



West Area Forum Minutes

Minutes of Meeting:

Date: 10 May 2010

Time: 10.30am

Venue: Bhatia Centre, Mexborough

Present:

Michelle Heeley (Chair)-	Latin Gardens & Emley Drive TARA
Jim Tierney -	Craganour TARA
Joyce Tierney -	Craganour TARA
Debbie Hutchinson -	DMBC Councillor
Georgina Mullis -	DMBC Councillor
Ray Mullis -	DMBC Councillor
Sue Phillips -	DMBC Councillor
Ted Price -	Edlington Royal TARA
Maureen Tennison -	Edlington Royal TARA
Roy Lund -	Mexborough Common TARA
Graham Ogle -	Neighbourhood Team Leader
Ann Coates -	Oval TARA
Andrea Mason -	Oval TARA
Mary Mayhew -	Oval TARA
Carol Sellars -	Oval TARA
Marion Westwood -	Oval TARA
Ken Barron -	Poets Corner TARA
Frank Knapton -	Poets Corner TARA & Mexborough TARAs Together
Tracey Leyland -	Poets Corner TARA
Linda Teasdale -	Poets Corner TARA & Mexborough TARAs Together
Lindsay Clarke -	St. Leger Homes (Community Liaison Officer)
Katie Dorritt -	St Leger Homes (Minute Taker)
Helen Kilshaw -	St. Leger Homes of Doncaster
Amy Nettleship -	St Leger Homes
John Young -	St. Leger Homes of Doncaster Board Member
David Wilkinson -	St. Leger Homes West Estate Manager
Insp. Ray Mountford -	South Yorkshire Police
Heather Saunders -	Temp. Federation Support Officer
Val Donnison -	The Lakes TARA
Shirley Benthham -	The Lakes TARA
S. Croft -	The Lakes TARA
A. Dockray -	The Lakes TARA
Margaret Cook -	Windhill TARA
Joan Robinson -	Windhill TARA
Emma Ward -	Windhill TARA

Apologies:

Chris Mills -	DMBC Councillor
Craig Salmon -	DMBC Councillor
Sandra Holland -	DMBC Councillor
Jill Arkley-Jevons -	DMBC Councillor
Keith Jobson -	Middlegate TARA (Vice chair Doncaster federation of Tenants and Residents' Associations)

Item No	Item	Action
	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></p> <p>Michelle welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked group to introduce themselves.</p>	
1	<p><u>Matters arising from last meeting</u></p> <p><u>Minute Amendments</u> Ken Barron to be added to the attended list Maureen Tennison is a member of the Edlington Royal TARA not Coronation Area TARA,</p> <p>Frank Knapton explained that he has spoken to a number of companies who have made their free phone contact numbers free to call from mobile phones. He requested if it would be possible for the repairs number to be free to contact regardless as to whether you use a landline or mobile.</p> <p>Mick Werritt replied that a contact number has been introduced which was cheaper than the previous one, but investigations will be done into cheaper or free calls from mobiles.</p> <p>Cllr. Georgina Mullis raised the question of the parking situation at Coronation Gardens, Warmsworth. He explained that the situation is still ongoing and confirmed that new parking bays will go ahead. This will be raised with the parties concerned. Georgina also asks what is being proposed for said spaces; David informs that four extra spaces will be added, as well as a drop kerb.</p>	David Wilkinson
2.	<p><u>Mick Werritt – Director of Property Services</u></p> <p>Mick Werritt presented a comprehensive presentation about the background, history and current performance of St. Leger Homes (please see attached document)</p> <p>Frank Knapton commented that the term “voids” should be changed to read as “empty properties”, as many tenants and residents did not understand such terminology.</p> <p>Following the presentation Mick Werritt opened up the floor and answered the following questions.</p> <p>Cllr.Georgina Mullis - asked about Home Insurance (regarding elderly or low income tenants who may not be able to afford the extra cost) and whether it would be possible to provide insurance for these individuals.</p> <p>Mick Werritt replied that although he is aware that there may be cheaper providers out there, the current Home Insurance that St Leger provides is very low cost. All individual circumstances will be considered.</p> <p>Cllr. Georgina Mullis asked if all houses have been given smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.</p>	

Mick Werritt replied that carbon monoxide detectors are currently being piloted in some houses but added that the cost for faulty carbon monoxide detectors is high. Most experiences with carbon monoxide leakages have been a result of solid fuel fires and the company ensures servicing of these are of high priority.

