

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER, 2009

Time: 1.00pm

Venue: Baptist Church, Scunthorpe

Present: Janine Mee – Chair

Danny Moore – Treasurer

Alison Highlands – Secretary

Ken Willey – Swinburne Road

Edna Kenyan – Market Hill

Tony Sanderson – Healey Road

Linda Pauley – Warley Road

Don Robertson – Hillside

Mark Harland – Lodgemoor

Ann Harland – Lodgemoor

Derek Clifford – Lilywood

Rosalie Clifford – Lilywood

Ron Weller – South Killinghome

Alex Killen – Sheltered Housing

Shazeda Haque – BME Rep

Audrey Birkenshaw – Astley Corner

Joan Parr – Swinburne Road

Betty Parsons – Disabled Rep

Terry Chatwin – Hallcroft

Jim Newcombe – Healey Road

Steve Dale – Crosby Park

Cherrill Page – Tenant Board Member

Karen Cowan – Resident Involvement Manager

Wendy Britcliffe – Senior Resident Involvement Officer

Steve Wardrope – Business Improvement Manager

Andy Orrey – Deputy Chief Executive

Steve Evans – Head of Housing Services

Apologies: Richard Leach, Mary Southgate, Steve Hepworth, Peter Woodcock

Janine welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made as there were some new members at the meeting.

#### **1. Accuracy of Previous Minutes & Update of Action Plan**

In Any Other Business the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph should have read that the trees had been cut down and not as it was written cut back, it should also have read that the person in charge of Caretaking should be asked to a meeting to answer this allegation.

The minutes were approved as a true record with the above amendment.

## **Update of Action Plan**

Communal areas – A list of the communal areas was handed out to all members of Community Voice which detailed the planned start dates.

Resident Involvement Strategy Monitoring Group – names were confirmed of the Community Voice members who had shown an interest in being involved with this group - Terry Chatwin, Alison Highlands, Ken Willey, Edna Kenyon, Alex Killen, Ron Weller and Shazeda Haque. A meeting is to be arranged for January 10.

Caretaking Workshop – the original date for the workshop meeting had been rearranged and it was confirmed the new date was 23<sup>rd</sup> of November at 1.00pm at the Baptist Church, Scunthorpe. Letters had been sent out confirming this.

Choice Based Lettings – This item is on the agenda for the meeting.

Performance Information – The spotlight reports have been given to all members of Community Voice and is on the agenda for this meeting.

Network Meetings – A meeting has been arranged for the 4<sup>th</sup> of December at 1.30pm at the Baptist Church, Scunthorpe.

Fitting of Cookers – This item will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Everything else on the Action Plan will be brought forward for future meetings.

## **Discussion Items**

### **2. 3 Items – Steve Wardrope**

#### **Business Plan Paper**

Steve provided a report that will go to the next Board meeting. Steve stated that as Community Voice members had only just received this paper and had no time to go through it then they could raise any questions or comments via the Resident Involvement team.

It was decided that a workshop would be arranged to discuss the Business Plan in more details (i.e. service delivery direction).

#### **Performance Information/Scorecard**

Steve gave a presentation of the spotlight reports which had been requested by members at the last meeting. Steve then asked for any questions.

It was stated that members were not happy with the repairs performance still being in the red. Steve replied that although it was still red we have made improvements since the 2008/09 reports.

It was asked if we could get a more detailed spotlight on the appointments made and kept to see what the percentage difference is of missed appointments caused by NLH and those caused by tenants.

It was asked why is it that when the performance reaches green it does not stay green. Steve replied that during the year the tables fluctuate and therefore we have to show accurate tables.

It was stated that members of Community Voice hoped that NLH did not become complacent being ahead of other Housing Associations in some areas. The reply was that NLH were certainly not being complacent.

It was asked if the tables allowed for people on benefits. Steve replied yes they did.

### Audit Commission Update

Steve stated that the Audit inspection will start on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November. A mystery shop has already taken place. Individual members of staff have been selected to be involved with interviews and several focus groups involving tenants have been arranged. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of December a small number of community voice members will be meeting with the Audit Commission. Steve then asked for any questions.

It was asked why the group had to meet 1 hour before the actual meeting. The reply was so that everyone attending could have a briefing session with Karen to establish who would lead on different subject topics.

### **3. Quarterly Complaints Report**

Liam provided a report and handouts were given out to members at the meeting. Liam asked for guidance from community voice on how information should be provided at future meetings, the following points were raised:

It was asked if the percentage figure shown for the provision of service was for tenders. The reply was that this only represented the tenants.

The figures shown on the satisfaction survey were discussed and it was felt that these should be better than they are at the moment.

A request was made for the analysis to be reported in numbers instead of percentages as not everyone understands percentages. The reply was that the analysis would be provided quarterly and would include the previous results and new results detailing numbers as well as percentages.

A suggestion was made to include the analysis of both the complaints and the compliments.

