

**SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES  
THURSDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2011 AT 10.30 HRS  
HELD AT  
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL**

Present: Tenants  
Margaret Pritchard (Chairman)  
John Short  
Margaret Akrigg  
Ron Pritchard  
Charles Howarth  
Robin Martakies  
Joan Chadwick  
Annice Lewis  
Dorothy Dixon  
Janet Cherry

Officers in attendance: John Mansergh- Performance Manager, SLH  
John Stirling- Tenant Participation Officer, SLH

Apologies: Doone Ward  
Win Sayers  
Anne Corbett  
Patricia Stoodley  
Peter Thornton – Housing and Development Portfolio Holder SLDC

The Committee were advised that Peter Bland and Phyllis Tweedale had resigned.

Circulation: As above

**Action**

**698 Minutes of Previous Meeting, 27 January 2011**

Minute 683 John Stirling asked to insert 'identification of' before 'products containing asbestos', and at minute 685- delete 'successful' before 'bid for £542.000 had been made to CLG'.

Subject to the above, the minutes were accepted as a true record.

**699 Matters Arising**

Robin Martakies- minute 688 (Grounds Maintenance) had received clarification about the boundaries of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) managed land and was taking up the matter of grass cutting with Tony Naylor from SLDC.

Dorothy Dixon- minute 683 (SLH Board Minutes 4 November 2010) was aware that one of her neighbours had written to the Chairman of the Board with a question. An answer had been received but there was no mention of the matter in the minutes under 'Residents Questions'. John Mansergh would check and report back.

**JM**

John Mansergh- minute 685 (Housing Revenue Account) the result of the bid for additional funding to undertake further Decent Homes work was now known, and SLDC had been provisionally awarded £300,000 in 2014-15. The letter from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) containing the detail of the offer would be circulated.

JSt

#### **700 SLH Board Minutes (27 January 2011)**

Minute 943 (Chief Executive's Report) Robin Martakies asked if members of Tenants' Committee would be attending the SLDC Housing Conference? John Mansergh would obtain further details of the event and report back.

JM

Minute 945 (SLH Maintenance Review) Robin Martakies had been involved in an exchange of correspondence with Peter Thomas and offered to share it with other members of the Committee should they wish.

Minute 952 (Complaints Remedies and Compensation Policy) Robin Martakies asked what further guidance had been issued following clarification of point 3.5? John Short replied that the matter had been referred back to the Policy Sub-Committee, who would re-examine the wording.

J Sh

Minute 941 (Performance Report) Ron Pritchard drew attention to the fact that some tenants had added to their own difficulties in the recent spell of adverse weather by switching off trace heating elements fitted in their homes as they believed it was expensive to run.

#### **701 SLH Board Agenda 3 March 2011**

Item 6.3 (Gas Safety Management and Corporate Gas Policy) Robin Martakies noted recommendation 5, but thought that effected tenants would be unable to pay the £250 administration charge.

Item 7.1 (Impact of Government's Policy Changes on SLH) Robin Martakies welcomed the paper, particularly the increased opportunities for tenant governance.

Item 4.3 (School Knott Close) The Committee endorsed the proposals, adding that the urgent need was for family homes, not Sheltered accommodation.

Item 4.4 (Stores Report) The Committee took the view that the report was timely and supported it.

#### **702 District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement**

The Committee had no hesitation in recommending the revised Agreement to both the Board and SLDC. The reduction in specific detail was most welcome. Margaret Pritchard said it was important that Board Directors were aware of the work of Tenants Committee, and she had offered an open invitation to any Council, Independent or Co-Opted Board Director to attend any meeting of Tenants Committee.

#### **703 Localism Report**

Noted.

## 704 Summary Business Plan

Noted.

## 705 Newsletter

Robin Martakies said that the notes of the Resident Involvement Service Improvement Group (RISIG) contained within the paper were a draft, and subject to ratification at their next meeting. At that meeting, he would be seeking to change the wording from should to could. (The notes would then read 'that savings could be made in producing newsletters in the future by.....')

John Short said that he had used the internet to research newsletters produced by other Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) and none were being produced in black and white. The Committee took the view that an eye catching publication was essential and supported the retention of colour printing subject to further information about costs and a Value for Money (VFM) assessment.

John Mansergh reminded the Committee that they retained the right to commission a third newsletter should they feel that there was a matter of importance to all tenants which needed to be circulated.