In regards to smoke alarms, there is a hard-wired smoke detector on the servicing programme. Tenants are being advised by local fire services and free smoke detectors are being offered.

Carol Sellars (Oval TARA) requested information about the future of the Decency Programme.

Mick Werritt answered that St. Leger Homes are working on the premise that the funds will be available. The Government do have a spending review every two years, however – Decent Homes are a legal obligation. It would therefore be difficult for anybody to stop the funds currently allocated to it.

Carol asked if the money for the Decent Homes project is European. Mick answered that the money is funded through the UK Government.

John Young added that it would be difficult to withdraw the finances promised to St. Leger so far but the whole subsidy arrangement is currently under review. However, the general consensus is that if the Housing Subsidy changes, we as a company are gainers.

Mick Werritt added that the finances are there. As an established Arms Length Management Organisation, we are stronger and therefore more likely to receive funds, where as a newly started Arms Length Management Organisation with no inspection history is less likely to receive funds.

Cllr. Sue Phillips commented on current issues with Decency Standards, mainly complaints regarding empty properties receiving Decency work where as current tenants have been waiting since 2008. She asked if there is a way or a system in place to ensure these properties are worked on.

Mick Werritt answered that St. Leger Homes of Doncaster aims to keep the process fair and a new system is needed if it has failed to create a fair approach to current repairs.

Cllr. Sue Phillips asked how one area can be ignored when surrounding areas have received Decency Standards?

Mick Werritt replied that he cannot answer for that specific area without referring to notes but he does sympathise. There is a full programme regarding Decency Standards to be approved by 2014.

Cllr. Deborah Hutchinson asked why the decency dates for Cusworth have been set back.

Mick Werritt answered that there is currently no published programme, adding that non-traditional properties have not yet been

<p>placed in to the programme and have cost calculated separately to ensure the work is within budget. It was stated that in 2008 St. Leger was in a position to carry out this work within their budget and could deliver the Decent Standards work. This was reported to the cabinet and factored in which caused the shift and set backs.</p> <p>Tracey Leyland (Poets Corner TARA) asks about Byron and Dryden Road and when the external painting will be finished.</p> <p>Mick Werritt answered that originally the Environmental Programme only covered fences but it may now be possible to extend its remit to cover areas such as exterior decoration.</p> <p>Tracey Leyland then asked why some houses have been done but others left and what is the current timescale for completion?</p> <p>Mick Werritt stated he has no answer. He realises the changes are needed and that it is a local need.</p> <p>Linda Teasdale (Poets Corner TARA) asked if information with regards to the decency programme is available to the public.</p> <p>Mick Werritt informed the meeting that a full update of the decency works/ programme will be issued with a future copy of HouseProud. The schedule is also available on the company's website – www.stlegerhomes.co.uk</p> <p>Frank Knapton comments that probationary tenancies will be introduced from the 7th of June for all new tenants. The probation period will be 12 months.</p> <p>Ken Barron (Poets Corner TARA – Windhill TARA. There are a number of issues with the regards to the state of properties on the Windhill Estate. He commented that the TARA had sent letters to both St. Leger Homes Directors and the Standing Joint Committee of the Doncaster Federation of Tenants and Residents' Associations. Ken commented that he was disappointed that there would be no special TARA meeting to resolve these issues. Mick Werritt confirmed that both he and Paul Lightfoot would be attending the TARA meeting on May 27, 2010. Ken Barron continued by asking whether contact has been made with the tenants that had complained. He was informed that each of the cases were being looked into by Paul.</p> <p><u>David Wilkinson – Estates</u></p> <p>Dave Wilkinson asked if the members of the meeting had questions with regards to Estate issues.</p> <p>Margaret Cook (Windhill TARA). There is a Japanese Knotweed problem that needs to be sorted as the tenant has been advised not to cut this down and dispose of via the green bin. Dave Wilkinson said that this will need to be forwarded to Community First as the Knotweed is treated in a special way and future visits will need to be made.</p> <p>Comments that there is an issue with weeds in their area, asks when</p>	<p>Dave Wilkinson</p>
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	<p>something is going to be done.</p> <p>David asked for the address and states he will treat the issue as a priority (addressed provided).</p> <p>Jim Tierney (Craganour TARA) mentioned empty private housing and issues with vandalism in the Denaby area.</p> <p>David Wilkinson replied that private housing should be contacted in order to sort out any issues.</p> <p>Frank Knapton congratulated Dave Wilkinson and the Estates Team workforce on fixing and painting the masonry.</p> <p>Inspector Ray Mountford – South Yorkshire Police Insp. Ray Mountford asked members of the meeting if they had any questions for him.</p> <p>Ken Barron (Poets Corner TARA – SJC Member) thanked Inspector Mountford for the police impact in the Mexborough area.</p> <p>Michelle asked if the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) name needs to be changed for publicity as those directly not involved may not understand what the acronym stands for.</p> <p>Insp. Ray Mountford explained that it was suggested that the group changed their name to “Community Meeting” but he felt this wasn’t suitable. The tagline “Have Your Say?” has been allocated but the suggestion that PACT was included in brackets might be more suitable.</p> <p>Ted Price (Edlington Royal TARA) added that the word “local” has been missed out.</p> <p>Maureen Tennison (Edlington Royal TARA) informed the meeting that at a ‘Community Crimefighters’ event last week nobody seemed to have heard about the prospective name change. Members of the meeting who do not like the idea of the name change should email Bob Dyson (Chief Constable) Robert.dyson@southyorks.pnn.police.uk</p> <p>Cllr. Sue Phillips asked if it would be possible to have a list stating the opening times of the SNT Offices. Insp. Ray Mountford agreed to forward a copy..</p>	<p>Insp. Ray Mountford</p>
	<p><u>Helen Kilshaw – Key Performance Indicators</u></p> <p>Discusses key issues</p> <p>Regarding calls reporting the need for a repair, 122,000 calls were received and answered within 30 seconds in March. Over the year the average time to answer was 20 seconds. The target is 18 seconds.</p> <p>Complaints for 2009/2010 – 100% dealt with. 98% dealt with within 20 days.</p>	

