

Dear Chair

Thank you for your letter of 5th June setting out the Committee's views on our request to appear before you for a second time. We were also grateful to have the opportunity to share with you on 12 February the seriously dangerous issues that some of our developments are experiencing..

It has always been our priority to focus on the immediate pressures that come with living in serious fire and build, defective homes. Equally we have always expressed support for any long term policies that seek to transform what is clearly, a toxic and low quality Welsh and English housing ecosphere. Grenfell tragically exposed decades of both manufacturers, developers and government failures (across all parties).

It is a basic citizen right that we all enjoy a robust and effective system of planning and a safe, high quality housing construction industry.

So we reiterate that our key focus is getting our developments remediated today at no cost to owners. As you know many of us face severe pressures both from a well-being and financial basis. Pressures that have been in place for some eight years and for some of our supporters well before that. Citizens are trapped in houses they cannot sell and from which they can see no escape in the foreseeable future. We now have one key leaseholder figure (not a Welsh Cladiator) who is liable for some £36,000 in legal costs because he dared to challenge a leading developer over this crisis. This is the brutal reality! It's also a stark contrast to the WG's repeated statements that leaseholders should not have to pay for developers mistakes

We stress is that time is not on our side. People are suffering, On 29th April we attended the first WG sponsored Leaseholders and Residents Forum. It involved some 50 people (many Welsh Cladiators had never heard from previously). It was an eye-watering meeting that revealed a litany of distressing stories from people who clearly feel isolated and cut off from any kind of information or support as regards the failures in their buildings and what their futures might hold.

One Cardiff delegate reported that she had written to the WG Minister some 14 times and had never received a response! She went on to say she had received no support from her MP! Others talked of severe financial worries and even concerns over self-harm such is the mental stress some people are experiencing. Many voiced frustration at the sheer lack of information regarding their development's defects and future direction. It was a damning session and frankly a stark contrast to the Minister's continued Senedd statements (that also follow her long serving predecessor) that all is going well In the Welsh Building Safety Crisis. Clearly things are not going well and frankly we are shocked by the lack of political interest in the ongoing crisis. Despite writing to the WG about the meeting we have to still to receive a response. It is depressing that not one member of your new Committee has sought to reach out to us to express concern or seek further information.

We were previously advised that following our meeting with you in February that the Committee had written to the Minister and that subsequent questions and issues had been raised with her. Regrettably, four months on we have seen no outcomes from those exchanges. Repeated requests to meet with the Minister have been met with replies that we first meet a new senior civil servant who is taking over responsibility for the crisis. This will be another in a long line of civil service rotations that we have experienced over the last six years.

Since meeting you in February, some of our members have experienced negotiating with developers access to their fire and build defective sites via the WG's Developers Contract (DBC). We believe there is much learning to be shared with other impacted groups as they attempt to navigate a similar path. Citizens need to be informed as to the mistakes that can easily be made as developers seek to protect their agendas and interests. There is also much to learn from developments such as Victoria Wharf where remediation plans are already being delayed as new defects are discovered and argued between the various parties and stakeholders.

So I trust you will recognise that we have less interest in commenting on future policies when we are still in the thick of a battle to get our current challenges resolved. For too many people involved in this crisis it is just a job but to us it is our lives!

We again appeal for far greater urgency and action on the issues and challenges that thousands of innocent Welsh citizens, who did everything right, are facing on a daily basis

Diolch yn fawr

Mark Thomas & Rob Nichols Welsh Cladiator Leads