## **Information Items**

### **4. Rent Increase – Andy Orrey**

Andy provided information on the proposed rent increase and explained that due to the Council making no increases in the past there is now a gap in rents. NLH are compelled by regulations to look at the rents and make sure they reach the targets set by the Government. The figures will be taken to the next Board meeting. Andy asked for any questions.

It was asked how the rent increase would be made up. The reply was that there is at least a £5 deficit on each rent according to the national figures, so therefore a rent increase every year for the next 3 years will have to be made as the maximum increase allowed per year is £1.50.

### **5. 3 Items – Steve Evans**

#### **Customer Access Review**

Steve gave a brief update on the new office which is scheduled to open on the 18<sup>th</sup> November. A formal opening will take place on the 27<sup>th</sup> November at 11.30am. Janine was invited as Chair of Community Voice to attend the opening and officially cut the ribbon. Janine stated that she would be delighted to do the opening. All members of Community Voice will be sent formal invites to attend.

A question was raised on whether a computer and telephone line would be available for tenants to use. Steve replied that these would be available for tenants.

#### **Choice Based Lettings**

Steve handed out copies of a questionnaire that refers to the new policy and asked for comments from members of Community Voice.

A suggestion was made on changing the wording from bid to offer. Steve agreed to make the change.

The new policy looked like it would make it more difficult for some people to get accommodation. Steve explained that the procedure would be easier as individuals would be given points and allocated areas of properties that have the relevant points.

It was asked if the Quick Key system was included in this policy. There is a similar scheme included.

How would a person who needed a property but had no points be able to apply? Steve replied that they would be housed through the Council's Homeless team.

Would all properties available be in this system? Steve replied that all properties in North Lincolnshire are included in this system.

Can tenants still do a mutual exchange with other tenants? Steve confirmed this would still be available.

It was asked if this new system could be accessed on the NLH web site. Steve stated that yes it could and also in person or by telephone. A registration number would be given for individual tenants to receive updates.

Would information be sent out in the post to everyone needing a property? Only those who requested information would receive it.

It was asked if the exchange list was kept up to date as some tenants had seen properties which should have been removed. Steve confirmed that the lists should be regularly updated.

### Caretaking

Steve provided an update on the service and the changes made to the way of working. Estate caretakers will have their own patches and work on a rota system. The caretakers will be more involved in working with the Housing Officers for their individual patches. A workshop has been arranged for the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November at 1.00pm at the Baptist Church to discuss the caretaking service in more detail. Steve asked for comments from members.

An issue was raised regarding the cleaning of the stairs in the maisonettes and high-rise flats. Should these areas be cleaned by the caretaking service as well as the communal areas. Steve replied that the caretakers duties included stairs as well as communal areas.

Discussions took place on grounds maintenance and if the caretakers were responsible for cutting back shrubs which covered paths. This job is covered by the caretakers.

Grass cutting and the clearing of paths was raised and Steve confirmed that this should be done automatically.

There are several issues regarding grounds maintenance and it was suggested that this be included as an agenda item for the next meeting. Details can also be raised at the caretaking workshop.

## **6. 2 Items – Karen Cowan**

### Resident Involvement Activity Report

Karen gave out copies of the report and explained the meetings that had taken place since the last community voice meeting.

Karen stated that the new decorating grant has been approved by the Board. The maximum allowance will now be £250. Karen asked for any questions from the report.

Who is responsible for checking on the condition of the property and making a decision on the amount of grant? Karen explained that this was decided by the Viewings Officer.

When will the new amount for the grant be implemented. Karen confirmed this is now already in force.

### Community Development Grants

A report was handed out on the Community Development grants. Karen stated that there is £50,000 in the budget set aside for the grants.

Monies from the community development fund will be split into the following:

Start Up Grant / Annual Grants – these will be available exclusively for North Lincolnshire Homes resident associations.

Development Grants – these are for any constituted group within North Lincolnshire, e.g.: Residents Associations, Neighbourhood Watch etc.

Karen briefly explained the procedure for groups to apply for the grants.

The following questions were asked:

Would associations need to apply for their annual grant? Karen stated that this would be given automatically following satisfactory completion of the AGM.

What happens if an association has already held their AGM? The Annual Grants will be back dated.

Karen stated that a maximum amount of £1,000 for the development grants was available for something which would benefit our residents. Each individual group would have to apply for this by completing an application form.

A development grant panel would be formed and 2 members will be recruited from Community Voice to sit on the panel.

## **7. Any Other Business**

### **Credit Union – Wendy Britcliffe**

Wendy asked if a rep from the Credit Union could attend a future Community Voice meeting to provide information on this scheme. It was stated that the decision would be made at the networking meeting.

It was suggested that different NLH Officers be invited to attend future Community Voice meetings as observers. This could be done on a rota system and would help them to gain more knowledge and understanding of Community Voice.

Cherrill thanked members of Community Voice for the invitation to attend this meeting and stated that it had been a good meeting.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Date: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December

Time: 1.00pm

Venue: Baptist Church, Scunthorpe