

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair Petitions Committee

6 November 2014

Dear William,

Re: PETITIONS COMMITTEE – P-04-573 – RESIDENTIAL LEASEHOLD SYSTEM IN WALES

The above petition is being processed via the Petitions Committee at this time.

In Carl Sargeant's AM letter dated 3 September he clearly indicates that the Leasehold Advisory Service had advised the Welsh Government that they found absolutely no evidence that this issue exists outside this estate.

Alas, this is not the case.

I have been approached by the family of an 85 year old from Cockett, Swansea, who on reading the newspaper articles on the Elba Site contacted City and County of Swansea (SCC) in May this year to ascertain if she could extend her lease as it has only approximately 12 years left to run; at present she is paying £4.37 ground rent. The Council informed her that they would grant a new lease (50 years) at a modern ground rent of approximately £1,900 per annum.

The elderly lady also enquired after the freehold sale price and received a letter from SCC dated 23 September 2014 stating that the freehold was £27,950 plus Council's legal and surveyor's fees of £1,690. This has subsequently been negotiated down to £25,000 plus £1,600 fees. However, the family are not in a position to proceed with purchase.

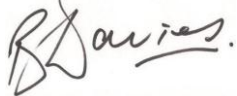
I write as I feel sure that there are more cases like this out there involving the elderly who are under tremendous stress, embarrassed to tell the families or have no family to advise them.

I have requested a full list from SCC of all Leasehold properties that they control.

I will forward all the necessary documentation to you for your consideration in due course

If there are any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Byron Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "H" and "B".

H. Byron Davies
Regional Assembly Member for South Wales West
Shadow Minister for Transport and Regeneration, European Affairs and Whip

Lesley Griffiths AM
Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty
(Housing and Regeneration)
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

6 November 2014

Dear Minister,

Re: PETITIONS COMMITTEE - P-04-573 - RESIDENTIAL LEASEHOLD SYSTEM IN WALES

The above petition is being processed via the Petitions Committee at this time. Your predecessor, Carl Sargeant AM under his previous office as Minister for Housing, wrote to William Power AM, Chair of the Petitions Committee on 3 September 2014. Copy enclosed for your easy reference.

In this letter he clearly indicates that the Leasehold Advisory Service had advised the Welsh Government that they found absolutely no evidence that this issue exists outside this estate.

Alas, this is not the case.

I have been approached by the family of an 85 year old from Cockett, Swansea, who on reading the newspaper articles on the Elba Site contacted City and County of Swansea (SCC) in May this year to ascertain if she could extend her lease as it has only approximately 12 years left to run; at present she is paying £4.37 ground rent. The Council informed her that they would grant a new lease (50 years) at a modern ground rent of approximately £1,900 per annum.

The elderly lady also enquired after the freehold sale price and received a letter from SCC dated 23 September 2014 stating that the freehold was £27,950 plus Council's legal and surveyor's fees of £1,690. This has subsequently been negotiated down to £25,000 plus £1,600 fees. However, the family are not in a position to proceed with purchase.

I write as I feel sure that there are more cases like this out there involving the elderly who are under tremendous stress, embarrassed to tell the families or have no family to advise them.

I will be forwarding all the necessary documentation to the Chair regarding this particular case in due course.

I have requested a full list from SCC of all Leasehold properties that they control.

I look forward to hearing from you that LEASE have taken this incident into account when preparing their report and subsequent recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Byron Davies'.

H. Byron Davies
Regional Assembly Member for South Wales West
Shadow Minister for Transport and Regeneration, European Affairs and Whip

Encl

Mr Jack Straw
Chief Executive Officer
Civic Centre
City and County of Swansea
Oystermouth Road
Swansea
SA1 3SN

6 November 2014

Dear Sir,

Re:LEASEHOLD PROPERTIES IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

I write further on the subject of leasehold properties within the control of the City and County of Swansea.

I have recently been approached by a Swansea resident who is in a similar position to those people on the Elba site. It would appear that there are more leaseheld properties, other than the Elba site, which are currently experiencing difficulties with the prospect of increases in their ground rents .

Under the Freedom For Information Act 2000 I therefore request a complete and up-to-date list of all properties held by the Council which are currently leaseheld within the jurisdiction of the City and County of Swansea; the term of the leases, the renewal dates of those leases and the ground rent currently being paid to SCC by the leasees.

I look forward to receiving the information.

Yours faithfully



H. Byron Davies
Regional Assembly Member for South Wales West
Shadow Minister for Transport and Regeneration, European Affairs and Whip

cc Mr Geoff Bacon
Corporate Building & Property Services