

Camden Federation of Private Tenants

ANNUAL REPORT



April 2013 – March 2014

The Voice of Private Tenants in Camden

Directors as at 31st March 2014:

Susan Aykroyd (Treasurer)
Carolyn Harms
Rita Legros (Secretary)
John McMillan
Sarah Mitchell (Chair)
Vic Seedman

Staff team:

Robert Taylor (Organiser, since April 2008)
Meade McCloughan (Assistant Organiser, since April 2008)

Volunteers:

Esther Lau
Robert Hudson
Rita Brayshaw
John Morris
Simone Stenfors

Registered office:

11-17 The Marr
Camden Street
London
NW1 0HE

Camden Federation of Private Tenants is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act as the Camden Federation for Private Tenants, registration number 25086R (England & Wales)

Auditors: Simpson Wreford & Co, Wellesley House, Duke of Wellington Avenue, Royal Arsenal, London SE18 6SS



Cabinet Member for Housing, Julian Fulbrook and Director of Housing, Rosemary Westbrook listening to tenants' experiences of renting in Camden

Thanks to our funder the London Borough of Camden for its financial support

Thanks also to The Hampstead Wells and Campden Trust for financially supporting our newsletter



Chair's Report 2014

“What's to be done about renting?” More people than ever before have started to ask this question. And about time too, our members would say. For the first time in many years politicians, policy makers, and economists have recognised there is a problem with private renting, and many more people in the housing world have turned their attention to trying to find ways of improving the experience of renting from a private landlord.

Last August, we hosted a meeting with Sarah Hayward, the Leader of the Camden Council (who has herself been a private tenant) and her officers. At the meeting they got to hear directly from CFPT members about their experiences of renting from a private landlord, and they in turn could explain what the Council was doing to address this serious problem.

Camden is one of the few local authorities to have a dedicated Private Rented Sector Strategy, and while it sets out clear objectives to tackle poor housing for the borough's tenants, it also recognises the limits of what can be achieved locally, without regulation from central government. We will continue to work in partnership with the local authority to ensure that this strategy is implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible in a time of diminishing resources, and to ensure that this borough retains a balanced mixture of residents.

We recognise however that many of the problems with private renting cannot be tackled just by working in Camden and so we are in the process of setting up our London-wide group for private tenants, which is funded by Trust for London. Our new project worker, Rosie Walker, has a wealth of experience researching, writing and campaigning on private renting, and like CFPT's Organiser, is herself a private tenant. She will be working across the capital with other groups and organisations to build a network of private tenants - bringing tenants together to gain a better understanding of their rights and how best to deal with landlords and agents.

In March CFPT alongside the Council hosted one of the largest meetings of private tenants that the borough has ever seen. Over 50 private tenants came along and had their say on whether private renting worked for them and Camden's Director of Housing, Rosemary Westbrook, and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Julian Fulbrook, got to hear some shocking but true stories about people's experiences of private renting in Camden. In the coming year CFPT will focus on three things that participants at that meeting said they would like to see happen: 1. Introduce landlord licensing in Camden 2. Ensure that more enforcement action is taken by the Council against poor landlords/agents 3. Lobby and campaign with others to improve tenants' experience of renting.

Our voice in the borough and further afield is much stronger when we speak for more people - so we will continue our work to increase the numbers of members and supporters over the coming year. Also, with the general election coming up we will be working hard to ensure that prospective parliamentary candidates for both constituencies have private tenants in mind as a group of residents to be taken seriously. And we will work in both Camden and beyond to ensure that tenants' stories are heard and their experiences shared to help others rent more securely and have an affordable future.

Sarah Mitchell

Understanding Camden's Private Tenants



Camden private renters' meet up

Come along to:

- Get free advice if you're having problems with renting
- Tell Camden Council whether renting works for you
- Find out more about the independent Camden Federation of Private Tenants

Advance booking isn't essential but will help us plan the event. Email hsu@camden.gov.uk or call **020 7974 5519** to confirm your place.

Tuesday 25 March 2014, 7pm - 9pm, Arlington House, 220 Arlington Road, Camden Town, NW1 7HE  Camden Town.



Over 50 tenants attended the above meeting that we jointly organised with the Council in March 2014, and this is what they said were their priorities:

- Private landlords to be licensed
- More enforcement action to be taken against landlords and letting agents
- Lobby and campaign for change in the private rented sector (PRS) to help tenants



Trust for London

Tackling poverty and inequality

Trust for London, a charitable organisation that exists to reduce poverty and inequality in the capital by funding voluntary and community sector organisations, stated in their London Review of 2013 that:

"The stereotype of the 'average' Londoner in poverty is someone who is unemployed, and lives in social housing. However, research we published in 2103 shows that this person is, in fact, more likely to be in work and lives in the private rented sector".



