

JOINT CONSULTATION MEETING
between
THE STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE
of the
DONCASTER FEDERATION OF TENANTS' and RESIDENTS'
ASSOCIATIONS
and
ST LEGER HOMES of DONCASTER
and
Doncaster MBC
held on
25 February 2010 at 1.00pm
in the
DONCASTER FEDERATION'S TENANTS' & RESIDENTS' RESOURCE CENTRE

PRESENT

STANDING JOINT COMMITTEE

Brian Naughton	(BN)	Chair
Mavis Williams	(MW)	Secretary
Andy Kerr	(AK)	Vice-Chair/Treasurer
Maureen Tennison	(MT)	Committee Member
Elaine Fleming	(EF)	Committee Member
Ken Barron	(KB)	Committee Member
George Hardy	(GH)	Committee Member
Michelle Heeley	(MH)	Committee Member
Bob Snashall	(BS)	Committee Member
Anne Porter	(AP)	Committee Member
Ernie Plastow	(EP)	Committee Member

ST LEGER HOMES / DMBC

Judith Jones	Director of Customer Services of SLHD
Meryl Liddell	Community Liaison Manager
Lynn Chamberlain	SJC Support Officer (minutes)

1. WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending followed by a run through of the housekeeping rules. He produced the revised menu that the Secretary and he had put together for the Resource Centre bookings.

2. APOLOGIES

Keith Jobson	Standing Joint Committee
Jayne Tindall	Standing Joint Committee
Susan Jordan	Chief Executive

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were passed as a true and accurate record. However, two Committee members' names had been misspelt which would be noted for future meetings. The correct spelling of MH was 'Heeley' and the 'l' had been missed from Ernie Plastow's name.

4. MATTERS ARISING

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AK pointed out that he had seen a poster advertising the BME Settlers TARA stating that refreshments and expenses would be paid for people attending. He felt that expenses should similarly be made available to all TARA's.

ML said that this should not have been on the poster and she would look into it.

GH felt that the BME Settlers TARA members should join in the community TARA's in their own areas.

ML replied that the members of the BME Settlers group were encouraged to join their local TARA.

JJ felt that the special interest groups had special issues and that it would perhaps be a good idea to have a nominated 'buddy' to encourage them to join local TARA's.

MT thought the buddy could go along to meetings to explain what the special groups are as people may not be aware what they were.

MT said that the coffee morning on the 6 February had raised £100 for the Mini Moto Project.

MT felt that the minutes did not reflect correctly the point she had made at the previous meeting. She had queried whether a Pathfinder person whose property was being demolished had priority over anyone else.

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JJ referred to the issue regarding boilers. JJ had spoken to Mick Werritt about this and he will make sure he reminds everyone to have a commonsense approach regarding replacing boilers under the decency scheme.

JJ With regard to the issue of the decorating vouchers, SLHD were having a small review about this to agree a change of the way they are given out. At the moment they are given out when the property is signed off which could be quite a long time. Vouchers could now be given out when the main work was done.

MT suggested employing an apprentice to do decorating at a good price for the elderly who could not do it themselves. JJ replied that different schemes were being looked into and also about taking on apprentices, but it was preferable to take them on when they could be given a job at the end of their apprenticeship. This could be an example for setting up a social enterprise. AP said that there was a gentleman living in Highfields who had been on a college plumbing course and wanted work experience without pay. JJ asked that details be passed on to ML.

AK referred to the training regarding BigWord. ML said that information regarding BigWord would be fed down through the team meetings. Viv and Nyssa from the Diversity Team would be going out to all team meetings and would also be coming to a future SJC meeting.

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EP enquired if 54 South Street had been let and JJ replied that it had been offered to someone.

MT gave an update on the Action Against Burglaries meeting on the 10 February. There had been different agencies there with a 'stranger at the door' demonstration which she felt would be particularly good for the elderly to see. This could be arranged through the Crime Reduction Team. The next meeting of the Action Against Burglaries would be at the end of March and if anyone was interested to contact Age Concern.

