

P-04-519 Abolition of Park Homes Sales Commission – Petitioner to the Committee, 19.06.18

CAERWNON PARK RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Dear Minister,

We welcome your decision to reduce the 10% commission rate on the private sale of park homes by half over a 5 year period, however, we strongly reiterate that there should be no pitch fee increases to compensate the park owners. This would defeat the object because all park home owners could be potentially worse off because the overall result would be to increase a park owner's income ad infinitum to replace the unearned charge. If the pitch fees are increased the resident would have to apply for more help from the councils via housing benefit etc. and also the Government for pension credit.

We are extremely concerned with the comments that you made at the end of your statement to The Senedd where you said that there could be changes in the legislation whereby park owners would be given the opportunity to increase pitch fees above the CPI.

You state that residents would have recourse to tribunal, many are not conversant with park home law and faced with the complexity and trauma of submitting a case and producing evidence to a tribunal (paperwork in triplicate) we have personal experience of tribunal and even we find it very daunting when facing not the park owner but the solicitor or barrister that they have employed to fight their case. Many need help in completing the simplest of forms and often do not even have access to a computer.

You also mention the lack of resident's associations, we are one of the few parks that have an active association and we are thankful that we were given the opportunity to have input to the 2013 legislation. I am personally unaware of many parks having such an association and therefore many elderly and vulnerable residents would have to fight their battles on their own which most are totally unwilling to do. Many moved to a park home life which is sold by the park owners as "a carefree lifestyle" and they are unprepared for the work and trials involved in trying to improve standards. We have tried in the past to help set up residents associations but without success as many residents fear reprisals from their park owner.

Smaller, happier parks have less of a turnover of homes so the lowering of the rate would have little impact on their business plans whilst larger park owners can offset this against higher siting fees and rents.

Thus far you are the third Minister dealing with this subject, given that The First Minister is stepping down at the end of this term there is a possibility that the new First Minister will reshuffle his cabinet and we will be passed on yet again.

We have given you all the information that we can think of but we implore you to give us the opportunity to discuss our fears and reservations with you directly, maybe just an hour of your time and it would be a very small delegation that would travel to Cardiff.

Yours sincerely

R.G. Mountford

Chairman.

Caerwnon park Residents Association