

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### MINUTES OF MEETING

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2010

**Time:** 1pm

**Venue:** Baptist Church, Scunthorpe

**Present:** Janine Mee – Warley Rd (Chair)

Mary Southgate – Sheltered Panel Rep (Vice Chair)

Alison Highlands – Geographical Rep (Secretary)

Terry Chatwin – Hallcroft, Haxey

Ken Willey – Swinburn Rd

Mark Harland – Lodgemoor

Ann Harland – Lodgemoor

Ron Weller – South Killingholme

Mo Weller – South Killingholme

Maria Havercroft – BME Rep, Ulceby

Jean Turner – Leaseholder Rep

Steve Taylor – Swinburn Rd

Don Robertson – Hillside

Pat Cowdell – Hillside

Joan Long – Healey Rd

Jim Newcombe – Healey Rd

Mrs Gull – BME Rep, Scunthorpe

Steve Dale – Crosby Park

Jo West – Martins Close

Karen Cowan – NLH, Resident Involvement Manager

Wendy Britcliffe – NLH, Senior Resident Involvement Officer

Andy Orrey – NLH, Chief Executive

Steve Hepworth – NLH, Director of housing Operations

Ian Dixon – NLH, Director of Finance

Holly Wilson – NLH, Finance Officer

Chris Baker – NLH, Resident Involvement Officer

## **1. Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping**

1.1 Janine welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained housekeeping items.

1.2 Janine reminded everyone of the smoking policy of the Baptist Church.

1.3 Janine sent round a card for everyone to sign for Edna Kenyon who is not well.

1.4 Apologies: Mr & Mrs Clifford, Richard Leach, Alex Killen, Edna Kenyon, Danny Moore, Cherrill Page, Denise Trowsdale, Toni Mosley, Ian Bridge.

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

2.1 Jean stated that her name had been left off of the previous apology list although she had informed the resident involvement (RI) team.

2.2 The minutes were proposed by Terry and seconded by Steve as a true record with the above amendment.

### **Update of Action Plan**

2.3 It was decided that the provision of extra care services should be removed from the action plan as this is a Board item rather than Community Voice (CV).

2.4 The volunteer's code of conduct, volunteer expenses policy and the CV minutes to the Board are all covered by the RI report on the agenda.

2.5 The staffing list has been given out to all members.

## **3. Reminder of Enquiry Log**

3.1 Janine reminded everyone of the log.

### **Decision Items**

#### **4. Resident Involvement Report – Karen Cowan**

4.1 Karen gave a presentation of the report.

4.2 A swot analysis was carried out at the CV away day. This has resulted in the formation of an agreed Volunteer Training Audit Plan. CV members will now complete the audit so that Wendy can use the information to plan the training requirements for the new financial year.

4.3 It was decided that a day-out by mini-bus will be arranged for sometime in April 2011 so members can see the whole of NLH stock.

4.4 A Leaseholder drop in day has been arranged for the 16<sup>th</sup> of December between 2pm and 7pm at the Baptist Church. The purpose of the event is to facilitate one to one discussions with leaseholders so that they can raise their queries and get answers. The position of Leasehold & Building Services Manager has now been successfully filled by Gareth Roebuck and Gareth will attend the event to introduce himself to the leaseholders.

4.5 The tea-dance for Sheltered Housing tenants had to be cancelled due to the weather but a new date has been arranged for the 28<sup>th</sup> of February.

4.6 Karen explained that feedback from the consultation exercise on the proposed changes to the Volunteers Code of Conduct had been positive. She then asked the meeting to vote to adopt the new code of conduct. The vote was unanimous therefore it will be adopted.

##### **Influence Rating – 1**

4.7 Karen detailed the feedback from the consultation exercise on the proposed changes to the Volunteers Expenses Policy. The feedback was in the whole positive, with the exception of two members that felt that a drop in the existing car mileage allowance would have a negative effect on them personally. Karen then put to the meeting that the mileage allowance be changed to 40p but that any existing volunteers could be given protected status should they wish to remain on the current 47p allowance. The meeting was asked to vote on these proposals. The vote was unanimous, therefore the allowance will change with effect from January 2011 and protection will be given to existing volunteers that wish to register their names with the resident involvement section.

