

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission Meeting

4 March 2021

Attendees

Memorial Commission

Thelma Stober (meeting chair) Michael Lockwood

Community Representatives

(Bereaved representatives)	(Survivor representatives ¹)	(Lancaster West representatives)
Sandra Ruiz	Hanan Cherbika	Susan Al-Safadi
Hanan Wahabi		Andrea Newton
Adel Chaoui		

Apologies:

Nabil Choucair
Hassan Hassan
Abraham Abebe

Secretariat

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission secretariat, 4 individuals

Other

Kaizen, 3 individuals (for the Engagement Update item only)
David Davies, Chair of Aberfan Memorial Charity (item 2)
MHCLG, 4 individuals (1 individual each for items 2, 3, 4 and 6).
Public Authority representatives, 2: Suzanne Kochanowski, MHCLG representative

Meeting purpose

The twenty-third meeting of the Memorial Commission to discuss the approach to communications, discuss and agree on securing wider expert support and to hear from a guest speaker from the Aberfan Memorial Charity.

Opening

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

Agenda Item 1 – for information items

- Three documents were shared with the Commission in advance of the meeting, for information. All changes are highlighted in these documents, and no action is required from the Commission.
- Thelma highlighted that the Commission have received four sets of minutes. The Commission agreed that they had no amendments to the circulated

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

minutes of the previous meeting (04/02) and were content for them to be uploaded to the website [here](#)

Action: Any further comments to be sent to the Secretariat by close 5 March.

Agenda item 2 – Aberfan Memorial Charity guest speaker

- David Davies, JP, a survivor of the Aberfan disaster and chair of the Aberfan Memorial Charity for over 20 years, attended the meeting to share his experience of the Aberfan memorial sites, including ownership and maintenance.
- David started by offering condolences and expressed Aberfan's shared pain with the Grenfell community.
- David explained that initially the *Aberfan Disaster Fund* was set up in 1966. There is now a funded charity – the *Aberfan Memorial Charity* – responsible for the memorial garden and cemetery memorial. Images (and, in advance, videos and an information sheet) were shown of both.
- **Ownership:** Those affected by the Aberfan disaster chose to establish a charity, now having five trustees with close personal links to the disaster, and an experienced, pro bono adviser who has guided Aberfan since 1978. All decisions are taken by the trustees but often consulting and updating the bereaved on important decisions. Trustee candidates are interviewed independently to ensure the best people are appointed.
- **Maintenance:** David explained general maintenance and upkeep is dependent on who the property is owned by. Funding was used to refurbish the cemetery memorial after the 40th anniversary and then the memorial garden around the time of the 50th anniversary, mainly due to deterioration in the stone structures. The stone walls at the memorial garden were replaced in 2019, using natural stone recycled from local bridges and aqueducts.
- **Materials and sustainability:** David explained that the lifespan of materials can vary and that initial materials need careful consideration. Some of the initial materials used in the Aberfan memorial sites had a lifespan of around 40 years, which contributed to their disrepair years later. Since then, trustees have chosen materials that are the most durable and lower maintenance to ensure a longer-lasting future.
- **Future proofing:** He talked about the need to consider the longer term, for example, when the cemetery memorial was being refurbished before the 50th anniversary, trustees decided to introduce best quality artificial grass to enable a constantly high standard of appearance regardless of the season, and with no need for weekly grass cutting.
- **Memorial design:** the Aberfan Cemetery Memorial has inscribed the names of all those who lost their lives on a large granite cross. It was noted that inscription of names in the Grenfell memorial may be something that the Grenfell community may wish to consider.
- **Memorial book:** David also explained that Aberfan has a hand-written and gilded memorial book, produced by the National Library of Wales, on display under glass in the village library. Three copies of the book were made, the

other two at the local school. In this and other ways, the names of the victims are never forgotten.

- David concluded by offering the Commission longer-term support and an invitation to visit Aberfan.

Action: Secretariat to arrange a visit to Aberfan when social-distancing restrictions have been lifted.

Agenda item 3 – update on engagement on the Tower and memorial

- The MHCLG public authority representative updated that safety works in the Tower are continuing and that the annual rewrapping is due to start shortly. You can find out more [here](#).
- MHCLG explained they understand that the Memorial Commission want to separate engagement for the memorial and the future of the Tower. MHCLG have spoken with Kaizen to agree how to separate questionnaires and the links to the questionnaires. MHCLG are working with the representatives to seek their agreement on how this can be carried out.
- MHCLG explained they will continue to engage with bereaved families, former residents of the Tower and Grenfell Walk, and local residents, about decisions on the future of the Tower.
- The Commission expressed that there is a need for the Memorial Commission to be independent and that there is a risk of confusion if conversations on the Tower and the memorial run in parallel. The Commission and MHCLG were both clear that the government is accountable for any decision made on the Tower and MHCLG is leading engagement on the Tower.

Agenda Item 4 – communications and engagement update

- Michael updated on his meeting with Felicity Buchan MP (Member of Parliament for Kensington). Michael explained that Felicity Buchan was particularly interested in the working groups that the Commission had set up to focus on children and young people, communications and engagement, the four-years on and procurement. Michael also updated on the co-chairs' meeting with Grenfell United. He explained Grenfell United were positive and supportive but were concerned about conversations regarding the Tower and the Memorial Commission running in parallel.
- Community representatives updated on February's online events with bereaved families and former residents, Lancaster West estate residents and the North Kensington community. They explained that they received primarily positive feedback alongside some constructive criticism. The Secretariat updated the Commission that Lancaster West estate residents' association representatives had been asked to be recorded in the minutes as such, rather than as residents. Community representatives acknowledged that engagement with organisations is important in reaching those individual constituents. They also emphasised the importance of ensuring people know how important it is that we also hear from the individual constituents.
- MHCLG highlighted that a letter is expected to be sent next week from the Memorial Commission with Memorial Commission branding on the envelopes.

