

JOINT CONSULTATION MEETING
Between
ST LEGER HOMES of DONCASTER
And
THE STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE
Of the
DONCASTER FEDERATION of the TENANTS and RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATIONS
Held on
11th JANUARY 2007 at 2.00pm
In the
HAYWOOD ROOM, COUNCIL HOUSE

PRESENT

ST LEGER HOMES

Mr P Hopkinson	Director of Property Services
Mrs J Clarke	Assistant Director of Customer Services
Mrs L Chamberlain	Community Liaison Officer (minutes)

STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE

Mavis Williams	Vice Chair
Frank Knapton	Assistant Secretary
Sid Hall	SJC Member
Andy Kerr	SJC Member
Sue Wilkinson	SJC Member
Linda Teasdale	SJC Member
Brian Naughton	SJC Member

1. WELCOME

Mavis Williams opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

2. APOLOGIES

Mrs L Ralph	SJC Chair
Ms D Ashmore	Secretary
Ms L Myers	SJC Member
Mr E Plastow	SJC Member
Mr A Melli	SJC Member
Mr N Hussain	Federation Support Officer
Mr M Musgrave	Chief Executive – St Leger Homes of Doncaster

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes were read and agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

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Frank Knapton said that he had been on an estate walk and had seen the Estate Caretakers out and about. He had found out from them that guttering and gates would be within their remit.

Sue Wilkinson asked whether a chimney sweeping service could be introduced. She also asked about an Enterprise Scheme (similar to Sheffield's) for all senior citizens in an area to have their gardens done who could not afford to have this done. Janet Clarke thought this could be looked into in the future post inspection. Paul Hopkinson explained that the scheme would have to eventually become independent.

Frank Knapton said that everyone with solid fuel should have their chimneys swept. Paul Hopkinson said that at the next Area Board meeting they would be looking at a draft policy for consideration.

5. DIRECTORS REPORT

Paul Hopkinson attended the meeting in Martin Musgrave's place and gave an update.

Paul explained that there was a lot of preparation going on for the inspection over two weeks beginning 26th March.

The Service Standards will be published about 22 January. They will be distributed and will also be on the Website.

We are now making the area offices DVA (disability access) compliant and works have commenced on the Stainforth Office, which should be finished by the end of March.

Linda Teasdale asked whether we were looking for new office premises. Paul answered that we are still doing an accommodation review.

Paul said that the Estate Caretakers are now having an effect on the estates. An advert had gone out to replace the supervisor. There were a number of caretakers on the Balby Bridge estate and at Intake. There is now a mobile team of 7-8 across the borough. Andy Kerr wanted to know who to contact regarding the Caretakers; Paul advised to get in touch with the local Estate Managers. Paul asked for any feedback to be given to him regarding the Caretakers. Sid Hall asked if the caretakers did anything on their own initiative. Paul explained that if it was not a big job, then yes they would. Anything else would have to go through their Manager.

Linda Teasdale asked if there was a structure for SLHD available for each area. Janet Clarke answered that this information had been provided for the website and she would arrange for it to be provided.

There are 16 Estate Assistant posts advertised to do tenancy verification checks as every property will be visited within two years to make sure that tenants are abiding by the Tenancy Agreement. Linda Teasdale asked whether tenants would receive a letter beforehand. Paul Hopkinson asked whether it was thought better to send a letter prior to the visit or just turn up. Everyone agreed that it was better to just turn

up so that the true picture could be seen, e.g. unoccupied properties when the tenant is conveniently at the property.

Since the introduction of the free repair number the number of calls has gone up. Therefore, more staff has been taken on. Due to the increase in staff larger premises were needed and the Call Centre has now been moved to Stanley House with 14 operatives. When they have had time to settle in Paul thought it a good idea for the SJC to have a look at the new location.

Sue Wilkinson raised the issue of someone waiting 3-4 months for a boarded up window to be replaced. Paul suggested that perhaps the window had been replaced once and broken again, but no repair should take longer than 20 days and may be there were special circumstances such as harassment which would have to be dealt with first. Frank thought sometimes there was a break down in communication as when a window had been broken and boarded up measurements were not taken at the time to order a replacement and it needed another inspector to come out to measure up which delayed things. Janet Clarke agreed to refer this again to the Area office.

