

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES
10.30 hrs THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2011
HELD AT
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL

Present: Margaret Pritchard (Chair)
Joan Chadwick
John Short
Janet Cherry
Dorothy Dixon
Doone Ward
Charles Howarth
Annice Lewis
Robin Martakies
Ron Pritchard
Don Brookes

Officers in attendance: John Stirling, Tenant Involvement Officer- SLH

Apologies: Margaret Akrigg
Anne Corbett
Win Sayers
Greg O'Neill
John Mansergh, Performance Manager - SLH

Circulation: As above

739 Minutes of previous meeting (19 May 2011)

Peter Thornton had tendered apologies. Subject to this alteration the minutes were accepted as a true record.

740 Matters arising

Minute 727 – Robin Martakies asked to raise this matter again under Any Other Business

741 SLH Board Minutes (26 May 2011)

Robin Martakies asked to be supplied with details of the skills and backgrounds of the new Independent Directors.

JST

Minute 1000- Robin Martakies asked about the current position with Council Directors. John Short said that the Board now had a full complement of Council Directors. John Stirling said that Council Director John Holmes wished to attend the Tenants Committee meeting scheduled for 1 September.

Minute 1000- Ron Pritchard asked about the £10,000 allocated to assist tenants with under occupancy issues. The Committee asked that a report be made available for their next meeting.

AK

742 SLH Board Agenda (7 July 2011)

The Committee considered all items of business due to be considered by the Board on

7 July, with specific reference to the following.

Items 6.3 and 6.5 Anti Social Behaviour Policy and Neighbourhood Management Policy- Robin Martakies said that the policies were good, but he thought that on all occasions SLH Officers should visit suspected offenders in pairs. Joan Chadwick said that in her experience that was not always necessary and could on occasions be unhelpful. Dorothy Dixon said that incidents of fly tipping etc in communal areas were particularly difficult to enforce. Ron Pritchard said that more emphasis should be placed on untidy gardens than appeared to be the case at present. Robin Martakies said that SLH should investigate clearing gardens by recharging tenants for the work. Dorothy Dixon said that tenancy agreements regarding untidy gardens were not being enforced.

Item 6.6 Retirement Policy- Robin Martakies said that the Annual Performance Appraisal for staff should be rigorous so that under performing staff could be retired if necessary. Janet Cherry supported the policy as it complied with current employment and equalities law.

Item 6.4 Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery- John Short said that government proposals to pay the housing element of 'universal credit' to the individual and not directly to the landlord may lead to a significant increase in rent arrears. This could impact upon the ability of SLH to repay any debt taken on by the new South Lakes Housing should transfer go ahead. The Committee agreed to write to Tim Farron MP with their concerns.

JST

743 Background to 2011 Board Meetings

In the absence of John Mansergh, John Stirling explained that the natural progress towards conversion to a Housing Association would see an increase in 'part 2' agenda items. This was due to items which were of a commercially sensitive nature, and not a reflection on current scrutiny arrangements. Jamie Martin would have access to the transfer papers and would alert Tenants Committee to any matters of concern. The Tenant Board Directors remained able to highlight issues at Board level which require a tenant input.

744 Painting Procurement Process

The Committee were invited to nominate 1 tenant and 1 leaseholder to sit on a panel to interview and select the painting contractors. Charles Howarth and Dorothy Dixon were nominated.

745 Conference Feedback

An analysis of the completed evaluation forms from the Tenant Conference on 23 June was circulated and noted. The Committee agreed to award 5 x £10 shopping vouchers to tenants who had completed their evaluation forms, and drew 5 entries at random.

746 Community Loan Shark Advocates

Details of an offer to take part in a training session were circulated. There were no nominations.

747 Treasurer's Report

John Short circulated his report, adding that there had been an increase in claims relating to stock transfer. However, when that was balanced against the decision to suspend other meetings over the corresponding period, expenditure remained on budget. John sought authority to purchase a gratuity to the value of £15 for the auditor. Authority was given by the Committee. John was thanked for his report and continuing work as Treasurer.

748 Members Reports

Joan Chadwick- the SLDC Housing Provision Advisory Group had been discontinued, and replaced by the Housing Advisory Group. The new group was less formal and included only one elected member in addition to the Portfolio Holder. The terms of reference of the new committee allocated only 1 place to Tenants Committee, not the previous 2 and the committee had allocated that place to herself.

Ron Pritchard- circulated the analysis of the evaluation sheets following the Cumbria Tenants Forum Awareness Day at Carlisle on 20 May.

749 Any Other Business

Robin Martakies- referred to previous discussions about travelling expenses and said that SLDC had now set their rate at 45p per mile for elected members. The time was now right to increase the rate for tenants attending to SLDC/SLH business within the terms of expense claim guidelines and constitution. John Short said that the tax free allowance had recently risen to 45p per mile as from 1 April, and should the Committee agree to the proposal he would review previous claims and make the necessary adjustments. The Committee agreed to set a rate of 45p per mile as from 1 April 2011. The passenger element would remain at an additional 1p per mile.

Suzy Duffy- gave details of a DVD which was being produced to help explain transfer issues to tenants. Joan Chadwick, Janet Cherry, Ron Pritchard, Margaret Pritchard and Annice Lewis volunteered to assist.

750 Date of Next Meeting and AGM

AGM 14 July 2011, full meeting 1 September 2011