

**COMMUNITY VOICE**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2009

Time: 1.00pm

Venue: Baptist Church

Present: Ken Willey – Chair

Mary Southgate – Vice Chair

Danny Moore – Treasurer

Alison Highlands – Secretary

Jim Newcombe – Healey Road

Tony Sanderson – Warley Road

Janine Mee – Warley Road

Terry Chatwin – Hallcroft Close

Edna Kenyan – Market Hill

Brian Duff – Swinburne Road

Alex Killen – Sheltered Panel Rep

Steve Dale – Crosby Park

Pat Cowdell – Hillside

Don Robertson – Hillside

Linda Lavin – Hi Crosby

Georgina Parkinson – Hi Crosby

Mark Harland – Lodgemoor

Sandra Day – Bushfield & Kingsway

Shazeda Haque – BME Rep

Richard Leach – RUG

Karen Cowan – Resident Involvement Manager

Wendy Britcliffe – Senior Resident Involvement Officer

Steve Hepworth – Director of Housing

Neil Webster – Head of Investment

**1. Welcome & Apologies**

Ken welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies: Betty Close, Steve Evans, Ray Day, Jane Duncan, Louise Usher.

## **2. Accuracy of Previous Minutes & Update of Action Plan**

Karen confirmed that all issues highlighted in the action plan have been completed and relevant agenda items included for this meeting.

There is to be an estate walk about round Martins Close, Barrow and this has been arranged for Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2009.

Richard confirmed that he is responsible for the booking of taxis for all the Community Voice meetings. Richards details are as follows: Home phone No: 01652 651081, Mobile No : 07583271046, E-Mail address – [trickydicament@aol.com](mailto:trickydicament@aol.com). Richard would like people to contact him well in advance of the meetings so that he is given enough time to organise the bookings.

The minutes were approved as a true record.

## **Decision Items**

### **3. Programme of Service Reviews – Karen Cowan**

Karen provided a report on the programme of Service Reviews and then asked for 10 volunteers to put their names forward for a sub-group. The following volunteers put their names forward: Danny Moore, Ken Willey, Mary Southgate, Alison Highlands, Georgina Parkinson, Edna Kenyan, Terry Chatwin, Don Robertson.

The above named volunteers will be notified when a meeting has been arranged.

Karen asked for any questions. There were none.

### **4. Environmental Works – Neil Webster**

Neil gave a report on the progress with the Environmental works then asked for any questions.

It was asked what were the priorities for sheltered housing schemes? Neil replied that there were plans already put in place for the sheltered housing.

It was asked how soon the consultations would be starting? It was stated that some consultations had already started and Karen replied that the hot-spots are being dealt with quickly.

There will be a sub-group set up to decide how to allocate the priorities for the environmental works. Karen stated that letters would be sent out to all community voice members for this sub-group and as there are only a few names required if several names are received these would be drawn out. Once a sub group has been established there will be a meeting arranged.

It was asked if the estate plans for the works would be up-dated on the web site? The reply was that yes they would.

It was asked if there would be any tenant or residents input? Neil replied that there has already been input received.

It was asked about the roads being done and if it was only roads which were owned by NLH that would have improvements made? The reply was that yes only roads owned by NLH were being done.

It was asked if there could be a joint venture between NLH and N.L.C put in place? The reply was that this would be brought to the next meeting for discussion.

It was asked who to get in touch with for repairs to paths? The reply was that it depends on who has ownership of the paths.

It was asked how could we resolve the problems of people parking on the town estate car parks who do not actually live on there? The reply was that extra car parking spaces is already covered in the estate plans. Copies of these are available from the local housing offices or from the web site.

It was stated that there were problems on the web site and that some information was not available. Karen stated that she would check on this and if there were any problems they would be rectified.

The next stage is to set up a sub-group and arrange a meeting.

## **5. Allocation Policy Review – Karen Cowan**

Karen gave an update of the policy then asked for any questions.

It was asked that if tenants who were allocated a property for the over 30 in a certain area, why had they been allowed to bring their children into the properties. Steve said that one case was being looked into and if there were any more they would also be looked into.

It was asked whether it would not be cost effective to do one draft policy and not more as changes are made. Karen replied that in future it would be done in one consultation and then any feedback to be given before the draft would be finalised.

## **6. Service Charges – Steve Hepworth**

Steve gave out a report and unfortunately there had been no time to look at this in detail, therefore Steve replied that Community Voice members should take the report away and look through it, if there is any feedback could they let Steve know by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June.

Steve then asked for any questions.

It was asked that if tenants paid for cleaning services did they have an input into how and when the cleaning is done? The reply was that yes they did.

It was asked if the tenants were charged for the cutting of grass in the communal gardens. Steve replied that they were not.

Were people on benefits included in the charges? The reply was yes they were.

It was stated that at the moment every tenant pays for services through their rent even though they don't receive them. Steve stated that since the law changed and those tenants who don't receive the services should not pay for them, unfortunately the rents which have been set by the government can not be lowered for those tenants therefore new tenants who receive those services will be charged separately. Any money which is not

needed for these services would be put to other departments for example: repairs.

It was asked if there was going to be a change made to properties where heating is charged for even though tenants don't use it. The reply was that yes there would be changes made for those properties as meters would be put in so that tenants would only pay for the heating that they used.

It was stated that it was still an unfair system and would the increase of rents and services be separate. The reply was that yes these increases would be separate.

It was asked if the cleaning of communal areas could be done by the tenants instead of paying someone else to do this. The reply was that there would have to be at least 80% of the tenants willing to agree to this.

