

COMMUNITY VOICE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: 13th December, 2011

Time: 1pm

Venue: Baptist Church, Scunthorpe

Present: Ken Willey – Swinburne Rd (Chair)
Mary Southgate – Tenant Rep (Vice-Chair)
Alison Highlands – Geographical Rep (Secretary)
Terry Chatwin – Tenant Rep
Edna Moore – Market Hill
Pat Cowdell – Hillside
Don Robertson – Hillside
Ron Weller – South Killingholme
Mo Weller – South Killingholme
Maria Havercroft – BAME Rep, Ulceby
Vicky Fernandez – LEBT Rep, Barton
Steve Dale – Crosby Park
Ian Mortimer – NLH, Resident Involvement and Community Development
Manager
Wendy Britcliffe – NLH, Senior Resident Involvement Officer
Steve Hepworth – NLH, Director of Operations
Steve Wardrope – NLH, Director of Corporate Services
Brendan McMahon – NLH, Service Improvement Manager
Susan Mumby – Independent Consultant

1. Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping

Ken welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained housekeeping items.

Ken informed everyone of the unfortunate resignation of Jo West. Ken stated that Jo would be sadly missed and wished her well for the future.

Apologies were received from: Mrs Gul, Richard Leach, Elizabeth Gilmore, Mrs Parsons and Danny Moore.

2. Accuracy of Previous Minutes & Update of Action Plan

The minutes were approved by Mary and seconded by Maria as a true record.

Update of Action Plan

The next date for training will be on the 16th of December at 9.30am covering The Big Society.

Allocations will be left on the action plan for the next meeting.

Group structures is on the agenda for this meeting.

The training leaflets have been sent out to all tenants.

The Christmas buffet lunch will be held on Thursday, 15th December at the Central Community Centre at 12noon.

Letters have been sent out regarding the proposal of future Community Voice document distribution. Agreement has been approved, as of January all Community Voice documents will be e-mailed to members. Those members who do not have the use of a computer will still receive theirs by post.

Wendy contacted Pat direct concerning a local lettings policy issue.

It was brought up about problems regarding the repairs free-phone line. Checks were made and no faults were registered for this.

The direct line to housing officers is still in use but if the housing officer is out of the office then the call will be re-directed to the call centre for you to leave a message.

There is still a vacancy for a leaseholder rep to attend Community Voice meetings. This will be promoted at future leaseholder meetings.

3. Reminder of Enquiry Log – Ken Willey

Ken reminded everyone of the log. It was stated that if you have made an entry in the log then you must check for a response at the next Community Voice meeting.

Discussion Items

4. Resident Involvement Report – Wendy Britcliffe

Wendy provided a report on the involvement activity which had taken place since the last CV meeting held in November.

Thanks were given to Edna & Danny Moore for organising the Christmas Party.

The Tenant Inspectors meeting has been cancelled and training for the Mystery Shopping taster session will be held in January 2012.

Wendy has asked for any ideas for the title for next year's Tenant Conference.

A list of future dates for Community Voice meetings was handed out. The 1st meeting will be held at the Baptist Church but hopefully from February the meetings will be held at the Customer Call Centre in Cole Street.

5. Expenses Policy – Wendy Britcliffe

Wendy gave a brief presentation of the policy as a full review is not needed. There will be a change in rate from April.

Wendy asked for any questions, there were none.

6. Customer Care Policy – Wendy Britcliffe

Wendy stated three members of Community Voice would be needed to set-up a working group. The following people showed an interest: Terry Chatwin, Mary Southgate, Alison Highlands, Ron Weller and Edna Moore. Wendy stated that the final decision would be made by Liam and then informed when the meeting would take place.

7. Group Structures – Steve Wardrope

Steve gave an update of the Group Structures, option 1 is the preferred choice chosen by the Board subject to consultations by tenant, funding and the council. Community Voice is the primary group and a separate meeting will be arranged to go through the structures in more detail.

Action Plan – To arrange a meeting to go through the structures.

Steve then asked for any questions.

Steve stated that this would only be a start; after all the consultations have taken place then an AGM of the company will take place before anything is done.

The local authority Board membership has now been reduced from 15 to 12 which mean that 3 council places have been lost. This has been approved by the Board but before it becomes fact an AGM must take place and company members (tenants who are ordinary members) must approve the decision.

8. Performance Information – Toni Mosley

Toni apologised for the absence of Louise Usher then gave a brief presentation of the report, then asked for any questions.

It was agreed by members of Community Voice that in future the reports would be in this format as it is much clearer.

Ken thanked the group for all their hard work in producing performance in this format which is excellent.