Camden

An online survey of private tenants conducted by Camden Council shows that:

11% think in general private rented accommodation in Camden is well managed

6% think shared private rented accommodation in Camden is well managed

12% think private rented accommodation in Camden is well regulated by the Council

75% think the Council should do more to improve private rented accommodation in Camden

Over 40% of tenants who contact us want help and support with:

- Rent levels
- Rent increases
- Dealing with the threat of eviction

Private Renting in Pictures



Camden Council Leader, Sarah Hayward, speaking to private tenants at one of our meetings



Private tenants listening intently in our of our Meetings



Labour parliamentary candidate for Hampstead and Kilburn, Tulip Siddiq, speaking at our last Annual General Meeting (AGM)



A private tenant visits our information stall at the Camden Mela festival in Coram's Fields



Sadly, an all too typical example of the type of poor property conditions often found in Camden's private rented sector



Treasurer's Report 2014

Please see on the next page the following extracts from the audited accounts: the Balance Sheet at 31st March 2014 and the Profit and Loss Account for the Year ended 31st March 2014.

CFPT continues to get by in a difficult climate! In fact, we have been able to reverse the trend of the previous two years, and have increased both income and expenditure by a bit over 6% on last year.

This has mainly been due to success in raising funds to produce two issues of the newsletter, which last appeared back in 2011. We received two grants from the Hampstead Wells and Camden Trust towards this, coming to a total of £1,250, and were also able to raise £1,000 in advertising sponsorship from solicitors' firms (Bishop Lloyd & Jackson Solicitors and Osbornes Solicitors LLP). These sums then account for the increase in income (in "Donations and other income") from last year. Expenditure has accordingly increased in turn, with the direct costs of producing the newsletters included in "Projects and events" and associated stationery and postage costs (taken together as "Stationery") also going up.

Other costs inevitably increase as well; one particular reason for this is that we have been required to take on a greater proportion of the shared overheads for the offices at The Marr.

As ever, of course, the great bulk of our funding has come from London Borough of Camden, which currently funds us via the Housing and Adult Social Care Department. The stability and reliability of the Council's support has been crucial not just in enabling CFPT to keep going over the recent years, but also to start to expand – modestly, this year, as noted above, but more substantially in future years, as I will be able to report next year.

The Balance Sheet shows overall reserves of £14,539. This figure includes two designated reserve funds instituted by the Management Committee five years ago. These are (i) a redundancy fund, currently standing at £7,736, and (ii) a premises fund, currently standing at £3,051. The intention is to increase these funds each year in line with the organisation's potential future liabilities.

On behalf of the Management Committee, I would like to thank once again our funders, the London Borough of Camden and the Hampstead Wells and Camden Trust, for their continuing support of the organisation.

Susan Aykroyd

Camden Federation of Private Tenants

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2014

| | 2014 £ | 2013 £ |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS | | |
| Debtors | 402 | 652 |
| Cash at bank and in hand | <u>16,488</u> | <u>39,445</u> |
| | 16,890 | 40,107 |
| Creditors: amounts falling due within one year | <u>(2,351)</u> | <u>(27,372)</u> |
| Total assets less current liabilities | <u>14,539</u> | <u>12,735</u> |

CAPITAL AND RESERVES

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Called up share capital | 388 | 391 |
| Designed reserves | 10,787 | 9,168 |
| Profit and loss account | <u>3,364</u> | <u>3,176</u> |
| Shareholders' funds | <u>14,539</u> | <u>12,735</u> |

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2014

| | 2014 £ | 2013 £ |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| TURNOVER | | |
| Grants Received | 59,300 | 57,890 |
| Donations and other income | <u>3,759</u> | <u>1,422</u> |
| | 63,059 | 59,312 |
| ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES | | |
| - Salaries | 37,088 | 36,778 |
| - Rent and services | 13,442 | 12,763 |
| - Insurance | 1,140 | 1,183 |
| - Repairs and maintenance | 1,086 | 900 |
| - Audit fee | 1,380 | 1,200 |
| - Accountancy and payroll services | 201 | 145 |
| - Telephone | 1,263 | 1,102 |
| - Stationery | 2,455 | 2,199 |
| - Equipment and IT | 26 | 216 |
| - Projects and events | 2,334 | 83 |
| - Subscriptions | 498 | 717 |
| - Sundry expenses | 257 | 204 |
| - Travelling | <u>82</u> | <u>119</u> |
| | <u>61,252</u> | <u>57,609</u> |
| Net profit before taxation | <u>1,807</u> | <u>1,703</u> |

Approved by the Management Committee on the 22nd July 2014 and signed on its behalf by Sarah Mitchell and Rita Legros. This summary has been extracted from the full accounts, copies of which are available from CFPT's offices.

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