## **Discussion Items**

### **7. Inspection Date – Steve Hepworth**

Steve stated that the Audit Commission would be at NLH on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November for one week to inspect the services NLH give to their tenants. If the inspectors want to arrange a focus group from members of Community Voice and Residents Associations it would be decided by them and not by NLH.

Their final feedback report should be ready by January. Steve asked for any questions.

It was asked if the inspectors would be going to different areas and properties. The reply was that yes they would.

It was asked if tenants did not want the inspectors in their homes could they refuse. Steve replied that anyone can refuse as it was their homes.

### **8. Tenant Involvement – Karen Cowan**

TSA Update

Karen provided information on the Tenant Services Authority update.

They are now on their 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of their National Conversation process. Karen stated that information is available on the web site if any member wants to look at it in full and give any comments. The web site is: [www.nationalconversation.co.uk](http://www.nationalconversation.co.uk) or if any member wants to comment by telephone the number is: 0845 2307000.

### Volunteer Hours

Karen stated that it is useful to capture how many hours our volunteers actually give to meetings. It would then be shown to the inspectors. Karen then asked for any questions.

It was asked if these forms could be done with a confidentiality clause as some members could be penalised for these hours due to their circumstances. Karen stated that NLH would only share details of the hours and not individual names.

It was asked if it was only Community Voice hours or also the hours on sub-groups? Karen replied that all meetings attended on behalf of Community Voice would be included in the collation of hours.

It was asked if Resident Involvement gave support to Neighbourhood Watch meetings. Karen replied that Resident Involvement only gave support to Resident Associations but that a NW group could incorporate a RA within its remit and would then receive support.

It was decided that Wendy would look at all the meetings and calculate how many hours were covered.

The hours which will be calculated are only Community Voice meetings and their sub-groups and will not include Resident Association meetings.

### Training

Karen stated that Wendy was due to complete the next tenant volunteer training calendar. This would be sent out to members.

Karen said that there would be evaluation sheets given out regarding the training courses for feedback to see if the course had been useful to individuals attending.

### NLH Tenant Conference

Karen stated that NLH were looking into holding a conference for all tenants.

### Resident Involvement Expenses Policy and Leaflet

Karen gave out copies of the above for members to look through and to give any feedback by the 25<sup>th</sup> of June. She explained that NLH already operates to this policy but that the specifics have now been put down in writing so that all will be aware of what is available.

## **9. Performance Information/Scorecard – Karen Cowan**

Karen gave Louise Ushers apologies for the meeting and stated that she had only just had sight of the hand outs and apologised for them as the font was too small to read. They would be changed and brought to the next meeting.

## **10. TV License Concessionary Rules – Steve Hepworth**

Steve provided a report on the rules for TV licenses then asked for any questions.

It was asked who paid the difference between the concession and the actual full price of a license. Steve replied that no-one did as the concession rate only applied in the Sheltered Housing Schemes.

### **Information Items**

## **11. Improvement Team Review – Neil Webster**

Neil gave an update on the new structure that is being put in place which should help to improve the system. Neil then asked for any questions.

It was asked if roofs were being replaced under this new structure. Neil replied that roofs which need to be replaced would be done disregarding what age they were.

It was asked if disabled tenants could have an option of replacing a bath with a shower, could this be done. Neil replied that this would be looked at through the Occupational Therapy who would access the individual's requirements.

It was asked if new tenants moving in had to put up with the adaptations made to properties or could they get them changed. Steve replied that hopefully new tenants when viewing the properties would look at the adaptations and then decide whether to accept them or not.

It was asked if there was a telephone number for complaints regarding the Improvement works. Neil replied that anyone with complaints should ring NLH and ask for the Clerk of Works.

It was asked if there were going to be any changes made to toilets that have the high flushing system. This is being looked into.

## **12. C.V Sub-Group Feedback**

Karen asked if any members would be willing to try a weekly payment of rent by direct debit as a pilot. Jim said he would be willing to do this. Details to be passed onto the rent department.

## **13. Any Other Business**

It was asked if there could be letters sent out to members of Community Voice who are not attending meetings on a regular basis. Karen replied that unfortunately this could not be done as the invites are for a representation from Resident Associations, it is not compulsory that someone attends.

It was asked why there was a delay of documents and contracts for services at Sheltered Housing schemes. Steve replied that the new start date for the Supporting People contract was due in late August 2010 and bids for contracts are starting to come in.

Karen asked that when members of Community Voice want to see staff when attending Meridian House they should make prior

arrangements and not just turn up into the individual offices. Members of staff often have work to complete by a deadline and other appointments to attend. Also Karen reminded members to avoid turning up too early for the start time of meetings as the rooms are sometimes not ready when they first arrive.

It was stated that work has begun on the garages on Ferriby Road.

It was asked if Steve could go to the A.G.M's of Resident Associations. Steve replied that if asked and he was available then yes he would attend.

It was asked about a repair needing doing to a new door which had been fitted. The reply was that they should phone the call centre and ask to speak to Mick Roberts.

#### **14. Date of Next Meeting**

13<sup>th</sup> of July @ 1.00pm – 4.30pm  
Baptist Church, Scunthorpe

10<sup>th</sup> of August @ 1.00pm – 4.30pm  
Baptist Church, Scunthorpe

14<sup>th</sup> of September (AGM followed by CV meeting) 1.00pm – 4.30pm  
Baptist Church, Scunthorpe