relating to the make-up of the doors and windows. Any comments concerning the terms of lease and payment contributions for improvements will be passed on to the leaseholder officers Claire Pudney and Elaine Somers who will be only too happy to respond directly.

- The exhibition is open from 9am to 4pm, Tuesday to Saturday, and runs until Saturday, October 2. To find out more visit the stall at unit 133, adjacent to the foodhall in Cattle Market Road.

Ground rent demand

CHANGES to legislation mean leaseholders will now receive a separate bill for their ground rent.

Previously the £10 charge was included within the annual service charge invoice. Under the Commonhold and Leaseholder Reform Act 2002, a separate bill will be issued within 30 days of the anniversary of the lease.

Elaine Seager principal enforcement officer for leasehold matters, said: "We would like to reassure leaseholders that there is no need to be alarmed or concerned by the wording – 'demand' as the letter is only a reminder.

"There is no change to the amount they have to pay only to the way in which the ground rent is now billed – separately to the service charge invoice."

Insurance advice

IF your lease states that you need to be included in Peterborough City Council's block buildings insurance you do not need to take out any additional buildings insurance cover. However, you are advised to take out your own insurance for contents. After October this will be Cross Keys Homes' block buildings insurance.

If you are uncertain about what cover you need, please contact the leasehold officers on 01733 425453.

Your news – your views

TELL us what information you would like to see in this newsletter.

Send your comments to Kelly Swift communications manager, Cross Keys Homes, Peterborough City Council, Maskew Avenue, Peterborough, PE1 2AY, or email kelly.swift@crosskeyshomes.co.uk

Frequently asked questions

Q: When will I receive my service charge invoice?

A: This year's service charge invoices are currently being produced and will be sent out to everyone who is due to receive one within the next two months. From 2005 invoices will be sent out between April and September in each financial year.

Q: What does the management and admin fee cover?

A: It covers employee costs for the management of leaseholder properties. For example dealing with queries relating to leases, giving advice and guidance. It also includes postage and stationery costs.

Q: Why are last year's repair charges included within this year's invoice?

A: We are unable to charge for repairs for the current year as they are still subject to change if further repairs need to be carried out. For this reason we estimate an advanced charge and any amendments are then made in the following year's invoice.

Q: Can I pay the balance of my service charge in instalments?

A: Yes. If you wish to pay your bill in instalments please contact Anthony Knight on 01733 425455.

Q: I have sold my property what do I need to do?

A: If you have sold your leasehold property a notice of assignment must be served and a £25 fee is payable. For further information or to obtain this notice please speak to the solicitor dealing with your property sale. It is important that you inform Cross Keys Homes of your sale otherwise the lease will remain in your name and you will continue to receive correspondence and invoices from us.

Send your questions to

kelly.swift@crosskeyshomes.co.uk