

**SOUTH LAKES HOUSING TENANTS' COMMITTEE
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

10:30am Thursday 14th September 17 held in the
Windermere Suite, Bridge Mills, Kendal

Present: Charles Howarth (Chair)
John Short
Paul Athersmith
Sue Layfield
Jim Layfield
Dorothy Dixon
Stephen Bolton
Lorraine Birchall
June Peckston

Guests N/A

Staff in attendance: Lyn Richardson - Community Engagement Officer- Minutes
John Mansergh – Assistant Director (Quality & Performance)
Lisa Maguire- Business Analyst

Apologies: Wendy Orr, Win Sayers, Mavis Nelson, Kenny Mayo

Circulation: As above

ACTION

1. Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting (25th August 2016)

Agreed as a true record.

2. Matters arising

Relating to point 1184 under amendments to the Constitution that this was now part of the Tenant Involvement Policy. This is all now clearly outlined in the Policy under 'Terms of reference', duties and responsibilities section.

John M reminded the Committee of their roles and responsibilities including providing scrutiny reports, agreeing an annual engagement plan and reviewing resources for tenant involvement.

Point 1183 - this was confirmed that the accounts were now closed and that the budget sat within SLH finance department.

John M explained the changes in governance of the SLH Board took place at the Special General Meeting which reduced the number of tenants on the Board from 4 to 2. This means that there is no need to nominate and vote for a tenant Board member as the places are already held by Charles Howarth and Lorraine Birchall.

3. Annual engagement plan

John M presented the Annual Tenant Engagement Plan and explained that the next scrutiny review will be around the Improvement works as the Committee had previously asked about whether the Kitchen and bathroom replacements were VFM. The reviews to follow this will Sheltered Housing review, repairs and estate management.

Charles highlighted that on page 2 of the Tenant Involvement Policy that the Scrutiny Report should be coming to Tenants committee with recommendations going to the Board.

As always, this process and exact timing of reports can be subject to change e.g. government policy or other external factors.

4. Resources available for tenant involvement

John M presented the resources available for Tenant Involvement which showed spend over the last 3 years.

In summary, staffing has reduced by half over the also 3 years with both Suzy Duffy and John Stirling roles not being replaced.

Charles commented on the drastic 50% cut in Tenant Involvement and the consequences for the committee. He questioned the need for Tenants Committee to fund the tenant portal under tenant communications and that it would be benefitting staff rather than tenants.

John M explained that this is a small proportion of the budget under communication and that it directly links to tenants. John M commented that the Board was under pressure to save £5M in response to the rent cuts and other areas had also been affected. He added that there is sufficient resources to deliver against the Tenant Involvement Policy and regulatory standards. He added that expenditure was in line with the median levels of similar sized Housing Associations.

Loraine commented that it does look harsh on the budget sheet but the reality is that the budget was not always spent anyway. Possibly the cuts are perceived rather than actual cuts with money often not being spent.

John Short did not agree with the comments regarding the drastic cut in funding and added that he felt that Tenants' committee has been genuinely overstaffed a few years ago.

He also commented that the GAP budget always struggled to spend their budget and even now it had been halved this may still be the case.

Dorothy asked if we still have tenant newsletters and John M explained that occasionally newsletters are sent out but not on a regular basis.

5. Election of officers and representatives

a) Tenants' Committee Chairman

Stephen Bolton gave a brief summary of why he feels he would be a good a candidate to be the next Chair of Tenant's committee. This was followed similarly with Charles Howarth expressing why he felt he could continue to be chair of Tenants Committee.

Both candidates were asked to leave the room whilst voting took place and Dorothy Dixon as vice chair led the meeting.

Dorothy announced that the results were in favour of Stephen Bolton. Stephen thanked the Committee for their support and thanked Charles for his services as Chairman to the Committee for several years.

b) **Vice Chairman**

3 tenants put themselves forward for vice chair in which Loraine Birchall, Charles Howarth and Stephen Bolton stood.

This resulted in Loraine Birchall being elected vice chair.

c) **Cumbria & North Lancashire Tenant Forum**

Paul Athersmith put himself forwards to be a member of Cumbria and North Lancashire Tenants Participation Forum. Dorothy Dixon and Margaret Akrigg continue to serve as members of this forum.

Agreed to review membership of this forum in March 2018.

Lyn R

d) **Grant Applications Panel**

John Short continues to chair the Grant Applications Panel. Jim Layfield is also now a member. Charles Howarth put himself forwards and was accepted as the other member of the panel. There are 4 meetings over the year normally Tuesday lunchtimes.

e) **Tenant Complaint Panel**

The complaints Panel is a relatively new group with 3 meetings held so far. The committee was asked if the current tenants could continue so as to provide continuity to the group. This was agreed by all as the best way forward. John Short, Paul Athersmith, Stephen Bolton and Dorothy Dixon to remain on the panel.

6. **AOB**

There was no other business.

Charles Howarth thanked the committee for letting him chair it for so many years and that he had thoroughly enjoyed doing it.

7. **Closure**

The meeting closed at 11:15hrs.