

**P-04-573 Call on the Welsh Government to investigate the residential leasehold system in Wales – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Committee, 19.11.14**

From – Mr Kenneth Douglas

To Mr William Powell, AM Chair of Petitions Committee

Dear Sir,

I refer to your letter dated 8th November 2014, with a letter attached from Lesley Griffiths AM concerning Petition P-14-573 asking for my comments.

I can only speak for myself, and not for all the residents of the Elba Estate, Gowerton, Swansea. The first letters sent, 6th June 2014, to residents, varied; subject to plot size up to 5000%+ per annum, up from 7% per annum, when the properties were purchased, plot size was not an issue at that time.

The Action Committee negotiations with Swansea council have resulted with a reduced offer of £400 per annum for all residents. This may well appear a wonderful result, however, it is still an increase of 800%, and will still be an enormous burden to many young families and pensioners, with the one main equation missing, that any diligent administration would have penciled in first, 'Affordability'. We are also told via the local press, that the properties on the Elba Estate "are worthless", due to the massive increase in the ground rent.

I understand, that following a 'Freedom of Information request', it seems the Elba estate were the highest rated leasehold properties in Swansea, even before this increase: These are working class people, not London stockbrokers. A savvy, experienced administration, receiving such a hot potato from a defunct authority, would have seen the failings of such a lease, a lease that is based on those used in the world of commercial properties, and should have been seen in this case, not fit for residential properties, and therefore not fit for purpose..

I believe this petition is vital, to safeguard the many thousands of residents within Wales, who's councils may be tempted to go the same route, if Swansea council is seen to be successful. I also believe it is essential for good governance, that the Welsh Assembly Government should have the authority to be able to intervene in

such matters, in the same way that it has been seen necessary to Cap council tax charges. Not all councils have competent management, and not all discharge a 'Duty of Care'. We the people, require a recourse at such times.

Thank you for your time

Yours faithfully

Ken Douglas