

**Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission Meeting
with bereaved families and former residents**
(24 June 2021)

Attendees

Bereaved family members and former residents (6)

Memorial Commission

Michael Lockwood (chair)
Thelma Stober

(Bereaved representatives)	(Survivor representatives ¹)	(Lancaster West representatives)
Adel Chaoui	Abe Abebe	Andrea Newton
Sandra Ruiz	Hanan Cherbika	
Hassan Hassan	Mohammed Rasoul	

Secretariat

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission secretariat (2)

Meeting purpose

- A minute's silence was held at the start of the meeting.
- Each of the community representatives introduced themselves, and set out their role to serve their community, listen to views, and work together to build a memorial to ensure that the community is not forgotten.
- Michael said he understood this was a difficult time for the community given the proximity of the four-year anniversary. He explained that the role of the Commission is to listen and to act on the thoughts and views of those present. He asked attendees for their concerns, hopes and advice.
- A bereaved attendee set out that they thought the recent letters on the future of the Tower were premature given that the community had not yet given a view on the future memorial. They were clear that the Tower is a personal matter and that everyone has different views, but that for them personally it is essential that a conclusion about what will be in the Tower's place is reached before talk about it coming down.
- Another attendee set out that they believed that the Tower was coming down. A community representative said that while no formal decision had been made by government, a lot of people believe it has.
- An attendee was clear that the Tower is a sacred place and that bringing it down would be offensive. He set out that height is important.
- An attendee said that the consultation with the community about the Tower is not an honest or a real consultation. Any survey needs to include all possibilities. The government's only role is to ensure that the Tower is safe. They should not be making decisions beyond that. They said that in the twenty-first century it must be

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

possible to make sure the Tower is safe. He was clear that an independent engineer was needed to analyse what is possible.

- A community representative set out that MHCLG had said that the decision on the future of the Tower would be based on engineering advice.
- A bereaved family member set out that retaining the height in any future memorial is important as it was where they lived with their family.
- A community representative set out that retaining elements of the Tower and the idea of height is something that they have heard repeatedly and that they will make sure this is included as part of the Commission's work. Another community representative set out that MHCLG has committed that parts of the Tower can be used as part of the future memorial, as long as it is safe to do so.
- An attendee set out that they knew the Tower would have to come down at some point, but that they felt it was important that justice was served before this so that the tragedy would not be forgotten.
- Michael set out that the idea of 'out of sight, out of mind' is something that has recurred throughout conversations. He said in his experience, independent engineering advice is essential.
- A bereaved attendee said that keeping the Tower standing might lead to the memorial becoming a tourist attraction, and that people might come to take photos and treat a site that is sacred as a museum. He was clear that this would be offensive to families.
- A community representative said they would be taking notes of all views about the future memorial and make sure these were included in the process, so that this is a memorial by the community, for the community. They also set out that decision making around the future of the Tower was *not* within the scope of the Memorial Commission.
- An attendee set out that the sightline from the A40 is important. This is one of the reasons that height is important.
- A community representative suggested using lights to project height at night, and that these lights could perhaps go even higher than the height of the Tower.
- A community representative said that one of the ideas that has come through really strongly was a creating a private place just for bereaved families.
- A bereaved attendee set out that no one is going to turn the Tower into a development or a museum. He said he would make sure this doesn't happen.
- A bereaved attendee said he wants the memorial to reflect how the bereaved feel. He said that the area needs to be a personal memory, and that what the families think is the most important thing. He said that the memorial should be a respectable place.
- An attendee said that any questions in a survey need to be scrutinised by the community first, so that the questions are not leading and the survey is fair. He set out that the Tower is a constant reminder of what happened. Seeing it is painful but it is also important.
- An attendee was clear that the new developments in the local area, and other plans that will result in changes to the landscape, are important and may have an impact on the final memorial. A community representative said that the council had committed to be sensitive to new developments in the area and make sure

that these do not adversely impact on the memorial. He said it was in the Commission's remit to take any concerns about the impact of developments in the area on a memorial, and to present these to the council.

- A community representative asked for more clarifications about the attendee's concerns with new developments. The attendee said that these included creating noise, leading to an increase in crime, leading to overcrowding in the area, and possibly being higher than the building and overpowering any future memorial.
- Michael concluded the meeting by summarising some of the important views they have heard. The Commission said it would write to the council, the GLA and TfL to reiterate that they need to respect the views of the community and ensure that any plans for the area do not impact on the future memorial. He also committed to ensuring the views shared around the future of the Tower were relayed to MHCLG.

Next meeting

Online meeting with bereaved and former residents:

22 July 18:00 – 19:00

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Phone Conference ID: 842 358 021#