

Crown Residents Against Sell Off

www.ourhomesarenotforsale.co.uk

Residents' protests continue

Hands
off our
homes



Saturday 13th of February 2010:
Over 200 demonstrators at
Cumberland Market make it
clear:

**Our homes are
not for sale!**

Cumberland Market residents turned out in force last Saturday in the latest protest against the Crown Estate's proposal to sell off our homes.

On a bitterly cold morning, residents came out in force to show the strength of their opposition to the Crown's proposals. Tenants ranged in age from young families with their children in buggies through to those in their 80's and 90's, some of whom have lived on the estate all their lives having moved on to Cumberland Market when some of the blocks were built in the 1930's.

It was standing room only in the tenants' hall as people gathered to hear the latest news and information from Steve Smith and Shireen Bilimoria, co-Chairs of the residents' association. Ben Bowling, the Millbank Chair, and Madeleine Davis and Jamie Duff from the Victoria Park Committee also spoke briefly, before local ward Councillor, Heather Johnson (Labour) and George Lee, prospective Parliamentary candidate for the Conservative party at the

forthcoming General Election, pledged to do all they can to help. It's clear that our campaign has support right across the political spectrum - Frank Dobson, our local MP, has made direct approaches to the Crown Estate as well as giving advice to individual residents, while the Liberal Democrats have also been in touch with the Resident's Association. But it's also clear that the main impetus must come from local residents - so please continue to do all you can to make your views heard and pressure the Crown to drop these proposals!

After the meeting residents assembled outside the housing office in a strong show of unity to Crown Estate staff inside carrying out their 'consultation' sessions. A short march around the estate and some fantastic community singing added to the atmosphere of the day and showed the unity and determination of residents on Cumberland Market to STOP the sell off going ahead.

GET INVOLVED

VICTORIA PARK OPEN MEETING

7pm, Thursday 18 February at St James the Less Church, St James' Avenue, E2 9JD.

Local politicians will attend, and there will be an opportunity to speak to a legal adviser, as well as to get any help you might need in filling in the Crown consultation form, drafting letters etc.

MILLBANK DEMONSTRATION

At Saturday's 'drop -in' at Crown Estate Office, Bessborough Place, SW1V 3SE at 11am on Saturday 20 February. JOIN US!

Emergency General Meeting - Tuesday 23 February, 6.30pm (TBC) in St Saviour's Church Hall, St.

Georges Square London.call Ben Bowling 07944 803 042 for confirmation.

To receive the latest news and campaign materials email: handsoffourhomes@yahoo.co.uk



I have worked in the NHS for over 26 years. I manage two clinics at University College Hospital, one for sickle cell and thalassaemia patients and the other a cardiac rehabilitation programme. I really don't need the extra stress that this proposal is causing. I have been a single parent having brought up my 2 sons alone. My mother also lives with me and I look after her too. Experienced keyworkers keep the heart beating of the NHS service but we too need support and our request is only for a place to live at affordable rents to enable us to care for our patients. If this option is no longer available many of us will choose the option to work overseas where opportunities are very attractive indeed.

Lesley Gilbert, Lee Green

Feedback on Clark meeting

Resident Association chairs and representatives from all four estates met Paul Clark and Jenny Mulligan (of the Crown's Housing Business Group) at Crown Estate HQ on Friday evening. Over an hour and a half we pressed Clark on questions including the reasons for the sale, the demands of tenants to have a proper say in the decision-making, the implications for residents, and the future of affordable and key-worker housing on these estates, and of our vibrant local communities.

What was absolutely clear from his vague and evasive answers was this:

- he couldn't point to a single positive benefit for residents of a sale;
- reassurances about 'protecting existing tenants', and transferring over Tenancy Book rights to a new owner remain vague, amounting to little more than the legal minimum provided by our tenancy agreements;

- there will be nothing whatever put in place to stop a new landlord from ending key-worker provision, introducing market rents, raising service charges, and selling on vacant homes for profit – and it's not just private landlords that do this – take a look at the rents charged on London and Quadrant properties!

- different parts of the estate could be sold to different buyers;

- he couldn't explain why so many flats and houses are being left empty, while desperate key-workers on the waiting list have been told all lets are suspended

- he wouldn't tell us when Crown housing staff were informed about the plans;

- he wouldn't say what buyers are interested, what price has been put on our communities, or to what use the money will be put (though Fri-

day's Evening Standard offered some clues on this!)

So what do we do now?

If the decision was up to Clark alone, we know what it would be. But it's the Crown Estate Board who decide. So that's where we go next. We asked to see a report on the results of the consultation and marketing BEFORE a decision is made, and to be represented on the Board itself when it meets to decide. Don't worry – we don't trust Clark to pass this on either, so we're contacting the Chairman and Chief Executive ourselves and asking for a further meeting.

We also need you to write to them direct at the address below, asking them to drop the sale proposals, and get your MPs, Councillors, employers, unions, churches, and community organizations to do the same.

Sir Stuart Hampson (Chairman) and Mr Roger Bright, Chief Executive
The Crown Estate
16 New Burlington Place
London W1S 2HX

Our campaign goes online

Sign the petition to Gordon Brown requesting that he intervenes to stop the sell off:
<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/crownresidents/>

Campaign materials, posters, and contact information for MPs, councillors etc can be downloaded from the campaign website:

www.ourhomesarenotforsale.co.uk

Or email:

handsoffourhomes@yahoo.co.uk

Who are these people?



Many of you have emailed to tell us of your fury at seeing hordes of suited property speculators being shown around your estates in the past week. You've also reported that these people scuttle away as soon as any resident approaches, leaving a representative of Knight Frank, an exclusive London company acting as agents for the Crown in the sale of our homes, to answer – or avoid – your questions. Is this what being consulted means? Please keep asking questions – who are these people? What companies do they represent? - and please make sure that every single window has a poster in it so prospective buyers can be in no doubt that they are not welcome.

CUMBERLAND MARKET OPEN MEETING

7pm on Monday 22nd February at Christchurch School. Frank Dobson MP will be in attendance as well as Cllrs Heather Johnson, Theo Blackwell and Nasim Ali, the Camden Federation of Private Tenants, and tenants from the former Church Commission estates.

LEE GREEN DEMONSTRATION

We will hold a protest rally on Saturday 27th February at 11am at the 'drop in' meeting at Colfeian Sports Club. We have an appointment with Heidi Alexander - Deputy Mayor and Propective Labour

Party Parliamentay Candidate for Lewisham - on Friday 19th. The Lib Dem councillors are supporting our campaign and residents should contact them with their concerns.