

**Minutes of Meeting held on 17 December 2008 at 3.00 p.m.
At Little Aynam House, Kendal**

Present: S Mallinson Leasehold Manager, SLH (Chair)
S Duffy Community Participation Coordinator, SLH
Cllr Hodson SLH Board Director and SLDC Cllr
Ms Dorothy Dixon 44 Waterside, Kendal
Mrs Joan Chadwick 4 High Tenterfell Court, Kendal,
Mr Alan Mark 6 Longlands View, Kendal
Tim Keegan 6 Applerigg, Kendal
Mr V Carter Housing Officer, SLH

Apologies: Miss AER Crowley, Longlands View
Mr Tom Lynch, Repairs Operations Manager, SLH
Ms A Dickinson, 5 Jennings Terrace, Kendal
Mrs D Thornton, 7 Jennings Terrace, Kendal

Circulation: All

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Subject

Action

1.0 Minutes of last meeting

Minutes for Leaseholder SIG of 19 August 2008 were declared a true record.

2.0 Matters arising

Dorothy asked that her comments regarding SLDC loans only being available to those who had been leaseholders for less than 10 years be noted by SLH and SLDC. Suzy will contact Tony Whittaker from SLDC to see whether he has passed on the comment. Sue said she thought that the 10 year rule was in the legislation. Add result of this enquiry to minutes.

Tim K asked whether it would have been cheaper to ask which leaseholders want an allpay card. Sue said no, it was cheaper so send to everyone.

Sue M said that SLDC's Cabinet had approved the buy back policy we discussed at the last meeting and had set aside £320K for it; Dorothy commented that this did not seem to be enough funds for '3 or 4' buybacks, even in this 'credit crunch'. Sue commented that a leasehold home had been abandoned and repossessed just a couple of weeks ago, and that right to buy sales had dropped this year from around 80 to only 3.

3.0 Allpay

Sue said that the cards had gone out to all our sundry debtors – that is anyone who receives a regular invoice from SLH, for example septic tank users, leaseholders. The cards are similar to pay point/pay zone cards. You can pay with cash at an outlet such as the Post Office, but will have to pay with your debit card on line. A number of the cards were already being used.

4.0 Unpooled Service Charges

Sue explained that following the Inspectors criticising SLDC for not investigating this issue, a review had now been agreed. As it is too late to make a difference to 2009/10 budgets, which are now being prepared, any changes are likely to be implemented in 2010/11. SLH board was to consider a paper on this on 18 December 2008, and Suzy promised to circulate the paper with these minutes. The unpooling would affect all tenants and leaseholders in that the services such as lighting to communal areas and grounds maintenance were not being charged to those who used them. In addition Tenants' Committee is still telling SLDC that they do not want tenants (and Leaseholders) to have to pay for services twice, that is, once in their council tax, and again in their rent or service charges. Sue commented that if estates were dealt with as a whole, the charges might be pooled across an estate. The review is going to cost around £45K to administer with a possible eventual boost to the Housing Revenue Account of £300K. **Joan will be making a point at the Board about the 'twice' charging for grounds maintenance etc.**

5.0 Report back from Tenants' Committee

Suzy explained that Tenants' Committee had asked that all the SIGs are chaired by stakeholders. The **Group asked that Sue M retains the Chair and that we review this annually.** Agreed

Dorothy said she is getting to know what the business at Tenants' Committee is all about, and has been able to put forward a general leaseholder view where appropriate. **The Group asked Dorothy to continue representing leaseholder interests on the Committee.**

6.0 5% Telephone Survey of Leaseholders

Suzy explained that she is carrying out a programme of surveys on different groups e.g. leaseholders, Tenant Involvement Club (TIC), and proposed that the leaseholder surveys questions might be about satisfaction with the newsletter format etc, which the Group had previously agreed. The survey will reach leaseholders who do not normally take part. Sue M mentioned that another major survey of leaseholders is due in the new year. Tim Keegan asked about the results of all these surveys, and Sue M promised that the results are used to improve the service, and communicated via the newsletter and website.

Tim K also said that the furore in the Gazette about the ice and so on demonstrated that people don't know which Council does what; many people complained to SLDC about a service that is the County Council's. Tim suggested a quiz on this topic might be useful and Suzy said she would be interested in trying something on those lines in the newsletter.

7.0 Any other business

- Put in newsletter piece about front doors being fire doors and can UPVC be fire doors?
- Mention upcoming major survey in newsletter
- Sue commented that very few leaseholders are responding to the satisfaction with repairs. The Group thought there had been a change to repairs reporting procedure and asked for a Q and A session with Tom Lynch at the next meeting to confirm what the procedure is. The Group asked that a reference number be given out by the *contact centre* ? staff. Leaseholders also need to know what repairs have been done as these are now billed at the end of the year, around March. Sue confirmed that many items which were previously priced from the schedule of rates as standard costs are now not priced. The Group also wondered if some repairs had been carried out in error because the tradesmen were not sure what needs

doing. Invite **Repairs Operations Manager to next meeting.**

8.0 Dates of Next Meetings

Suzy explained that she and Sue were proposing that we have 3 meetings of the LESIG and one special event for all leaseholders where we might invite staff from SLDC to answer questions. The Group **agreed to have 3 meetings and one special event in 2009/10.**

Tuesday 17 February 2009

Tuesday 12 May 2009

Special event 29 September 2009

Tuesday 8 December 2009

All at 3.00 p.m.