



**OPEN** communities  
a better way of working



**Lee Page**  
**Regional Manager (South)**

**The Committee of the Tenants and Residents Association have decided to continue working with Open Communities to continue our work to develop a TMO. The committee has been able to obtain a Government grant to pay for their support.**

Open Communities Ltd., is a national accredited training and advisory service which specialises in advising council tenants and leaseholders. The Committee has chosen them to help develop our ideas and find out what is the best option for residents.

Open Communities, have helped to develop the committee, support the discussions with the Council and helped us to look at the possible options.

**Open Communities offer a freephone advice and information line, 0800 073 1051, which is staffed from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.**

**If you require this document in large print, audio tape, Braille or in another language please contact:- Open Communities on 0800 0731051**

Translation are available in the following languages; Albanian, Bengali/Sylheti, French, Spanish, Arabic, Serbo-Croat, Somali.

**OPEN COMMUNITIES FREEPHONE INFORMATION LINE: 0800 073 1051**

Email: [enquiries@opencommunities.org](mailto:enquiries@opencommunities.org) - Website: [www.opencommunities.org](http://www.opencommunities.org)



## Clarence Way Tenants and Residents Association (TRA)



### **Welcome to the third edition of the new newsletter of the Clarence Way Tenants and Residents Association (TRA).**

Following the very well attended General Meeting on 24th November 2009 we have now reached the end of the first 'Exploring the Options' phase. As we explained in our last newsletter we looked at a range of opportunities to increase the level of participation of residents in running the estate and felt that the only one that offered us the opportunity to get involved to the level we wanted was the development of a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO). It was great that nearly everyone who attended the General Meeting

agreed with the recommendation of the committee that we should now look to serve a Right to Manage Notice on Camden Council. However, we have to stress that we still need to develop this proposal a little further before bringing it back to a General Meeting later in the year for everyone to vote on formally.

**If you want to get involved with the TRA or TMO please do! We are always looking for residents of the estate to become more involved with the work that we do.**

**OPEN COMMUNITIES FREEPHONE INFORMATION LINE: 0800 073 1051**

Email: [enquiries@opencommunities.org](mailto:enquiries@opencommunities.org) - Website: [www.opencommunities.org](http://www.opencommunities.org)



So why do we think a TMO is the best way in which to manage our estate? We believe that there are three very good reasons for developing a TMO for Clarence Way.

## **Reasons for a TMO**

- 1. To have a locally based housing office from which to provide the housing management service for Clarence Way (and employ our own Manager)**
- 2. To improve the current repairs service**
- 3. To make sure that the improvements we have fought so hard for as a TRA are maintained (and improved further) over future years.**

In our last newsletter we outlined the other options that we have looked at and why we felt that they were not right for this estate. Here we look at the reasons given above and why we think they matter to the residents of this estate.

## **A Local Office**

We believe that by developing a local office for the estate it will help to improve a number of the services currently delivered by the Council from the Neighbourhood Office in Kentish Town. A local office, open at the times to suit residents will enable residents to call in at a time that suits them to report any repairs, incidents or other matters. A local office would still be contactable by phone or email if preferred but will be easier for us to contact the staff we employ to manage the estate. We believe we have already identified a possible office space and have had some very early discussions with the council about the possibility of developing a local office on the estate.

## **Repairs**

We also believe that a TMO we help us to improve the repairs service so that repairs are completed in one visit and are carried out to a higher standard than is currently the case. Locally employed staff will be able to keep an eye on the communal area of the estates as well as being able to carry out inspections of the repairs quicker and easier than currently. A TMO also doesn't have to use the same contractors as the Council. Although we will only receive the

same allowances to manage the estate as the Council currently spends we believe we can use them more effectively. If a repair is carried out 'right first time' then we will not continue to waste money on calling out contractors repeatedly to complete the same repair.

## **Maintaining Improvements**

Over recent years residents have fought hard to achieve the improvements on the estate but we don't believe it should be down to a small number of individuals to continually have to fight to make sure that we receive a good housing service. By doing it ourselves, through a TMO, we think we can maintain and improve further the estate. A TMO will be allocated the same level of funds that the Kentish Town Housing Office currently receives to provide the services on the estate. Local control, in other areas of both Camden and London, has shown that TMOs are able to provide better services for the same cost. Many TMOs also manage to make savings on their allowances which they are then free to spend on improvements to the estate. Both tenants and leaseholders benefit from improved services and their homes becoming more desirable places to live.