They updated that the first newsletter was sent out with 70 subscribers and since then more people have signed up to the newsletter. MHCLG said that Community representatives could expect to see the draft of the next newsletter shortly.

- Community representatives asked how the push notifications work. MHCLG explained push notifications notify people automatically via email about updates to the website if they sign up. Those who have signed up can unsubscribe at any time. MHCLG agreed to send an example to representatives to show what the push notifications look like to those who have signed up. You can sign up to push notifications by scrolling to the bottom of any page of the [Memorial Commission website](#) and entering your email address.
- A community representative from the communications and engagement working group updated on their previous meeting. The representatives updated that they had discussed making use of other organisations' newsletters to make people aware of the Memorial Commission. They also explained that the Memorial Commission needs to make itself more visually appealing and that they discussed a photo project idea involving people holding up cards with words from the [word cloud](#). Instagram was also discussed as a channel for engaging young people.
- MHCLG provided an update on the number of people who have been engaged by the Commission and Kaizen. A total of 926 people had given their views about the memorial (as of 4 March 2021). The Commission expressed concerns that the numbers of bereaved and survivors engaging with the Commission, whilst increasing, are still only doing so slowly. Kaizen agreed and noted that the majority of those engaged with through their work are primarily Lancaster West and North Kensington residents, and that more work needs to be done on engaging bereaved and survivors. Thelma expressed that she is keen to show all the steps taken and methods used in engagement to show that the views of bereaved are being put first. MHCLG agreed to share an outline of the methods for engagement with the co-chairs.
- Kaizen showed the Commission the initial word cloud from bereaved and survivors and noted that many words are the same as those put forward by the local community. Kaizen emphasised that the word cloud for bereaved and survivors is not yet complete and therefore it might change. Community representatives said that when they held their engagement events in February 2020, they gathered lots of words and would like these to be incorporated in the word cloud. Secretariat explained these are on the [website](#) and have already been shared with Kaizen but will ensure that they are reshared.
- Kaizen explained that they would like to share a recommendation with the Commission about moving from themes to an emerging vision statement. Kaizen said that they will share some example vision statements from other memorials with the Commission before the next meeting.

Action: MHCLG agreed to send an example of what the push notifications look like to those who have signed up with representatives.

Action: MHCLG to send an outline of the methods of engagement for bereaved and survivors to the co-chairs.

Action: Secretariat to ensure the words collected from February 2020 events are shared with Kaizen.

Action: Kaizen to share vision statements with Commission ahead of 31 March meeting.

Agenda item 5 – design adviser interviews

- The interview panel for the design adviser role comprised Thelma, one bereaved representative and one Lancaster West Estate representative alongside two MHCLG officials who provided technical expertise. Thelma explained that they interviewed three candidates and that whilst all three looked promising, there was one candidate who the panel agreed would be preferable.
- Those of the Commission who were on the panel recommended that the rest of the Commission meet with the preferred candidate before making any appointments. The Commission agreed and asked that the Secretariat facilitate this meeting.

Action: Secretariat to facilitate meeting between preferred design adviser candidate and the Commission.

Agenda Item 6 – four-year anniversary

- The four-year anniversary working group explained that they had agreed that their primary focus should be to mark the passing of four years since the tragedy and remember those who lost their lives and homes. The working group had agreed that the Commission should lay a wreath and that MHCLG should explore options for adding further trees to the site. They explained that they had discussed another plaque but agreed that this might risk diminishing the current plaque. They are considering alternatives such as artwork.
- They explained that they are exploring the idea of a video featuring co-chairs and community representatives. The working group asked whether the Commission has any ideas or thoughts on their initial plans.
- Thelma explained that for last year's 7/7 anniversary, they produced a video involving the mayor of London and suggested that the Commission could possibly involve high-profile people in their video, such as a member of the Royal Family. The working group explained that they have considered asking the Memorial Commission's supporters to get involved.

Q&A (taken from questions asked to the Commission over the past month)

Q: Why is there no North Kensington community representative on the Commission?

A: There is no representative on the Commission specifically for North Kensington, but each of the Community representatives undertook to represent their constituent group and the whole of North Kensington as well. You can find out more [here](#).

As part of this role, the Commission runs online events for bereaved families, former residents, local residents and the North Kensington community. You can find out more about these events [here](#).

The Commission also works alongside engagement organisation, Kaizen, who have been working with North Kensington residents to ensure that their views are heard and included in this important work.

Q: How does the Memorial Commission define and engage with next of kin and bereaved families?

A: The Commission uses the definition for next of kin as identified by the Metropolitan Police. However, the Commission recognises that there are people who lost their loved ones in the tragedy who may not necessarily have been listed as the next of kin and understands that family structures can often be complex and difficult to define. The Commission is keen to adopt the most inclusive approach to working with families and to engage with both those who are formally listed as next of kin as well as closely bereaved family members.

Next Meeting: 31 March 2021
Meeting end.

Memorial Commission online community events – April

Three events are being held in April for the Commission to meet bereaved families and former residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk, Lancaster West residents and the North Kensington community via Microsoft Teams. The purpose of these meetings is to hear your thoughts and ideas and to answer any questions that you may have.

Next meeting with Lancaster West Estate residents:

22 April 18:00 – 19:00

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or dial in: +44 20 3795 5763 and use conference ID: 293 911 902#

Next meeting with bereaved families and former residents:

26 April 18:00 – 19:00

Please contact GTMCSecretariat@communities.gov.uk to request the joining details.

Next meeting with the North Kensington community:

29 April 18:00 – 19:00

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or dial in: +44 20 3795 5763 and use conference ID: 268 092 840#