

March
2024

Recognised Tenants
Association
Company Number - 06826092
Incorporated - 20/2/2009



PEEL COMMON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Sarah Woodman - Chairperson

Since joining the PCRA last November I have discovered the huge contribution that PCRA committee members selflessly give their time, free of charge, to support and keep our beautiful estate running ship shape and safe. This work includes negotiating reductions of the annual service charge which would have been a lot higher had the CEO not intervened and challenged MLM's initial accounts, providing all kinds of advice and support to residents from receiving complaints about parking, dog mess, fireworks etc, responding to reports of potential hazards, enhancing the services on the estate, addressing and liaising with the gardening team for landscaping requests or queries and attending local consultations on behalf of residents including the recent consultation on the future of the Peel Common Schools. I feel it prudent to use my first newsletter to highlight, recognise and thank our committee members and to promote the importance of resident membership (£10 per annum) to enable this vital service to continue. The role of the Chair is equally as demanding and I have assisted numerous residents this past 4 months with advice and information and liaised with the gardening team, managing agent and counsellors. Roy Wilkinson (CEO) has also put together an article on Page 2 – Your Greatest Asset – which also reiterates the importance of a resident's association.

Chris Barstow - Vice Chair

- Provides first line support to the Chairperson.
- Attends consultations/meetings representing the resident's association.
- Responds to lighting enquiries / issues and investigates, arranges remedial work.
- Should be recognised for the huge project recently undertaken to upgrade the estates street lighting.

Phil Adams - Membership Secretary/Website Manager

- Collates registration and issues membership cards.
- Monitors and assists residents with access to the PCRA website. Adding information for the For Sale and Trades and Services pages and members only pages.
- Issues passwords for PCRA members to access the members library.

Dave Vallance - Health & Safety

- Health & Safety oversight of approximately 70 acres, around 40 acres of houses with their gardens, 30 acres of landscaped open spaces, interspaced by Fifteen miles of paved footpaths.
- Responds to concerns/incidents with site visits.
- Arranges remedial work or providing advice.
- Documents incidents for records.
- Scrutinises the insurance policies.
- And overall, with residents' assistance, keeps the estate a safe place to walk around.

Treasurer – Margaret Harrowsmith/ Joanne Donovan

- Prepares trial balance submission for accountants.
- Reconciles bank accounts.
- Carries out all aspects of banking, liaising with Membership Secretary.
- Provides the Company House confirmation paperwork.

Secretary – Marian Cobbett

- Minute taking of committee meetings and AGM.

Sub Committee Members

Tara Suares – Attends committee meetings, distributes newsletters and membership cards with help of volunteers

Mark Chorley – Attends committee meeting,



LOOKING AFTER YOUR GREATEST ASSET – THE PCRA CEO

Roy Wilkinson

The most important benefit we all have and therefore considered probably our main asset, are our homes. It does come however with some strings attached.

SETTING A SERVICE CHARGE

- When the Peel Common Estate came to fruition it was fully leasehold (all 544 dwellings) and each property came with a leasehold contract covering legal caveats for conditions of use. The contract was for 999 years and all homes paid a yearly £5 rent to the estates owner – the landlord. Unlike other typical leasehold properties however (Large blocks containing individual flats) each dwelling itself was maintained fully by the leaseholder and only the surrounding grounds of the Peel Common Estates property was required to be collectively maintained. This part known as the communal area was under the responsibility of the landlord and included a maintenance cost levied against the leaseholder in the form of a service charge.
- A typical definition of a service charge is that it is a payment that the property occupier (resident freeholder or tenant leaseholder) pays for services related to the upkeep of any communal areas attached to their home. On Peel Common the only areas attached to the homes are the open garden areas including pathways and street lighting

THE CHANGES AND INFLATION FACTOR

- It is difficult to understand how the Peel Common Estate was designed with a rent that over time could not be inflationary increased. This proved to be a major oversight for the Landlord as rising inflation verified the low rent disadvantage by reducing substantial profits for ownership of the Peel Common Estate. History has proved this as the estate, throughout its existence has had many reluctant owners.
- Over the years the actual ownership of the individual homes changed considerably and more than 70% have been purchased through a favourable enfranchisement. Most resident property leaseholders have now become freeholders but importantly, instructions concerning the imposition of major lease caveat restrictions have been transferred to the enfranchised freeholder's title.