A revised Editorial Team consisting of Charles Howarth, John Short and Annice Lewis was agreed. Dorothy Dixon agreed to ask the forthcoming Leaseholder Service Improvement Group (LESIG) for a nomination to editorial Team.

## 706 Replacement Tenant Board Director

Margaret Pritchard paid tribute to the valuable contribution made by Peter Bland to both Tenants' Committee and the Board of South Lakes Housing. Her views were wholeheartedly endorsed by the Committee, and it was agreed to present Peter with a small token of their appreciation to a maximum value of £20. The Committee also agreed that the provisional arrangements for the signing of the revised District-wide Tenant Participation Agreement would be a fitting occasion for such a presentation.

Robin Martakies asked for clarification about the age profile of tenants contained within the report.

**J St**

John Stirling said that In addition to the 3 current Tenant Board Directors, there were 7 members of the Tenant Involvement Club (TIC) who had expressed an interest in the work of the Board. In making their selection, it was important that the Committee did not discriminate against tenants who were unable to attend Tenants' Committee due to their employment or other commitments not fitting in with the time of day the Committee met. Charles Howarth said that he had found his year on Tenants' Committee useful before being appointed to the Board, although a person with suitable experience may not need it. John Short said it was important for any prospective Tenant Board Director to understand the commitment expected of them, both from their fellow tenants and the Board, to fulfil a 3 year term. They must also understand that as a Director, they accepted a legal obligation to place the business interests of South Lakes Housing above the interests of Tenants Committee.

The Committee agreed to defer their selection to the next meeting, to allow time for

- a) The 7 members of TIC to be notified of the vacancy
- b) All tenant members of SIGs to be notified of the vacancy
- c) An opportunity for those tenants showing a continued interest in the vacancy, to meet informally with the Chairman and a small number of other Committee members to discuss the matter further

**J St  
J St**

**JS/MP**

## **707 Tenants Conference 2011**

John Mansergh asked that subject to the Committee giving authority for a conference, the RISIG take on the role of a working group to oversee and assist with arrangements. Dorothy Dixon said that round table discussions were much more preferable to formal presentations and hoped that this year there would be no long speeches. The Committee agreed to host a conference this year along similar lines to 2010, but without long formal speeches. The RISIG was appointed to progress this work on behalf of the Committee.

## **708 Treasurers report**

John Short presented his written report and added that the Committee had a balance of £569, which should be sufficient to the year end, when further funds from SLH would then be needed. John Mansergh reassured the Committee that SLH was committed to a financially sound Tenants Committee. Robin Martakies sought clarification for claiming his travelling expenses for attending SLDC Overview and Scrutiny meetings. John Short advised that as Robin was nominated to SLDC Overview and Scrutiny by Tenants' Committee, he should claim from Tenants' Committee, not SLDC. The Committee thanked John for his continued work.

## **709 Housing Provision Advisory**

Joan Chadwick advised the Committee that at the last meeting of HPAG, the Portfolio Holder had asked her if another member of Tenants Committee would join the Group. There were no expressions of interest. (Following the meeting Margaret Akrigg indicated a willingness to attend).

## **710 Members Reports**

Ron Pritchard- had circulated a written report concerning a visit he made with the Repairs Operations Manager and his staff to the out of hours call centre at Carlisle. Ron was impressed by the amount of information available to the call centre staff and how quickly an incident could be responded to.

Robin Martakies- the RISIG would bring Estate Walkabouts and Area Discussion Groups for consideration by Tenants' Committee in due course.

Joan Chadwick- the Income Management Service Improvement Group (IMSIG) had identified good practice at some sheltered Schemes, when elderly neighbours who were not necessarily SLDC tenants were invited to sessions hosted by Schemes to meet representatives of the Benefits Agency etc.

## **711 Any Other Business**

Robin Martakies- noted with thanks the inclusion of Tenants Committee concerns contained within the letter from the Leader of the Council to Andrew Stunnell MP.

Robin Martakies- following receipt of details of Residents Associations holding regular meetings, (minute 684 [a]) he asked for brief details of their activities. Margaret Akrigg said that Castle Walk had a social fund only, not a Residents Association. Dorothy Dixon said that Waterside Residents Association was at the point of applying to SLH for funding, but they were still waiting for a price to erect a notice board on the estate.

## **712 Date of next meeting**

7 April 2011

Meeting closed at 12:15