##### **Influence Rating – 1**

4.8 Karen put forward the results of the consultation exercise on the timings and days of CV meetings. Feedback clearly indicated that the majority of CV members would prefer the meetings to be held on a Monday afternoon, but there was a small number that were disadvantaged by having meetings held on the same day and time each month. Therefore Karen put forward a proposal for meetings to be varied in the future, e.g. two meetings held on a

Monday afternoon, the next held on a Thursday morning, two meetings held on a Monday afternoon, one meeting held on a Tuesday evening, two meetings held on a Monday afternoon, and so forth. The proposal was approved by all that in future the Community Voice meetings will be staggered in terms of days and times to suit differing individual needs. The January & February meetings have already been set and so these dates will stand. A new schedule of meetings commencing March will be arranged and distributed.

### **Influence Rating – 1**

4.9 Terry stated that it made a change to see praise for NLH in the Scunthorpe Telegraph.

4.10 The position of Resident Involvement and Community Development Manager (Karen's job) has been advertised, with a closing date for applications being the 4<sup>th</sup> of January. It was decided that Janine as Chair of Community Voice will participate in the recruitment process for Karen's replacement.

### **Influence Rating – 3**

## **Discussion Items**

### **5. Financial Inclusion – Chris Baker**

5.1 Chris gave a presentation of the report which all members of Community Voice had received.

5.2 It was asked if NLH was advising tenants not to sign-up to energy suppliers who made unofficial house calls. Chris replied that NLH were advising tenants who wanted to change that they use comparison web-sites instead. Chris stated that NLH staff could visit tenants who were interested in changing and could take along their lap tops to help them.

5.3 It was stated that energy suppliers were not only using door-step calls but also the telephone and that tenants need to be made aware of this.

### **6. Procurement Policy – Holly Wilson**

6.1 Holly gave a presentation of the policy then asked for any questions.

6.2 It was decided that a workshop be arranged to understand what procurement involved.

6.3 It was asked if we recruited local tradesmen before employing outside the area. Holly replied that NLH always tried to employ locally first.

### **7. Supporting People Update – Steve Hepworth**

- 7.1 Steve gave a brief presentation of the report which was handed out at the meeting.
- 7.2 Steve stated that the new contract will start in January and will run for 3 years. Steve then asked for any questions.
- 7.3 It was asked if the new tariff only applied to new tenants. Steve replied that the new tariff was for everyone who used this service.
- 7.4 It was asked if tenants were only contacted by telephone. The reply was that tenants would receive personal visits.
- 7.5 It was asked what the age range was to receive this service. Steve replied that it was usually over 60 but it can be as young as 55
- 7.6 It was asked if these charges would change. The reply was that these are the true charges for the 3 year contract.
- 7.7 It was asked what would happen when there were holidays or illness, would tenants still receive their visits. Steve replied that the contract states that visits will still be made regardless of holidays or illness.
- 7.8 Steve stated that this new contract starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and hopefully by April everything will be covered and in place.
- 7.9 Steve stated that prior to support officers visiting to carry out assessments, letters are being sent out now which will briefly explain the process and will give time for arrangements to be made for others (i.e. family or friend) to be present when the assessment takes place.

## **8. Government Policy & Impact – Steve Wardrope**

- 8.1 Steve gave a brief presentation of the report then asked for any questions.
- 8.2 Steve stated that this report is only for consultation.
- 8.3 It was suggested that members of Community Voice who wanted more information could receive one to one consultation.
- 8.4 A revised document will be brought out by the 17<sup>th</sup> of January.
- 8.5 Existing tenants are protected from the changes.
- 8.6 It was asked if it was likely that NLH would apply for any of the government funding. Steve replied that already the amount of money stated in the document for new builds has been halved but we are having discussions with NLH to see if it is possible to bid for any of this money.

