

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission – Correspondence from the Petitioner to the Chair, 19.06.14.

CAERWNON PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

To Mr. William Powell
Chair: The Petition Committee

19th June 2014

Dear Mr. Powell,

I have read the correspondence sent to you by Mr. Carl Sargeant and I take this opportunity to state our case once again. You are aware of the changes in legislation that have taken place in the park home industry since the park owners were allowed to demand commission of up to 10% on the sale of private homes, plus a further unspecified amount to put the home on their website. Hopefully from the 1st October 2014 the new legislation will come into force and put right the many injustices that have taken place in the industry with unscrupulous park owners making life difficult and in some instances untenable for their residents. This legislation in a slightly different form is now in place across the border in England. Though the Welsh legislation has definite advantages over the English version it is not Utopia although it is a significant improvement on the ineffective law provided to protect residents living on protected sites some years ago.

Unfortunately the 10% commission charge could not be included when the last consultation took place yet Mr. Sargeant takes pleasure in pointing out that only a few of the respondents made comments about it, if it had been included I believe the majority of respondents would have pointed out the unfairness of it.

The existing evidence pointed out by the Minister can only be the survey submitted in 2002 by Berkeley Hanover which all but the park owners find unfair and extremely biased. Most of the information coming from the survey was from unscrupulous park owners and these are the very park owners that the new legislation is trying to remove from the industry. When a postal survey was carried out on the report the vast majority of park owners were contacted yet only approximately 3% of park home owners were asked for their opinions, hardly a fair assessment.

Mr Sargeant also points out that an increase in pitch fees would take place if the commission charge was removed or reduced, I was of the belief that increases above the inflation rate can only take place if the majority of residents agree, if I

am wrong and the park owner can increase it when he feels fit then what use is the new legislation.

You must be aware that on the 2nd July a petition signed by over 30,000 park home residents is being presented to No.10 Downing Street calling for change to the commission charge because residents feel that enough is enough. We are now in the 21st Century where the voice of the ordinary people should be listened to. There are very many residents in Wales who feel the same but are still (despite the new legislation) too afraid to form residents associations or voice their opinions because of repercussions from the park owners. One park in Wales is nicknamed Stalag Luft ***** because of the fear of incurring the wrath of the park owner. It should be remembered that many park residents are elderly and have been intimidated in the past or are simply frightened, it is down to us slightly more vocal residents who have strong residents associations and are not afraid to put our heads above the parapet to be a voice for them too, please listen to us, we are the voice of the majority.

Kirsty Williams AM requested on our behalf a face to face meeting with the Minister to discuss the commission charge but he has rejected this proposal out of hand.

Yours sincerely

Bob Mounford

Chairman Caerwnon Park Residents Association