

**Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission Meeting**  
**11 September 2021**

**Attendees**

**Memorial Commission**

Thelma Stober (meeting chair)                      Michael Lockwood

**Community representatives**

(Bereaved representatives)	(Survivor representatives <sup>1</sup> )	(Lancaster West representatives)
Sandra Ruiz	Abraham Abebe	Andrea Newton
Hanan Wahabi		Susan Al-Safadi

**Secretariat**

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission Secretariat, 4 individuals

**Other**

Stephanie Edwards, independent design adviser

Public authority representatives: MHCLG representative (Suzanne Kochanowski)

**Meeting purpose**

The twenty-eighth meeting of the Memorial Commission to discuss recent media coverage speculating on decisions on the Tower, and agree the Commission's response.

**Opening**

- A one-minute silence was held at the start of the meeting.
- It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

**Item: recent media coverage of Tower decisions**

1. Thelma began the meeting by explaining that the recent media coverage on the government's decision on the future of the Tower (Sunday Times article, 5 September, and other coverage following this), was a priority for discussion and asked community representatives for their reflections.
2. All the community representatives agreed how difficult the past week had been. They were clear that they felt upset, and above all angered, by the media reports.
3. The community representatives agreed that they still stood by their [statement](#) published on Monday (6 September). A representative said that it would take some time, if ever, for the Commission to recover from this. They stated that the comments from the 'government source' in the media had led to many in the community feeling they had been repeatedly misled. They said they were personally shocked by the level of disrespect that this showed towards bereaved families. Other representatives agreed.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of the Memorial Commission, this refers to former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk.

4. A community representative stated that there seemed to have been little consideration of what was good for the community. Bereaved, survivors, local residents, students at KAA and everyone else in the community had not been treated with respect, when they should be at the heart of the decision-making process. The most affected should have been told early and in private.
5. A community representative spoke about the evidence on the structural stability of the Tower, and said the Tower could be made safe if there was the political will.
6. Another community representative said that they felt their voices had been ignored once again, and this is the same thing that happened before the tragedy. They reflected that it felt like the one change had been a renewed sense of unity in the community. The community representatives made clear that government needed to engage with all bereaved and survivors together, not only with community representative groups.
7. The community representatives said there should be an open meeting with the secretary of state for MHCLG and all bereaved family members and survivors who wished to attend. They gave their view that the bereaved and survivors deserved a public apology from government. The community representatives agreed that this should happen before any other actions, and that the Commission would support the bereaved and survivors in this request.
8. A community representative said that in addition to the disrespect shown to the whole community, they felt those on the Commission had been personally undermined by the government. They noted that they had received direct comments from community members who perceived the Commission had information on Tower decisions that it had not shared. They said they felt the memorial process, the Commission, and the whole community, had been let down.
9. The community representatives were clear that if the Memorial Commission were to continue, it would need to review its ways of working to ensure its remit and independence were clear. They agreed that now, more than ever, it was important to be clear in all communications that the Memorial Commission is independent from government.
10. A community representative stated that the Memorial Commission should be proud of the work it has done to date. They recognised that this was a great setback, and the Memorial Commission would take time to recover, but said they believe the representatives would support each other through this.
11. Michael agreed that despite everything, the community representatives should be proud of the responsibility they had taken on and their progress to date. His view was this means it is even more important they do not give up. He suggested that the Commission pause until they had some answers from ministers, before anything could move forward.
12. Suzanne responded that MHCLG was equally shocked by the article and did not know who the source was. She was clear it was not an official government communication, and that the government would not communicate its decision to the media before families, as this would be completely insensitive and disrespectful. She accepted and understood the levels of anger shown by the community representatives and community.

13. A community representative said that it was important that the government should hear directly from the Commission on the levels of anger within the community and how it was affecting their work. Others agreed and suggested that the Commission request a meeting with the Secretary of State.
14. A community representative said they felt that the Commission should write to the secretary of state so he was aware of the Commission's position. Michael suggested that they wait for the secretary of state to respond to their current outstanding letter.
15. Thelma suggested a further letter would be important given the devastating impact on the community of the Sunday Times article. The community representatives discussed and agreed that they should be proactive and write to the secretary of state and request a meeting with him. A community representative asked that the concerns they had raised during the course of the discussion were set out clearly in the letter, as well as a meeting request. The community representatives stated that they did not want to undermine the united position of the community. They were clear that they wanted above all to stand with the bereaved and survivors in their request for a meeting with the secretary of state and a public apology to the whole community.
16. The Memorial Commission agreed to pause its work until it has received the answers it needs. They agreed to cancel all community meetings in September.

### **Actions**

17. The Memorial Commission's work and engagement is paused for the interim. Secretariat to cancel community meetings for September.
18. Co-chairs to draft a letter to the secretary of state:
  - representing the community representatives' views in the meeting
  - in support of the request from bereaved and survivors for an open meeting with the secretary of state
  - requesting that the secretary of state meet the community representatives to renew the government's commitment to the Commission

**You can contact the Memorial Commission directly using the details below:**

**Phone** 0303 444 4831

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