There were 19 bungalows in Scawthorpe that have been left empty for 3-4 years. These properties have now been brought up to standard and have been allocated and will be handed over next week.

Frank said that he had inspected the Adwick Town Hall regarding leaflet availability, cleanliness etc.

6. COMMUNITY LIAISON / DIVERSITY REPORT

Lynn Chamberlain presented the report from the two teams.

COMMUNITY LIAISON TEAM

TARA News

There have not been many general meetings of the TARA's during December as they have been busy holding Christmas parties and visits to the pantomime etc.

Denaby Central TARA

The TARA has not been meeting for some time due to the lack of attendance at their meetings. A meeting was held on the 12 December to make a decision whether to continue or close the TARA and reform into a Tenants Club. There were only two people present at the meeting therefore telephone calls were made to the rest of the Committee to find out what the consensus of opinion was. It was felt by everyone that the TARA should reform into a Tenants Club. A further meeting will be held to agree a Tenants Club Constitution, contact point and activities etc.

New TARA Interest

Lynn Chamberlain attended a meeting with people from The Oval Conisbrough who are interested in forming a TARA. A meeting has been arranged for the 18 January when a Committee will hopefully be elected and the TARA will take off.

There has been some interest shown by the tenants in Coronation Gardens, Warmsworth and Lynn Chamberlain has sent the 'Setting up a Tenants and Residents Association' booklet to Avril Redsull who is the contact point. When a venue has been sorted out then an initial meeting will be arranged. This will be updated in the next report.

Skips

There has been a quick response from many of the TARA's on the opportunity of having a skip funded through St Leger Homes. The skips have been badly missed over 2006 when the funding from Community First was withdrawn.

Sponsorship of Small Projects

We have received several requests for the funding of £10,000, which has been set aside to sponsor small projects within the local community. All the groups that have put applications in are eagerly waiting to see if they have been successful. As soon as the results are known everyone will be informed.

Training

Training courses have been set for TARA members to take advantage of including:

- 16 January – Introduction to Effective Communication and Negotiation
- 17 January – Applying for Funding
- 23 January – Introduction to Business Planning
- 6 February – Equality and Diversity
- 20 February – Business Planning Workshop
- 7 March – Newsletter Writing

Drop in Days

Last year the Community Liaison Officers took out the mobile display unit to various locations to promote the TARA's and also to give out SLHD information. During the winter months we have been looking at different indoor locations to do the same thing, mainly to promote SLHD information. The following dates and venues have been arranged:-

- 12 January – Woodfield Community House, Balby
- 17 January – Hyde Park Community House
- 25 January – Askern Library
- 30 January – Armthorpe Library
- 31 January – Craganour Community House, Denaby
- 1 February – Conisbrough Library

A Community Liaison Officer will be attending as will an Estates Officer and a member of the SJC.

Website

A Calendar of Customer Involvement has been put on the Website, which shows TARA meetings and Diversity meetings, also, religious festivals have been put on for the month. We have also put on the Website the Menu of Involvement and we

are arranging for this to have a 'submit' button put on so that when someone fills it in it will come back to us for our records.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY TEAM

There is a Disability Focus Group meeting at 1.30pm on 14 February at the Friends Meeting House. The Agenda is yet to be confirmed.

BME Doncaster Settlers TARA

There is a BME Doncaster Settlers TARA meeting at 5pm on the 22 January at the Friends Meeting House. The Agenda will include a presentation by Ernie Beresford, the Learning Development Support Worker from Adult, Family and Community Learning Services. Vimbe Mbedzi, Chair, and the Committee will lead the rest of the meeting.

Young People (Engagement)

Following the collation of personal information, contact has now been made during the December period with our young tenants aged 16 – 30 years; 'Young Customers' of the service were identified through the SLHD data base. Approximately 1, 800 Introduction/contact letters were sent out to attempt to engage young people into a focus group arena. Information obtained from approximately 40 returned reply slips, included within the introduction letter assisted to decide upon the most appropriate day and time period to hold a future meeting. An initial meeting involving young people is to be arranged during the early period of 2007.