# Next Steps - So what happens now?

We now have to go through a programme of work to prepare to serve a legal notice on the Council and prepare for a Government Approved Assessor to meet with the committee of the TRA to examine how effective we are as a committee. We particularly need to examine the training undertaken by the committee and the experience we have...

In order to set up a TMO the government have developed something called the Right to Manage. This is a legal right all council tenants and leaseholders have but in order to do it we have to follow the path laid out by the government. Although it was first developed in 1994 the legislation was updated in 2008 and it sets out the areas of 'competence' that TMO committee members must have. Obviously no-one committee member knows everything, although we can use our experience from the work and voluntary activities we have carried out in the past to contribute to the assessment of our competence. What we will be doing over the next few months is working out what experience we have that is relevant to TMOs and where we need to have further training and advice. We also need to develop a range of documents and policies that need to be in place when we are



subject to the Assessment in order to develop a TMO properly. These will include;

- **A Training Plan** (and how we will buy this training)
- **Financial Standing Orders**
- **A Code of Conduct for the Committee**
- **Communications Strategy**
- **Diversity Policy**

When we have done all of this we will need to ask you formally if you are in favour of serving a Right to Manage Notice on the Council. The government require us to do this so that we can start developing a TMO properly.

Please note that by setting up a TMO we will still be Council tenants and leaseholders.

It is only after serving the Right to Manage Notice that we will agree which services the TMO will actually provide. We would welcome your views on how much or how little we should look to take on.

# Annual General Meeting

We're aiming to hold our AGM in May and we would love to welcome some new committee members to join us and help shape the future of the Clarence Way Estate. Details of the date and time will be circulated nearer the time.

Some residents from Torbay Court attended the Safer Neighbourhoods meeting in February and asked for increased patrols on the estate to deal with some anti social behaviour that has been occurring in their block. Please contact any of TRA members to get the contact numbers for Camden Security or the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

## Silla says!

**A message from  
the Chair of  
Clarence Way TRA**

*We've been informed that the lifts should be refurbished once the decent homes contractors have finished sometime in May. We've also spoken to Camden Council about problems being caused by contractors parking in residents parking bays. They have said that they'll look into the matter but can everyone please let us know if the problems continue?*

## Get in touch.

Anyone who wants to find out more about what's happening on the estate can now email the TRA on [clarence.way@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:clarence.way@hotmail.co.uk).

We're also now on Facebook (just search under the email address).

The site is still being developed but please ask us anything you want to know about what's going on.

**facebook.**



## **The Haven Youth Project**

---

offers a variety of activities and learning opportunities to young people aged 13-19 years old. The building has a youth café, dance studio, radio station, music studio and flood-lit sports facility open 5 evenings a week. **Call the project on 020 7681 8643 for more information**

## **The Junior Haven**

---

caters for families with children 8-13 years old and delivers an After School, Holiday & Transition project. **Call 020 7692 2293 for more information.**

## **Littlehaven**

---

caters for young children and their families by providing a drop-in play facility, and crèche supported ESOL classes.

**DROP IN** Tue, Wed & Fri;

**CRÈCHE** Mon & Thurs – all  
10am – 12pm.

**Call 020 7692 2293 for further information.**

## **Our Intergenerational Project**

---

is a terrific cross-generational project where all ages have the opportunity to meet to undertake some fun activities. **Call 020 7485 3386 for further information.** This group are currently particularly keen to recruit more members for its community choir.

# TRA Membership

Over the coming months we will also be asking residents of the estate to formally become members of the TRA. We have always been against this and have included everyone who lives on the estate as members automatically. However, the Assessor will want to see evidence of the community support for the TRA so we need to ask everyone to sign a membership form. There will be no cost to join and we hope that as many of you as possible join.

**When we hold a General Meeting to vote on whether or not to serve a legal Right to Manage Notice on the Council it will only be members who are able to vote.**



## H.E.L.P.S

(Help Elderly Local People Scheme)

**If you're aged over 50 and live in Camden  
you are eligible to join CCA HELPS.**

For a fee of £5 per year you can join any of the classes, clubs and activities held for the Over 50's in the Castlehaven Community Centre.

**To find out more ring 020 7692 2238.**