8.7 Steve stated that he would keep Community Voice updated with this as it developed as the proposals are only for consultation at the moment.

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8.8 A presentation was made to Karen as she is leaving Resident Involvement (but not NLH) as she has been promoted within NLH to the position of Head of Customer Support.

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### **Information Items**

#### **9. Presentation on Rents – Ian Dixon**

9.1 Ian gave a presentation using the large screen then asked for any questions.

9.2 Ian stated that £81 billion has to be saved from public spending and that social housing funding has to fall by £3.9 billion - £4.5 billion.

9.3 NLH obligations are to achieve target rents for a 3 bedroom property of £81.81 per week by April 2012. At the moment we are achieving roughly 87% of these targets therefore in the next 2 years rents will have to go up by roughly £20 to reach the targets. NLH has tried to balance out the rent increases so that it is easier for tenants.

9.4 It was asked when do tenants find out about the increases. The reply was that tenants have to be given 4 weeks notice by law so therefore tenants will be told early what the increases are as it depends on the rate of inflation.

9.5 It was asked what would happen if NLH did not reach the government targets. Ian replied that if it happened then we would lose government funding and also be penalised.

9.6 It was stated that NLH have an obligation to let tenants who are on low incomes know about applying for rent rebates where applicable.

#### **10. Status Survey – Karen Cowan**

10.1 Karen gave a brief presentation of the survey then asked for any questions.

10.2 It was asked when the survey is being sent out. Karen replied that the survey will be sent out between the 10<sup>th</sup> of January and the 21<sup>st</sup> of February. The survey will be sent out to the following groups: all Sheltered Housing tenants, all Leaseholders and a 20% sample of general needs tenants. We should have the results by the 7<sup>th</sup> of March.

#### **11. Board Observers**

11.0 The observers for the Board meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February will be: Janine Mee, Mary Southgate, Terry Chatwin, Ron & Mo Weller.

**12. Any Other Business**

12.1 Steve gave thanks to volunteers and tenants who helped others due to the bad weather.

12.2 Steve stated that unfortunately due to the weather we have had problems coping with heating repairs as usually we receive about 100 calls but during the bad weather we received roughly 300.

12.3 It was decided that a separate meeting would be held to discuss the problems which had arisen due to the weather conditions.

12.4 It was asked if NLH had heaters for tenants to borrow during heating repairs. Steve replied that NLH do have heaters for tenants to borrow.

12.5 It was stated that when you get through to the call centre you are told you are 1<sup>st</sup> in the queue even though you may not be. Steve replied that he would look into this.

12.6 The gas check prize draw was done. The number 333 was the winner. The address was noted.

**13. Date of Next Meeting**

13.1 Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011, 1pm at the Baptist Church, Scunthorpe.

**Definition for Influence Score**

High	1.	Tenants have the authority to <u>make</u> decisions
↑	2.	Tenants have the authority to make <u>some decisions</u>
	3.	Tenants have the opportunity to <u>influence decisions</u>
↓	4.	Seek tenants views <u>before making decisions</u>
	5.	Decisions are publicised and explained to tenants <u>before implementation</u>
Low	6.	Information is given to tenants about <u>decisions already made</u>

Four elements of this meeting received an influence score.

When adding all scores together the total is given as 6.

The total of 6 divided by the 4 elements gives an average ladder of influence score of 1.5 which indicates a high level of influence.

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### **E-Mail Addresses for CV Officers**

Chair, Janine Mee – [janinemee@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janinemee@hotmail.co.uk)

Vice Chair, Mary Southgate – [beth.51@live.com](mailto:beth.51@live.com)

Treasurer, Danny Moore – c/o [e.kenyon@yahoo.com](mailto:e.kenyon@yahoo.com)

Secretary, Alison Highlands – c/o [Jeanette.highlands@ntlworld.com](mailto:Jeanette.highlands@ntlworld.com)