

London 19th August 2014

Dear Councillors:

We, Draper House residents, have received and now digested the report of the investigation by Claer Lloyd Jones into the major works programme to refurbish our homes. This programme was more traumatic, and lengthier than we could ever have imagined; only now is the end in sight, and we truly hope that lessons really have been learned by those senior council staff whose attitude to us was so shockingly disinterested. A very bad taste has been left in tenants' and leaseholders' mouths, because of the treatment we - as borough residents and Council Tax payers - received, and significantly, because of the appalling wastage of money as a result of so much council and contractor mismanagement. Despite that, we are glad the investigation was commissioned, and we welcome its findings. Its scope was not as wide as we had hoped for, but it offered the chance for us to speak to an independent source about the serious problems encountered during, and prior to the start of, the major works programme. We were listened to, and the conclusions Claer Lloyd Jones comes to, we believe validate the dissatisfaction and complaints we so often raised.

Communication, or rather the lack of it, with Southwark Council officers was the major problem throughout the process and we are glad to see Claer's acknowledgement of this, and her recommendations for future projects *. However, we still have concerns, namely:

- there has not yet been a resident satisfaction survey
- the compensation awarded so far does not reflect adequately the great financial and emotional challenges the Draper House residents have had to face for 36 months.
- we do not know what we can expect in the way of a snagging period now that the works are drawing to a close.
- Elkins is keen to get each resident to 'sign off' his/her flat as satisfactorily completed. Most residents will not be doing so until it is clear how problems, which arise over the next year or so, are to be handled.

We look forward to communicating further on the above issues.

It is too late to turn back the clock for Draper House and its residents, but we hope that future major works programmes carried out within Southwark are managed properly by the council, that contractors who fail to comply with the rules - such that they leave residents unsafe and at risk in their homes - cannot walk away with compensation, and that public money is never again as shamefully wasted as it has been here.

Yours sincerely,
Luisa Pretolani
Chair, Draper Residents Association

** on the subject of communication, the Draper Residents Association is already questioning whether lessons have been learnt, as it recently became clear that planning issues regarding the Crossway Church - in which the DRA was involved - had changed without any notification whatsoever