It is the aim of the PCRA to have a voice in the spending of the Service Charge and continue to protect the integrity of the Peel Common Estate and its residents. The Service Charge fund is ring fenced for Peel Common Estate expenditure and includes a legal obligation on the estate landowner or its contracted management agent to provide a fit for purpose service that does not allow standards on the estate to fall. It needs a recognised residents association to make this an enforced condition.

NEGLECTED OR PROTECTED

- Like most large privately owned property developments, the Peel Common Estate is looked after by a managing agent. To make life more difficult for the estate however, the managing agent is remotely situated in north London. Coupled to this is the fact that the beneficial owner is absent to the point that he does not communicate with his managing agent. This is a recipe for a life of poor administration and bad practice.
- The question to be asked is what does this mean for the resident and raises the question of ownership responsibility. As a landowner why bother to remain the title-holder of gardens and open spaces that provide no financial gain? This lack of benefit on the part of the landlord may pose some misgivings and concern for the future of the Peel Common Estate.

THE CASE FOR SELF PROTECTION

- It is evident that there is a need for a backup plan to provide the cover for collective concern and action. Currently this is provided by the Residents Association however this asset can be viewed as having its limitations and is reliant upon the strength of a strong residents association.
- Toward this aim the Peel Common Estate has a proactive residents association that has made its managing agent fully aware of its responsibilities. To this end and to show its determination the residents association has taken on various tasks that the current arms length management would find difficult to accommodate.
- Also, the bulk of the maintenance work is carried out by a remarkable on site, hard working, gardening team that work closely with the residents association.
- Primarily the efforts and dedication of the residents association, though often taken for granted is basically well regarded by non member residents. Support however tends to occur in the mind and not by action. The strength of the membership does not match the effort of protection leaving the association with a need to punch above its weight. This current asset, to vigorously fight their corner, is very precarious and depends very much upon volunteers and disappointedly, the diminishing membership.
- The current apathy to the Reality of the Situation should be regarded very seriously. The Peel Common Estate has the means to continue self protection and ensure an uncomplicated future. Disregard and lack of support of this asset is considered sheer folly.

For membership advice contact the Membership Secretary - Mr Phil Adams.
Drop off Membership Applications, Membership fees at 38 The Parkway or Contact the PCRA at 22 Tern Walk. (post box) or e-mail peelcommonRA@gmail.com or Contact PCRA on 02392 161202 (leave a message)



An Electrical Condition Inspection Report was conducted in April 2022, to assess the general condition and the work needed to bring the street lighting up to a satisfactory and efficient level. With the certification provided upon completion enabled the estate to update its energy provider and carry out repairs identified during the testing period. Passing on this updated information gave an accurate reflection on the costs of energy usage. The comparison with the previous history provided a readjustment of street light ownership to 86 streetlights. Originally due to the way the numbering was previously shown on the certificate, the number of street lights appeared to indicate 96! This work helped facilitate a clearer picture of the estate allowing us to put in place a plan of direction on the street lighting system.

Phase 1

Provide a definitive plan of the Peel Common Street light ownership to be used by SSE (Scottish Southern Electric) to collect energy charges. Currently there are still areas of unknown ownership and repair and when this phase is complete our Vice Chairman will liaise with SSE to confirm the Peel Common Ownership.



Phase 2

Currently Hampshire run a ‘darkness to pre-dawn switch off’ on street lighting. This is a cost cutting exercise but also fits in with the county Eco ambitions. The Vice Chair has been in communication with SSE, and they have stated the Peel Common Street lighting supply could be included in their switch off program. For this to move on, it is essential that MLM agree to the PCRA involvement and any subsequent decisions with SSE.

Phase 3

The payment of invoices for unmetered supplies has always been a bone of contention, making estimates of electrical energy costs at budget time very difficult. It is hoped that a better understanding of the complicated energy usage and correct billing costs would be more effective under the guidance of the PCRA. The Vice Chair would require MLM agreement to be given permission as a spokesperson to represent the interests of us, the user. This would include the ability to select the best and cheapest provider.

REPAIRS – The certification we received allowed us to break these down with urgent repairs being prioritized. Working with MLM, it was arranged for SSEN (Scottish Southern Electricity Networks) to make safe a few streetlights. Whilst we paid for some of these repairs, others were completed to make safe at no cost. It was at this point that conversations with a nationwide streetlight contractor were started -SSE Streetlight, now rebranded and known as ENERVEO. With part of our future phase planning to reduce our energy usage, working alongside, and using a nationwide streetlight company will help us in the long run.

