

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE MINUTES
10.30 am THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2011
HELD AT
THE RESOURCE CENTRE, LITTLE AYNAM HOUSE, KENDAL

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

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

Guests Nora Hunt- Tenant
Josie Winston- Tenant
John Holmes- SLDC nominated SLH Board member

Apologies: Anne Corbett
John Mansergh- Performance Manager SLH

Circulation: As above

764 Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of previous meetings- 30 June and 11 August 2011
Agreed as a true record.

765 Matters arising

Minute 760 (11 Aug 2011)- Robin Martakies asked how individuals who were not on the waiting list accessed Choice Based Lettings (CBL), particularly if their first language was not English. Ron Pritchard said that once an initial registration document (which was available in different languages) had been completed, an individual was given a unique reference number which allowed them access to CBL.

Annice Lewis said that she was aware of a number of vacant properties which were not on the CBL website. John Short said that void properties were not displayed on the website until they were ready to view.

Minute 741 (30 June 2011)- Ron Pritchard reminded officers that the Committee had asked for a report regarding the £10,000 which had been allocated to assist tenants downsize.

766 SLH Board Minutes (18 August 2011)

Minute 1032- Ron Pritchard asked if new Board Members were receiving sufficient support, as they had joined the Company at a time of rapid change. John Short said that both new members had shown great interest in the future of SLH, and they were a welcome addition to the Board.

Minute 1034- Robin Martakies congratulated SLH for the surplus in the first quarter management Account figures.

Minute 1031- Robin Martakies asked if the new SLH vans were purchased or leased. Ron Pritchard said that they were leased.

767 SLH Board agenda 8 September 2011

Single Equality Scheme (8.2). Robin Martakies said that he was pleased to see progress in this area. Referring to para 1.2, he noted that the socio-economic duty was subject to further national consideration and consultation, but asked if SLH should be complying with the spirit of the new requirements. John Stirling said that as far as Tenant Involvement was concerned, SLH was already complying with the requirements as tenants had either their expenses reimbursed or on occasions paid in advance.

At para 10.2 of the appendix, Robin suggested that the data might also include the fact that South Lakeland suffered with areas of poor mobile phone coverage. He was also surprised that 'high levels of prejudice' were listed as a factor. Both Margaret Pritchard and Win Sayers gave recent examples of local situations which had occurred recently.

At para 6 of the appendix, Robin Martakies asked if staff training was compulsory. John Stirling said that it was.

768 Treasurers Report

In presenting his written report, John Short said that the budget showed a surplus, due in the main to the cancellation of Service Improvement Group (SIG) meetings. He confirmed the purchase of a gratuity to the value of £15 for the Auditor. In noting his report and verbal updates, the Committee thanked John for his work as Treasurer.

769 Website Report

Peter Bland, a former member of the Committee had visited the websites of a number of other landlords. He concluded that the SLH website was not as dynamic, when compared to the better ones from his research. The Committee agreed with the views of Peter Bland, and agreed that subject to a positive vote to transfer, would contribute to work of SLH to establish a better product. Ron Pritchard cautioned against underestimating the amount of staff time needed to keep a website current and dynamic. The Committee wished to thank Peter for his work.

770 Members Reports

- (a) Ron Pritchard reported on the Cumbria Tenants Forum meeting, when the newsletter from Barrow Borough Council had been circulated. Ron said that he found the Barrow newsletter easier to read than that produced by SLH. Arrangements for the next Awareness Day on 26 October in Ulverston were going well. Nic Bliss, Chair of the Confederation of Co-operative Housing had accepted an invitation to speak. John Short said that the SLH newsletter had gone from A4 to A3, and this an issue he wanted to re-visit.
- (b) Win Sayers reported on the Gas Maintenance Contract meeting, saying that servicing of gas appliances was ahead of schedule, but the start of the heating season would see a slowdown. A leaflet advising tenants with open fires to

burn suitable fuel, particularly timber, was being prepared. The loft insulation top up programme was progressing well. Margaret Akrigg suggested that tenants be reminded that gas cookers which were their own property would not be repaired by SLH.

- (c) Robin Martakies reported on the Resident Involvement Service Improvement Group (RISIG) and circulated the draft minutes. Robin apologised for the late circulation and said that future RISIG meeting would be scheduled to allow sufficient time for the minutes to be circulated with the TC agenda. The Group recommended to Tenants Committee that the Committee hold an open event, possibly on 26 January 2012, inviting Councillors, Board Members, Residents Associations and other Tenants. He commended the Learning from Customers report, adding that the Group may commission further research into individual subjects at a future date. On Area Discussion Groups, the RISIG felt that the mechanism for feeding back to tenants the results of funding bids and work completed was unclear. John Short said that late circulation of minutes was unacceptable and reminded SLH that all SIG minutes should be emailed out to members of Tenants Committee. Regarding the open event, John Said that that the idea had been tried on 4 previous occasions with dwindling attendance. Decisions of the Grant Approval Panel (GAP) regarding estate improvements together with their cost were published in the newsletter for the information of all tenants. Don Brookes said that he had made 3 identical applications in consecutive years and had not received any feedback. John Short said that he would ensure future applicants received ongoing feedback. Josie Winston thanked the GAP for work recently undertaken at Gallowbarrow.

771 Any Other Business

The Committee asked for a breakdown of the Tenant Participation budget for their next meeting.

772 Date of next meeting

13 October 2011

773 Closure

The meeting closed at 1200