

Aga buyers keep up pressure on government

By PAUL JENKINS

THE founder of the AGA Homebuyers' Group has blasted the uncertainty that members are in over the state of their homes as the investigation into Gary Robb's finances continue.

Larry Smith has expressed fears some of the homes may subside from their mountainside base if firm foundations are not put in place soon.

Government officials have frozen Aga boss Mr Robb's bank account and retained his "kimlik" (identity) card as investigations into the finances of his company continue. They have also arrested former business partner Tahir Soycan as they investigate alleged malpractice.

But Mr Smith, who has brought a house on the Amaranta site and set up the online members' group

from his base in England, said it was the customers of Aga who were suffering and he feared they may never see their homes.

He said: "This has been going on too long and the wall of silence from the government is deafening.

"Despite repeated previous assurances from them that they would be the guarantors of the homes, work has not started, far from it, and this so-called investigation seems to be endless."

Mr Smith said some of the houses on the Amaranta site were unlikely to survive another harsh winter and were in danger of subsidence.

He said: "I suppose one way you could look at it is at least nobody will be in the houses when they go because they are not finished, but people have paid good money already just for a basic structure.

"I really think one way or

another someone in the government needs to step forward and be counted, or at least admit there has been a delay but either way come up with the latest information for us."

Members of the group stepped up the pressure on the government this week when they met Interior Minister Özkan Murat. They attended the session at Girne District Office on Tuesday when Mr Murat made himself available to answer questions. Then on Thursday they marched to Attorney General Akın Sait's office in Lefkoşa, demanding information on the state of the Amaranta Valley project.

Yesterday they again went to see Mr Murat, and presented him with an unofficial document for him to sign, allowing Aga owner Gary Robb to restart work on their homes. Although Mr Murat refused to sign, a spokesman for the group

said the exercise had been worthwhile because it had made him see how serious the problem was. She said: "People's patience has run out now — it has been going on a year and some people are renting their third property in that time because their homes are not finished. Others have had to go back to England and stay with friends or relatives.

"We need some answers because progress has ground to a halt. We need to know, for example, when they will unfreeze Gary Robb's assets so he can continue building — or, if they are not going to do this, then, as promised, they must act as guarantors of the project so either way we will get our houses. "We are trying to be positive and support each other as much as possible but there is only so much uncertainty we are prepared to take."