
From: David Collins <david@future-conversations.com>
Sent: 12 July 2015 23:03
To: Judith Blakeman; cllr.r.atkinson@rbkc.gov.uk; Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk
Subject: Re: Grenfell Tower - Lancaster West Estate

Hi Judith,

Thank you for organising and chairing the meeting on Saturday – to both of you in fact.

I can tell you, it would be much easier for me to not be engaged in this matter with TMO and Rydon. As you note, this is not even my property! I could be living in a quiet riverside apartment in a sleepy little village just down the river from Richmond upon Thames. Having a business, family, and social life these matters are sometimes taking up a disproportionate amount of my time. It's just the injustice that I have seen and experienced myself. How people here have been treated with disrespect, and so poorly engaged and considered in a matter which is of fundamental importance to their lives and their homes. It's a bit like I had to get engaged because of what I saw, heard and experienced. I am a bit surprised to have to fight for people to have equality, justice and to be heard – but I guess that is just the way it is in life sometimes.

It was good that Rydon and TMO were both represented. It was a shame they approached it like a 'presentation' rather than a meeting of equals for a dialogue. That was partly why I wanted to avoid having the meeting in 145, as I think it would have fostered a more open and collaborative dialogue. Still, I understand Robert and you needed to see the work, and it was really good as it made it easy for people to attend from the Tower. It also meant we were able to look at things, such as piping and alternative locations in a practical sense. Maybe next time we can meet somewhere neutral and see if it affects the conversation too.

In terms of getting to this stage, I am glad you have taken this on for us. We (and I think I speak for the group here) had attempted to get the local TMO representatives to listen. But they were not willing to do so. That seems to be the main failing in their approach to engagement, as far as I can see. There is talking but not a lot of listening as far as I can tell. There has been no RA on Lancaster West for us to speak to. When we asked to be recognised as a group concerned about the Improvement Works we were refused that by TMO. At that time they instigated the re-instatement of an RA. I believe the first proper meeting is this coming Tuesday, to nominate or elect representatives. I emailed Christine, the existing Chair I believe, about a month ago asking to meet: but she has never responded. We joined a union to give us a sense of community and strength, which we now have, and it meant we have had a Fun Day and have more good things planned too. We believed that TMO would listen to us if we went to the length of joining a union and having them represent us. But no. We had plenty other plans for how to raise the issues we are facing more publicly, but we were delighted to hear from Pilgrim you were willing to meet with us, and I am delighted that we are making some progress now. It does remain to be seen how much progress we are making; I will be very interested to see how Peter Maddison and others now respond. There really has been very little community engagement around the project here, and I think the strength of feeling is partly a result of that. I suspect more listening is required. And I think Rydon need to up their game too, and take the complaints about threatening behaviour seriously.

It was good to read about the attempts you made to ensure there was proper access to the Tower during the works. The law is an ass. Some common sense and care would deliver a different solution. My mother was a district nurse and midwife, and I think her concern for people in the community has to some

small extent rubbed off on me, for which I am very grateful. It would be good if more decisions were made with the longer term benefit in mind, rather than the short term cost. The same goes for the construction standards Simon kept mentioning in the meeting. Designing to standards does not necessarily produce a safe or good solution. It takes more thought and care to do that, and I remain concerned about the location of the HIU's and pipework, specifically in relation to the only escape route from the home. It was good that Peter agreed to an independent assessment of that matter. Please could a resident from the group who met on Saturday be in some way included in that process, as it would aid it's independence greatly. It would be shame to receive a bland report to say it all sticks to the standards, without any real consideration of the wider risks and location.

I spoke to Eddie yesterday. I am glad he came along and expressed his views. Whilst I may have a different approach to Eddie, and therefore we do argue, I find there is a lot of value and insight in much of what he says. It was also good to hear from other residents too, especially those talking calmly and clearly, and to hear some calling for us all to work together on this. In the lift tonight I bumped in to someone who lives here whom I have never met before. We ended up talking about yesterday's meeting. He was very interested in what is happening, and was completely in agreement with the sentiment of the residents you met. He has not let Rydon in to do the HIU work, he has been threatened like many others, but he feels strong enough to say no to them. He suggested we (possibly more work for me) draw up a petition, so that people who could not attend on Saturday can add their voice to what was said. If we do that it will take some time, as it will involve people here doing it in their own time. I would rather TMO and Rydon simply took what we said at face value (and realised there are others who feel the same way or similar, and others who felt pressured in to having the work done and want it moved too) and respond appropriately, so we don't have to continue to fight to be heard and respected. I still remember talking to people about the HIU in their homes in May, and many of those people saying they didn't want it, they felt forced to have it, they don't like it, and they would like it moved. All of this points back to a key issue here. The community is having to do this for itself; people are having to fight to be heard, and for those at the TMO and Rydon to behave in a responsible way towards us. The community has not been engaged in this project, and in my experience more widely. There are good people living here, who could help make this project and are a success if given a chance and treated with respect.