5. DIRECTORS REPORT

JJ referred to the recent article in the Free Press regarding the Management Agreement and how disappointing it had been for the Free Press to take the line they had on it. It had caused concern with the tenants and staff worrying about jobs as the article had stated SLHD had only been granted a one-year extension. There was no mention of the massive improvements that SLHD has made. There had also been no mention of the support given by the SJC in the article. If we did get a four-year extension and we did anything wrong, then the Council could cut off the Contract anyway. The Chair informed everyone that he had prepared a press release on behalf of the Federation giving support to SLHD to be included, but it had not been put in. JJ was going to a meeting the following Monday to talk about the Management Agreement and the next year's Delivery Plan.

There was a continuous improvement on the turnaround of complaints. We are looking at using TSA guidance and are setting up scrutiny arrangements to bring in standards on the estates where there are SLHD and Housing Association properties.

MT said that the Royal TARA in Edlington has had issues with tenants of private landlords. The TARA had been working with Gail Hancock to bring in selective licensing, but no progress had been made which was creating massive problems. JJ said that she would chase this up with Gary Wells.

AK said that he understood that there were 6,000 empty homes mostly private properties. He enquired whether it was correct that if a private property had been empty for six months then a tenant could be put into the property and charged rent. JJ responded that over time the Council can look at what the private landlord is doing about the property and can intervene, but this was not a straightforward procedure as it was difficult to track down private landlords. MT explained that with selective properties the landlords have to bring the properties up to scratch. JJ suggested that perhaps someone from the private sector section of DMBC could come along to a future meeting.

JJ informed the meeting that letters regarding the rent increase were going out soon and also the tenancy notices about consultation on the proposed changes were also being sent out. SLHD was trying to get involved in community issues and have

been working hard in Rossington setting up a boxing club and also supporting MiniMoto clubs going across the borough. SLHD are also involved in the brick yard ponds project at Edlington.

EF referred to a 93 year old lady who had had no heating and hot water for four days although the problem had now been sorted out. JJ asked for the address so the reason for this could be looked into.

AP brought up the issue at 5 Copax Court, Highfields where there is a strong smell coming up into the bathroom first thing in the morning. It has been investigated but the smell still persists.

6. COMMUNITY LIAISON / DIVERSITY REPORT

ML went through the CLO report for February.

The Chair enquired who is actually running the Communal Halls. ML replied that the running of the communal halls was being looked into. JJ explained that some communal halls were used more than others and originally formed part of the OAP bungalow schemes. It was thought they should perhaps be run like the Community Houses so tenants would have more say in how they are run. However, it was felt that money used to do the communal halls up could be better spent elsewhere.

AK was concerned that there was still a large amount in the accounts to do with the community houses. ML said that she would chase this issue up. MW said that the Advance Alarms renewal for maintenance has been received and she understood that this would now be paid through the CLO team. ML advised that the account should be passed on to the team and that she would deal with this.

ML said that the arrangements for 'Unity in the Community' were nearly complete.

With regard to training, a new programme was being put together and it was hoped to put different courses in for the next year. The costs were being looked into as on occasions people who had requested training had not turned up. The Chair stated he was interested in an 'IT course for the terrified'.

The Chair was concerned that the BME group were using the computers when this had not been agreed. ML said she would check up on this as she was under the impression they were only used for training purposes.

MT enquired about a Food Hygiene course for the SJC. ML replied that four sessions had been arranged at different places. MT asked that a course be set up for a Saturday to enable people who worked to attend. ML said that four courses had already been arranged and there was one at the TRRC on the 7 April. The others were 30 March at the Bhatia Centre, Mexborough, 1 April at the Intake Community Centre and one had taken place at Balby on the 22 February.

BS pointed out that the SJC membership information needs updating. ML said this would be done.

7. CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair referred to the sale of raffle tickets and that already £300 had been received. He requested SJC members to assist the CLO team with the preparation of the packs for the Conference.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

BS apologised in advance for non-attendance at the SJC meeting on the 11 March.

AK enquired who was responsible for the grass cutting at the Welfare schemes. JJ replied that a review was going on regarding the SLA with the Council as, for example, the service was available for over 60's, but not all of these people are unable to do it for themselves. She thought that DMBC would be responsible for the Welfare schemes.

The Chair asked whether the £25 decoration voucher could be increased. JJ said the affordability of this would have to be looked into as if this was increased then something else would have to suffer.

9. DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting would be Thursday 25 March at 1pm in the Doncaster Federation's Tenants' and Residents' Resource Centre, 40 St James Street, Balby Bridge, DN1 3BB.