NEARLY THERE – With all the urgent repairs completed, plans on the next phase of works with energy reductions have started to be reviewed. The main highway streetlights work on a photocell with a built-in timer which turn the lights on at dusk, then turn off at 12:00am, before coming back on at 05:30am for the last hour or so before sunrise. Against the current set up of the estate lighting this is a 50% cost/energy saving.

At the time of writing, this work is now nearing completion, and a few early morning walks have confirmed the photocells are turning the lights off when they should.

After all the work that’s been completed, an update to our energy supplier of the adjustments to the photocells that have the built in timers, bring all the estate street lighting into a cost saving, eco-energy saving environment.



GARDENING UPDATE – Clive Lightfoot

Well Friends, another winter is almost over and good riddance to it! Not so cold but wet and stormy, luckily the estate didn't have too much damage.

The rain however, has caused some flooding on some paths. The water table has risen and unfortunately there isn't much we can do about it, but it is the same all over, not just the Peel Common estate. The paths do tend to clear in a day or two. At one point I thought we were living in Venice but with not so many gondolas!

We have finished the digging and edging of the rose and shrub beds and we are just waiting for the lawns to dry out a bit ready for grass cutting.

In the meantime, we are reducing some hedges and pruning some of the smaller trees. The mild weather does mean that the roses have some lovely new shoots on after their late autumn prune. This has of course complimented the daffodils that are now in their full glory. So enjoy this lovely time of year and lets look forward to the warmer weather



We are extremely fortunate to have a team of conscientious gardeners that go above and beyond their remit to keep our beautiful estate so well-manicured. With an estate like Peel Common it is important to have a bespoke contract gardening team who maintain to such a high standard. The PCRA, and I am sure all residents, extend their thanks for the team's work.



Help to keep our communal grounds beautiful



Please refrain from driving on grass verges or allowing contractors to do so when carrying out works to your home



Please use the bins sited around the estate for litter and pick up after your dogs



Donations of unwanted shrubs gratefully received during Spring to be repurposed in the estate's communal areas

Useful Information

PCRA WEBSITE

To use the Market place and advertise on the Trades and Services contact Phil Adams, at peelcommonRA@gmail.com or Phone 02392 161202 (leave a message)

The PCRA website www.peelcommonresidents.co.uk

holds a plethora of information relevant to the estate. It is viewable by all with such items as, enfranchisement, the proposed Newgate Lane Housing and Newsletters. There is also a member area, for PCRA members that hold budget reports, accounts and AGM minutes. **THE TRADES AND SERVICES PAGE CONTAINS ADVERTISEMENTS FROM LOCAL TRADERS AND IS BEING UPDATED OFTEN WITH FURTHER ADVERTS APPEARING ON A REGULAR BASIS.**

To contact the PCRA telephone **02392 161202** and **leave a message**

This is an answer service and only messages with a request for a call back will be responded to

Do not have access to computer or telephone? Drop a letter into the mailbox at **22 Tern Walk.**

Estate Street Lighting: Chris Bairstow 07305 873746 or e-mail chrisbairstow.PCRA@outlook.com

Health & Safety: Dave Vallance (PCRA Health and Safety Officer) dj.vallance@virginmedia.com

Membership/Website/Enfranchisement: Phil Adams (Drop off Membership Applications, Membership fees at 38 The Parkway or Contact the PCRA at 22 Tern Walk. (post box) or e-mail — peelcommonRA@gmail.com or Phone the PCRA on 02392 161202 (leave a message)

WHAT WE DO

- Advise on the budget for the Service Charge
- Scrutinise service charge expenditure
- Examine Managing Agents independent end of year service charge accounts
- Advise the managing agent on all Estate issues
- Assist with advice on freehold purchase
- Organise Street lighting repair and replacement
- Organise pathway repair and advise on health issues
- Advise on distribution of costs for gardening
- Liaise with the gardener on maintenance issues
- Liaise with gardener on resident issues
- Support or advise on neighbour disputes
- Support or advise residents on title issues and caveats
- Liaise with GBC on such issues as dog fouling and fly tipping
- Provide a website that holds important estate information

Managing Agent:

e-mail - billing@mlmproperty.co.uk Telephone 0208 492 9850 or 0208 492 9855

Write to – MLM Billing Team, Premiere House, Elstree Way, Borehamwood WD6 1JH