At least it is not all bad. Constantine's project is certainly gaining much more community engagement, and he does take a wonderful photograph.

And I am fascinated to know what happens in terms of the wider redevelopment of this whole area.

Anyway, enough from me. I hope you appreciate it is late and I have just typed this without much thought to grammar or if everything I have written is exactly the way I would like to say it. Hopefully the intention is clear. And my gratitude for getting involved in a positive way.

Best Wishes,

David

From: Judith Blakeman

Date: Saturday, 11 July 2015 16:57

To: David Collins, <cldr.r.atkinson@rbkc.gov.uk>, <Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Grenfell Tower - Lancaster West Estate

Dear David

Thank you for these letters, which do clarify things.

I was advised that the TMO would not engage with Pilgrim Tucker as she has no formal right to represent Grenfell Tower residents. The correct representational route is via the Residents' Association and/or the ward councillors. I understand that the residents were at that stage using neither mechanism. (Incidentally, I am a Unite Labour councillor).

However, I do agree it was discourteous of the TMO not to write and say this. It certainly delayed most of you from engaging with the ward councillors. Similarly, I understand that the TMO will not engage with you because you are a sub-tenant. Their argument is that you should raise these issues with Tunde and he should then raise them with the TMO. Again, it was discourteous not to advise you accordingly, but they should have responded immediately to the attempted break-in at your flat.

I recognise that we have not yet put up new notices setting out our revised councillors' surgery arrangements at the Leisure Centre, but during the General Election campaign we did put out several Notting Dale and other campaign newsletters through every door, which included our new surgery details. Indeed, several Grenfell Tower residents did come to see us and we took their individual concerns to the TMO as required, most of which were resolved satisfactorily – other than the request to have the HIU unit in the kitchen.

Subsequently Pilgrim Tucker asked for a meeting with me, which I agreed, at which I advised her that the reason she was getting no joy from the TMO was as set out above. I told her that the correct route was through either the RA or the councillors, and perhaps it is this that then prompted you all to come to our surgery? We were then able to progress matters and I hope we can progress things even further following on from today's meeting.

I propose to draw up a short note of what happened at the meeting and have it delivered to every household in the Tower so that everyone is updated. We will include in that note details of our surgeries, so that residents can come and see us if they have concerns with which we can assist.

Incidentally, your point about the stair access is well made. This was also raised by both the Residents' Association and the ward councillors with the TMO at the time when the ramp from the walkway to the ground was removed.

I checked the original planning permission to see if it had been agreed to remove the ramp and it had – unfortunately this item was buried deep in the document and was extremely vague. I then sought legal advice about the reduced disability access to the walkway and I also took Kiran Singh, Siobhan Rumble and a young mother with a child in a pushchair on a walkabout to see how the extended walk to the station end of the walkway disadvantages residents with mobility issues, heavy shopping and small children. Sadly, the legal advice was that disability access is not a requirement because of the age of the buildings, which I personally think is outrageous.

We asked the planners why they had approved the removal of the ramp without looking at the consequences and their response was somewhat unsympathetic. They made the point that disability access remains at the station end of the walkway.

We also asked for a lift to be installed from the ground floor to the walkway as a part of the refurbishment of the Tower and were told (a) that it was not practical; and when we pointed out that there had been a lift there in the distant past, that (b) they would not put one in because it was likely to be vandalised. So I am afraid we lost that one too.

I thought today's meeting was very helpful and was very relieved that Mr. Daffarn did not dominate it as he has done in the past. This also helped matters – and I think Mr. Maddison was rather surprised at the strength of feelings expressed. We will urge him to reflect constructively on what he heard.

Kind regards.

Judith and Robert

From: David Collins [<mailto:david@future-conversations.com>]
Sent: 11 July 2015 10:08
To: cllr.r.atkinson@rbkc.gov.uk; Clr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk; Judith Blakeman
Subject: FW: Grenfell Tower - Lancaster West Estate
Importance: High

Attached is the letter from Pilgrim Tucker to Robert.

As you can see it was copied to myself and one other resident; we were asked to be the 'representatives' of the group at that time.

We have not ever received a response.

David

From: "Tucker, Pilgrim"
Date: Wednesday, 13 May 2015 12:25
To: "rblack@kctmo.org.uk"
Cc: "clwilliams@kctmo.org.uk", "[REDACTED]", David Collins
Subject: Grenfell Tower - Lancaster West Estate

Dear Mr Black

Please find attached a letter regarding the works at Grenfell Tower on the Lancaster West Estate. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes

Pilgrim

Pilgrim Tucker
Unite Community Coordinator
London and Eastern

33-37 Moreland Street
London EC1V 8BB

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