Leaseholders question time – meeting notes

Date: 1 October 2026

Purpose:
To answer leaseholder questions submitted in advance and raised during the session, provide service updates, and identify matters requiring follow-up.

Key discussion points:

Lease extensions and ownership:

- We manage the lease-extension process once the leaseholder's solicitor serves the relevant notice. The process generally takes around three months, although timings vary.
- The premium is determined by an independent valuation. Indicative additional costs mentioned were approximately £750 plus VAT for valuation and £1,500 plus VAT for legal fees.
- Marriage value becomes relevant when fewer than 80 years remain; leaseholders approaching that point were advised to seek an extension promptly.
- A share of the freehold cannot be purchased at Foxgrove Path because it is a mixed-tenure block.
- At Dapple Court, Hart Homes is the freeholder and Chime manages the block directly. Hart Homes is jointly owned by Chime Housing and Watford Borough Council.
- A detailed shared-ownership query about extending a lease, staircasing, inheritance and the treatment of owner-funded improvements was taken offline for specialist follow-up.

Service charges

- Previous-year actual service-charge statements were issued late and required Section 20B notices. Current statements had been sent before 30 September and were expected shortly.
- Statements should show a breakdown of services such as cleaning and grounds maintenance. Individual queries should be referred to the Home Ownership team.

- Contracts are tendered and assessed for quality and value for money; customers may participate in contractor selection through involvement opportunities.
- We agreed to provide the Foxgrove Path resident with a direct-debit/payment statement and investigate why it had not previously been supplied.
- Payment frequency follows the lease. Where an annual charge causes difficulty, residents should contact their Income officer or Home Ownership team to discuss a payment plan.

Major works, consultation and value for money

- Residents cannot opt-out of essential replacement of obsolete communal door-entry systems. Relevant works should be consulted on through the Section 20 process.
- A Section 20 consultation is required where qualifying works exceed £250 per leaseholder. The process includes a notice of intention, a notice of estimates and a final invoice after completion.
- Concerns about painting quality and contractor conduct at Foxgrove Path will be investigated. A further inspection will be arranged and the conduct concerns raised with the contractor.
- We intend to work towards five-year major-works plans so leaseholders have more notice for budgeting, although no delivery date was confirmed.
- There is no current communal solar programme for Charlesbury House. The proposal will be passed to the Sustainability Lead for consideration in future funding and decarbonisation work.

Parking, security and estate management

- Filton House and Erskine House parking is owned by Three Rivers District Council. Adrian Anstee will discuss resident-only signage with the council.
- Dapple Court vehicle thefts should be reported to the police and housing officer so concerns can be raised at weekly police meetings. A previous CCTV consultation did not secure support; a new consultation could proceed, with at least 50% resident support required and costs recovered through service charges.
- The reported van occupation at Dapple Court should be sent to the housing team with as much identifying information as possible.
- At Flaxen Court, we can write to residents about considerate parking and may gather vehicle registrations and consider enforcement if problems continue.

Repairs and maintenance

- Dapple Court cavity-wall insulation was supplemented and subsequently tested as adequate. Ongoing cold-bathroom concerns should be reported individually.

- A fire-door works programme is under way at Dapple Court. The lift-breakdown query remains outstanding. The bin store access repair was scheduled for the day after the meeting.
- Dapple Court cleaning is weekly, with inspections; residents were asked to provide current photographs if conditions remain poor.
- The unclear Flaxen Court storage repair query requires follow-up to identify the location and nature of the problem.
- A repairs recovery plan is in progress under the new Director of Repairs and Maintenance, covering backlog reduction, accountability, monitoring, scheduling systems and customer communication.
- A maintenance surveyor will inspect Gandhi Court's car park, line markings and balcony rails during the current financial year. Any resulting works will not be completed this financial year but may be added to a future cyclical programme.

Communication and resident involvement

- Our formal relationship is with the leaseholder. Leaseholders who sublet should register an alternative correspondence address and keep their tenants informed.
- Email correspondence can be requested, although some statutory notices must also be served by post.
- Residents were advised to contact a clearly identified person or mailbox rather than copying many recipients, to avoid uncertainty over ownership.
- We will consider reminding non-resident leaseholders to pass important information to subtenants.
- Future sessions will include representatives from Repairs and Maintenance, Assets and, where possible, Service Charges. Leaseholder meetings are held every four months; separate shared-owner sessions are also available.

Other resident queries

- Noise nuisance should first be raised with the neighbour where appropriate, then reported to us and/or the local authority. The Noise App can be used to record evidence.
- Access to loft space at Downer Drive depends on the individual lease and requires a lease review.
- Responsibility for the shed at Downer Drive requires a site check; if a resident installed it in the shared garden, that resident would normally be responsible for maintenance.
- A leaseholder was asked to send her refund form directly to Emma Stone, who agreed to investigate.

Decisions and agreements

- Essential communal door-entry replacements will proceed; residents should receive the appropriate consultation.
- Payment arrangements may be considered where lease terms require annual service-charge payment and a resident is struggling.
- Dapple Court CCTV may be reconsidered through a fresh resident consultation.
- We will work towards providing longer-term major-works information and will bring relevant technical specialists to future meetings.

Actions:

Action	Owner	Timescale/Status
Provide the Foxgrove Path resident with a payment statement and investigate why it was not provided previously.	Anne Bijum / Home Ownership	Follow-up required
Reinspect communal decoration at Foxgrove Path and raise contractor conduct concerns.	Assets/Repairs team	Follow-up required
Confirm residents at Pinchfield Close understand how to use the replacement door-entry system.	Emma Stone / relevant team	Follow-up required
Explore development of five-year major-works plans for leaseholders and shared owners.	Director of Assets / Housing	Longer-term work
Pass the Charlesbury House communal-solar proposal to the Sustainability Lead.	Assets team	For future consideration
Discuss resident-parking signage for Filton House/Erskine House with Three Rivers District Council.	Adrian Anstee	Follow-up required
Provide an answer on recurring Dapple Court lift breakdowns.	Compliance team	Outstanding
Clarify and follow up the Flaxen Court storage-repair issue.	Housing officer / Repairs	Outstanding
Inspect Gandhi Court's car park, markings and balcony rails and assess for future cyclical works.	Maintenance surveyor	Inspection this financial year

Consider a reminder to non-resident leaseholders to pass important information to subtenants.	Home Ownership team	For consideration
Investigate the leaseholder's refund form.	Emma Stone	Follow-up required
Arrange specialist follow-up/Teams discussion on the shared ownership lease extension and improvement valuation questions.	Hugo Wray	Follow-up required