Rural Communities

A 'Rural Survey Questionnaire' was created from a previous utilised 'Status Survey' Questionnaire document to consult with our customers from 'Rural Communities'. Approximately 500 questionnaires were sent out to customers. From that total 150 questionnaires were subsequently returned. The information received from within the questionnaire highlighted that rural customers were on the whole generally pleased with the service provided by SLHD.

Gypsy & Travellers (Engagement)

The work undertaken around those tenants identified as gypsies and travellers presents new challenges for the service. This particular area of work is being addressed through adopting a more strategic approach and role to engage and consult with these members of our community and customer base. In these early stages, SLHD' s involvement within a borough wide 'strategy group' involving other key partner agencies is being utilised to assist SLHD to collate relevant information in respect of the locality of this client group and 'best practice guides' around their engagement and consultation. It is also envisaged that any subsequent returns from SLHD' s Customer Profile Questionnaire will be utilised to identify those gypsies and travellers residing within SLHD property.

New Staff Member

We are pleased to welcome back to the team, Dave Willis, who was formerly a Community Liaison Officer and is now joining us as the Community Liaison Manager starting on Monday, 15 January 2007.

Sue Wilkinson queried the venues for the drop-in days. Rossington Memorial Hall Galsworthy Close Communal Hall and Mexborough were suggested.

The Vice-Chair said that the Wheatley Community Action Network office has been extended and there will be an opening on the 22 January.

7. CHAIR'S REPORT

There was no Chair's report.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Tenants Handbook and Tenancy Agreement

Janet Clarke said that Dave Abbott had been to the SJC with the Tenants Handbook and Tenancy Agreement. The four weeks consultation was statutory. Janet suggested the documents should also be sent to the SJC and to the TARA's first as in the past asking for comments.

Andy Kerr asked if there was anything in the new Tenancy Agreement regarding the height of trees. Janet answered that there were Planning rules regarding trees blocking out someone's light and a tenant would only be asked to reduce them if they were a nuisance to neighbours. Brian Naughton wanted to know whose responsibility it is to cut them down. Janet responded that it would be the tenant, but if they were mature trees then the Council's Arboriculturalist would be called in.

Sue Wilkinson wanted to know if permission to fit aerials in 4 (g) would have to be applied for retrospectively. Janet said that it was only saying tenants must not do it without prior written consent.

Sue also queried 4(m) regarding dogs in flats or maisonettes. Sue knew of someone who had been told they could take a dog into a flat and now that they cannot keep it. Janet said this would only be the case if it was causing a nuisance. Janet said the Tenancy Agreement was changing because of the need to more closely relate it to nuisance.

Linda Teasdale wanted to know if a satellite dish was already erected when someone moved into a property and they did not want it she felt they should not be responsible for it.

Brian Naughton said there was nothing in the Agreement about keeping reptiles. Janet Clarke responded that the Agreement could not give a blanket no against all reptiles, but if there was any nuisance caused by reptiles then this again would be a breach of the Tenancy Agreement.

Right to Buy

Linda Teasdale asked whether SLHD would have a say in what people plan to do with the land following a Right to Buy. Janet said that it would be dependent what was in the Conveyance and if alterations to the property were planned then they would have to apply for Planning Permission. It would be extremely unlikely that a Conveyance would include a clause that says that building was not permitted.

Bramalls DVD

The Vice-Chair asked if there were any volunteers for the film Bramall's were doing the next day.

Mobile Display Unit

Brian Naughton said that he had been out to see the mobile display unit as it is in for refurbishment. The fridge and cupboard were coming out and the displays would be on the back and on the doors. The storage will be moved to one end. It would be done in neutral colours, but it was not finalised yet. There will be a big generator and there would be two cooler boxes instead of the fridge. The banner was probably going to be altered to show the Federation as well as SLHD.

Windhill Estate

Linda said that on the Windhill Estate it had been agreed at the Cabinet meeting for the demolition of part of the Estate. There would be 60 tenants and residents who need re-housing soon and wanted to know what would happen. Janet Clark said that we cannot hold back properties, but under the points system it had been agreed that these people would be given additional posts and this would be done on a phased basis.

Skips

Frank Knapton wanted to put on record his thanks on behalf of the West of the Borough for the provision of skips, which had been agreed by the West Board.

9. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 11th January 2006 at 2pm in the Haywood Room, Council House.