

## **Please Sir.....Can we have some collective representation?**

Posted on February 16, 2014 by grenfellactiongroup

If Charles Dickens were alive today he would be appalled how residents of Lancaster West Estate have had their legitimate concerns marginalised and their democratic right to collective representation ignored by elected Councillors of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council and their henchmen/women from the TMO.

We are particularly concerned and upset with the in-action of the TMO Resident Engagement Team and remain perplexed at their concerted actions to sabotage all attempts by residents to increase community participation on Lancaster West Estate. It seems that the old mantra of "divide and rule" continues to guide the TMO's every decision.

Residents of Lancaster West are well used to this kind of ill-treatment.

In October 2012, the Grenfell Action Group approached Yvonne Birch and Janet Edwards at the TMO anti-Resident Engagement Team and requested that the TMO recognise and support the Grenfell Action Group as a Resident Association. The TMO went out of their way to find reasons not to recognise the Grenfell Action Group as an RA despite being independently advised by Jon Warnock from TPAS (a tenant empowerment organisation) that they should do so.

As a result of these TMO actions the concerns of our community went unaddressed.

In February 2013 our local Labour Councillors did their best to derail a legitimate request for a Public Meeting proposed by the Lancaster West Residents Association, the Grenfell Tower Leaseholders Association and the Grenfell Action Group.

As a result of our Councillors actions the concerns of our community went unaddressed.

In July 2013, after the power surge issues at Grenfell Tower had destroyed our electrical appliances, local stakeholders approached the TMO and requested that they support residents by allowing us to form a Resident Group to seek justice for our losses. With the support of Councillor Blakeman (Labour) and Councillor Feilding Mellen (Conservative), the TMO denied us this request.

As a result the concerns of those impacted by the Grenfell Tower power surge went unaddressed.

In January 2014, after speaking with the Lancaster West Resident Association, the Grenfell Action Group requested that the TMO help residents of Grenfell Tower form a Resident Support Group to help tenants and leaseholders through the upcoming improvement works.

Unbelievably, Janet Edwards from the TMO even found a way to strangle this attempt at collective representation. As a result residents of Grenfell Tower will have no representation through the improvement works.

We have published our damning response to the TMO's refusal below in an email sent on

24th January 2014:

Dear Ms Edwards,

The TMO seem to have a very funny way of promoting resident involvement on Lancaster West Estate and your decision not to assist residents of Grenfell Tower to set up a localised Resident Group to help steer them through the upcoming improvement works is nothing short of scandalous.

It would seem that the TMO are determined to exercise a "divide and rule" policy and deny residents of Grenfell Tower the ability to form a collective group to represent our collective concerns at such a crucial time in the buildings' history.

Residents do not want to be solely contacted individually by letter by the TMO as it gives us no power or strength to change things we may not be happy with. We had this experience during the "power surge" crisis and residents have a right to come together to make sure this ill-treatment and disrespect of residents is never repeated. To deny us a legitimate voice is undemocratic and brings great shame on the TMO Resident Engagement Dept. and the TMO organisation as a whole.

Be aware that the KALC Project awarded local stakeholders on Lancaster West Estate the sum of 10 thousand pounds to ensure that residents views were taken on board. Residents of Grenfell Tower are looking for an investment from the TMO that would also allow us to access some external support (Planning Aid for London, for example) and ensure residents of Grenfell Tower have a collective voice and proper access to representation and mediation during the improvement works.

Regards,

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Grenfell Action Group

WE DEMAND THAT THE TMO AND THE RBKC COUNCIL TREAT THE RESIDENTS OF LANCASTER WEST ESTATE WITH RESPECT AND SUPPORT OUR RIGHT TO BE HEARD THROUGH COLLECTIVE REPRESENTATION