It was asked if satisfaction cards are still used by the repairs team. Toni replied that the repairs department have stopped sending out the cards as they did not give a true reflection of the service or value for money, a company (volantas) has been employed to call approx 20% of repairs done to get satisfaction information.

It was asked what happens if a tenant is not happy with their liason officer during the improvements. Toni replied that if this happens then they must report this to NLH complaints directly.

9. Empty Homes Review – Brendan McMahon

Brendan gave a presentation of the review which started in August, then asked for any questions.

Brendan stated that unfortunately as the report has been done in black & white the divisions in the charts are not clearly defined.

It was asked if tenants moving in to empty homes are given a choice of dates. Brendan replied that post-let repairs are made by appointment to suit the tenant. If a tenant wants to move in earlier or later then NLH will work with the tenant to suit them.

Information Items

10. Affordable Rent Policy – Steve Hepworth

Steve gave a presentation of the policy. NLH are the only social housing association in Lincolnshire to be given any money from the Government to build new homes, but obviously stipulations have been put in place. Steve then asked for any questions.

It was asked who would be affected by this new policy. Steve replied that only new tenants would be affected, homes which are large (4/5 bed) or adapted will be on as a fixed tenancy. Only 19 properties per year will be on as a fixed tenancy.

Steve stated that the proposal is for 4/5 bed, adapted, high rent and high demand properties. The decision will be made by the Board in January with a 6 month evaluation put in place.

It was asked if we were making it unfair for those on low income to get the high rent/high demand properties. Steve replied that those on benefits would be covered by their benefits.

Steve stated that the fixed tenancies would only be used if it is beneficial to NLH.

It was asked if the e-mail sent referring to an increase of 70p in rent is on this proposal. Steve replied that this was a different proposal.

It was asked if the fixed tenancies would affect everyone. The reply was that it would only affect new tenants.

Steve stated that the rent increase in April will only be the minimum to achieve the government target.

11. Computer Training – Susan Mumby

Susan gave a presentation of the computer training available and handed out information sheets. This will be run over a 3 year period and hopefully reach 2000 people throughout North Lincolnshire. Susan then asked for any questions.

It was asked how many people could be trained at one time. Susan replied that ideally it would be small groups with a maximum of 5 people so that the training could be more concentrated. Funding would be looked at so that no outlay would be incurred by the Resident Associations.

It was asked if Susan would make individual visits to Resident Associations to promote this programme. The reply was that she would be happy to do this.

Susan stated that obviously each Resident Association would have their own agenda's and that she would be happy to fit in with them.

It was asked how we would go about funding for this programme. Susan replied that once you had decided on what training you wanted then she would put in a bid for you to cover the costs.

Susan stated that she would give out a formal proposal to forward out to Resident Associations to find out the amount of interest in this programme.

Action Plan – To send out proposals to Resident Associations to find out interest in this programme.

12. Community Voice Budget 2012 – Ian Mortimer

Ian gave an update of the budget for 2011 which was £12,500 at the moment about half has been spent. Next year the budget will be reduced by £2,500 due to the spending used.

It was stated that an away-day is to be arranged for February to decide what training Community Voice members want.

Action Plan – To arrange an away-day for Community Voice members.

13. Reminder of Board Observers/Leaseholder Panel – Ken Willey

Dates have yet to be arranged for these meetings.

14. Any Other Business

A request has been received from James Thew to be the Gypsy Rep at future Community Voice meetings. It was agreed that he could attend the next meeting as an observer.

Alison gave an update of the research carried out regarding First-aid training. It was decided that this would be left until the away-day.

It was asked why the telephone line for the support officer who had left resulted in losing the broadband in the communal area. The reply was that this should not have happened and that this would be looked into.

It was stated that in future updates by Resident Associations are both wanted and needed for up-coming Community Voice newsletters.

A date in February is to be arranged for the next network meeting of Resident Associations.

The Gas draw took place and number 390 was chosen by the chair.

The following numbers for the tenant rewards was chosen by members of Community Voice, they are: 17, 20, 27, 33, 52, 60, 99, 102, 140 and 173.

The new pet's policy will be brought to the meeting in January.

It was stated that new windows should have opening instructions in-case of a fire. The Reply was that this would be looked into and reported about at the next meeting.

15. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 9th January 2012 at 1pm, Baptist Church.

CV Officers Contact Details:

Ken Willey – Chair Kenneth.willey@ntlworld.com

Mary Southgate – Vice-Chair

Alison Highlands – Secretary Jeanette.highlands@ntlworld.com

Danny Moore – Treasurer