	<p>Empty Homes for 2009/2010 – the target was 30, actual was 20.</p> <p>Servicing 2009/2010 – In February 98.3% of gas services had been completed. The remaining 11 properties were due to lack of entry.</p> <p>Rent Arrears – Target – 1.67%, actual – 1.64%</p> <p>Michelle asked if the group would like a copy of the report. The consensus was that this would be appreciated. Helen Kilshaw agreed to have these attached to the minutes prior to circulation.</p>	
3	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>Michelle thanked all members of the meeting for attending and opened the floor to any other business.</p> <p>Jim Tierney (Craganour TARA) – With regards to the Earth centre located in the West of the borough they would like to ask for support. Meetings are being held to discuss the future of the land. It appears that from a meeting previously attended that this area may have been ear marked for industrial/ chemical usage. Although the meeting was stated to be a closed meeting and at that point the Tierneys were requested to leave the meeting as it was a closed meeting.</p> <p>Jim and Joyce Tierney requested the help of TARAs borough and Regionally wide.</p> <p>Carol Sellars (Oval TARA) said that there is a group in Conisbrough also looking into this situation and that it would be useful for the two parties to get together to discuss a way forward. Heather Saunders requested that Carol Sellars forward her some information regarding the situation so it could be taken to the Standing Joint Committee of the Doncaster Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations to distribute to the TARA</p> <p>Carole Sellars mentioned the fire safety situation on the Oval Estate After speaking to fire safety about issues regarding the maisonettes in the area with no clear fire exit, the tenants are waiting for more information from St. Leger Homes of Doncaster. Information has been passed on by both the Community Liaison Officers and Ken Barron the Standing Joint Committee TARA Mentor. However, all efforts to arrange the attendance of a Health and Safety representative from St. Leger Homes of Doncaster to attend a TARA meeting have failed.</p> <p>David Wilkinson stated that he will speak to Mark Kenworthy with regards to this issue.</p> <p>The meeting was closed at 12:25pm</p>	<p>Carol Sellars</p> <p>Dave Wilkinson</p>
4	<p><u>Date & Time of Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Monday 5th July 2010 – 10:30am Tenants' and Residents' Resource Centre 40 St James Street Doncaster</p>	