

**SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES
THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 10.30 HRS
HELD AT
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL**

Present: Phyllis Tweedale
John Short
Peter Bland
Dorothy Dixon
Charles Howarth
Joan Chadwick
Margaret Akrigg
Ron Pritchard
Margaret Pritchard (Chairman)
Robin Martakies

Officers in attendance: Suzy Duffy, Community Participation Coordinator- SLH
John Stirling, Tenant Participation Officer- SLH

Apologies: Win Sayers
Brenda Gray, Portfolio Holder- SLDC
Ian Elleray, Community and Housing Manager- SLDC
Lucy Reynolds, Senior Strategy Officer- SLDC
Peter Thomas, Chief Executive- SLH

Circulation: As above

Copy to:

Action

The agenda for the SLH Board AGM on 23 September, together with all supporting reports and accounts was available for collection.

537 Welcome

Margaret Pritchard opened the meeting noting that this was the first meeting of the Committee since Su Marriott had resigned. The Committee agreed to send a card containing an expression of their thanks to Su.

J St

538 Minutes of previous meeting (2 July 2009)

Minutes of previous meeting (2 July 2009)

John Stirling asked that the word 'since' be added between 'that' and 'the' to the first sentence of paragraph 2 of minute 525, to clarify the meaning.

The minutes were then agreed as a true record.

539 Matters arising

Minute 522- John Short asked if the further information regarding complaints had been provided. John Stirling said that prior to the agenda being sent out, he had enquired of Robin Martakies if his request had been met and Robin had confirmed that it had. Robin Martakies said that upon reflection he could not recall if the information had been supplied or not. John Stirling would identify the nature of the additional

J St

information sought, and make a further request.

Action

540 SLH Board Minutes 9 July and 13 August

13 August- John Short said that this was an extraordinary meeting and dealt only with the management accounts, and other procedural matters preliminary to the Board AGM on 23 September. Other agenda items not directly linked to the AGM had been deferred to a later date.

Phyllis Tweedale suggested that Tenants' Committee should mirror the practice of the Board and appoint 'Champions' for various subjects. Peter Bland said that it was the duty of the Tenant Board Directors to report back to Tenants' Committee on Board meetings and other activities. John Short said that the Board was looking after the interests of tenants better than before.

541 SLH Board Agenda 23 September 2009

The agenda for the AGM was noted. Copies of the full accounts were available.

542 Treasurers Report

In presenting his report, John Short said that due to the timing of meetings over the summer, his report unusually covered a 3 month period.

The £400 donation from the Bramall Community Fund was shown as a separate item. John Short suggested that the fund could be used to pay for a selection of cleaning materials to be presented to new tenants, by a member of Tenants' Committee, in order to promote the work of the Committee. Robin Martakies said that new tenants should be made aware of the local 'Voice' where one existed. Joan Chadwick said that before coming to any decision, the terms of reference of the original Bramall Community Fund should be consulted. Suzy Duffy would make the necessary enquiries.

SD

543 Strategic Housing Options Update

Margaret Pritchard said that although Ian Elleray was unable to attend in person, he had updated her by telephone. The current position was that SLDC were in the process of appointing consultants to advise on the options process. One of their first tasks would be to draw up recommendations for the appointment of an Independent Tenant Advisor. Ian Elleray would attend the next meeting of Tenants' Committee on 22 October and give a comprehensive update.

544 Review of Family Fun Days

Suzy Duffy circulated the timetable for reviewing the outcomes of the Family Fun Days (FFDs), and members of the Committee who had attended the events were encouraged to give their feedback. Once all views had been received a report would be prepared for the next meeting on 22 October, and the Board meeting on 29 October.

Robin Martakies said that the original Area Panels, which were subsequently replaced by Area Discussion Groups, had worked well. They represented democracy by, and accountability to, tenants. He asked who had authorised the replacement of Area Discussion Groups (ADGs) by Family Fun Days. He supported FFDs but wanted ADGs to continue as well.

John Short also asked who changed from ADGs to FFDs and asked for an answer to the question within 1 week.

Margaret Pritchard said that spending decisions for estate improvements could be returned to the ADGs from the Grant Approvals Panel (GAP) to ensure fairness. Peter Bland said that as Chairman of the GAP, he was rigorous in ensuring that all areas and applications were treated fairly.

545 Disabled Tenants Group

Margaret Pritchard said that all other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) within Cumbria had a disabled tenants group, who advised and mystery shopped issues affecting people with disabilities. Margaret thought that such a group would be useful within SLH, but was unsure of possible terms of reference.

Charles Howarth said that he was at the Customer Access Service Improvement Group when it was agreed that changes would be made to the presentation of written material to assist visually impaired tenants.

Suzy Duffy suggested that she contact SLDC, and John Stirling contact the RSLs in Cumbria to ascertain their respective positions and report back in due course. The Committee agreed to that course of action.

SD/J St

546 Review of Service Improvements

Members had hoped to pose questions to the Chief Executive at this point. Suzy Duffy reminded the Committee that they are always welcome to discuss any concern about the service with the Chief Executive by telephone, or by making an appointment to see him. Any tenant can also ask a question of the Board, make arrangements to address the Board, or propose that the Tenants' Committee makes a recommendation to the Board. Tenants' Committee may also invite the Chief Executive to a meeting.

In the absence of Peter Thomas, Suzy Duffy presented the report. She said that the review supported the principle of engaging tenants who had an interest in a particular subject but did not seek the formality of Tenants' Committee, but that the number of current Service Improvement Groups (SIGs) is reduced.

Robin Martakies said that it was an excellent report, but wondered if SIGs would be open to all tenants or by invitation only.

The Committee agreed to approve the proposals subject to clarification regarding the matters of whether meetings should be open and what topics the six new SIGs would cover. A 'Recommendation to the Board' can then be made at the next meeting of Tenants' Committee.

547 Decent Homes

The mop-up work was scheduled to be completed by the end of November. The reports were noted.

548 Members' Reports

Ron Pritchard- Had attended the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Tenants' Panel on 29 July. Whilst the Panel was reassured that the scheme was countywide, not countrywide they did have concerns about access to the scheme by vulnerable tenants or applicants.

Phyllis Tweedale- Had travelled to a meeting of the Housing Provision Advisory Group (HJPAG) on 7 August, only to find that it had been cancelled.

Joan Chadwick- Had attended a repairs and maintenance SIG when changes were made to the reward scheme for leaving a property in a clean and tidy condition. The capital programme would now be considered by the group too.

549 Any Other Business

(a) Ron Pritchard- thought that the prominence given to anti-social behavior (ASB) in the most recent edition of the newsletter was out of proportion to the problem. Peter Bland said that this was his view too, but he had been in a minority when the matter was discussed by Editorial Team. Dorothy Dixon said that the people who were affected by ASB wanted to see that firm action was being taken by SLH. Joan Chadwick suggested that it may be more appropriate to praise the majority of tenants for their good behaviour. Robin Martakies said good news, not negative, was needed about ASB.

(b) Ron asked Committee members to inform him of subjects in which they wished the Cumbria Tenants and Residents Forum to offer training.

(c) Suzy Duffy- wished to invite Michael Wheatley from Derwent and Solway Housing Association to attend the meeting of 22 October in order to discuss methods of raising awareness of the importance of household contents insurance with tenants. The Committee agreed.

(d) John Stirling presented a 'Safer Driving' certificate to Ron Pritchard.

550 Date of Next Meeting

1030 hrs, 22 October 2009 in the Resource Centre at Little Aynam House.