

**THE MINUTES OF THE 22ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DONCASTER
FEDERATION OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS HELD IN THE MANSION
HOUSE
ON THURSDAY 20TH MARCH 2003 AT 7PM.**

Attendance

SJC

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Lyn Ralph | Chairperson |
| Sid Hall | Vice-Chair |
| Moira Hood | Secretary |
| Mavis William | |
| George Hardy | |
| Emrys Fowler | |
| Vera Boughen | |
| John McGuinness | |
| Sid Bennett Sue | |
| Wilkinson Frank | |
| Knapton | |

Speakers & Officers

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Martin Winter | Executive Mayor of Doncaster |
| Cllr Gerard McLister | Portfolio Holder. Alan Fiddler |
| Sue Riordan | |
| Garry Williams | |
| Steve Proctor | Manager Area 2 |
| Kate Reeves | Manager Area 3 |
| Dave Bell | Manager Area 4 |
| Elaine Ligo | Manager Area 5 |
| Ken Bostwick | Manager Area 6 |
| Mick Peduzie | Community Liaison Team David Ingall |
| Lynne Harrison | |
| Sue Bowie | |
| Tom Cunningham | |

TARAs

36 TARAs/TAs/Tenants Clubs

1 Apologies

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| David Allott | |
| Gary Allen | Head of Housing |
| Ian Stephenson | Executive Director Cllr Ward |
| Instoneville TARA | |
| Darlington Grove TARA Julian & Jane Hurley | |
| Pat Hagan | |

2 Welcome from Lyn Ralph-Chair of the Standing Joint Committee

Lyn opened the meeting by extending a warm welcome to association members, staff, elected members and guests before going on to introduce the speakers for the evening Executive Mayor Martin Winter and Councillor Gerard McLister, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services.

3 Address by Mayor Winter-Executive Mayor of Doncaster

Mayor Winter opened by thanking the SJC for allowing him to come and talk to association members for a few minutes. He went on to say that as the first Executive Mayor at the head of the new model for local government his job was that of an executive decision maker but he was not on his own as he was able to delegate some responsibilities to his cabinet members one of whom was Gerard McLister.

"Where are we going?" I have a big vision for 2010 with our Transformational Goals spelling out the priorities for achieving our full potential the first being tackling deprivation.

He went on to say that we were 10 days away from the decision on Finningley Airport and that there were real challenges ahead in housing, health, crime, education etc. In the manifesto it would spell out how the council would tackle these issues, there would be a white paper on neighbourhood issues. Mayor Winter said that he did not have all the answers but decisions would reflect what people were saying to him.

FLAG has been fairly successful already in spite of what critics say in the paper. There will be a new paper on anti-social behaviour from central government which will help us deal with those who are disruptive in our society and make other peoples lives a misery. It is all about changing the face of Doncaster making it not the cheapest but the best place to live.

i

Mayor Winter said that he was changing Neighbourhood Services with the introduction of Community First which would result in teams of clearly identifiable people out in the community dealing with many issues like grass cutting, dealing with weeds in the pavements, dog fouling and graffiti cleaning etc. Members of the public will be able to approach these people and report items that they have noticed or want something done about There will be no more "Its not my department" what they cannot deal with themselves they will report to the person who can. These Community Safety Wardens in your communities are not part of the police although they will work closely with the police if necessary. I guarantee that the Housing Revenue Account will not pay for FLAG.

For me it is about the community working with the council I know you want cleaner streets, safer communities and like me you are sick of anti-social behaviour if we work together we can achieve so much more

Mayor Winter said that there were particular challenges for housing and that both sides must work closer together. No more only doing what is on the docket if something else needs doing at the same time then get it done. Housing under real pressure with another visit from audit coming up in September we must make real changes before then as we cannot afford another bad inspection or they could take the management of housing away from us.

In closing Mayor Winter said that he was looking forward to working closely with the associations and the SJC and that Cllr McLister was his front man on housing issues. He apologised for not being able to stop for the remainder of the evening as he had another engagement.

4 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were agreed a true record proposed by Roger Haldenby, Intake High Rise TA and seconded by Emrys Fowler, Stainforth TARA.

5 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6 Annual Report-including Treasurer's Report

Lyn went through the report page by page inviting members to make any comments, there were no issues raised on the annual report. The treasurer's report was accepted as a true record proposed by Sid Hall, Balby West TARA and seconded by Roger Haldenby, Intake High Rise TARA.

7 Motions -proposed by Sue Wilkinson

Sue Wilkinson put the motion proposing changes to the federation constitution to the floor there was no speakers against the motion and the changes were agreed by a large majority.

8 Introduction of nominees

Lyn asked each person nominated to stand as she introduced them to the audience; there were 8 nominees for this year's election.

Lyn welcomed the new TARAs that had been formed since the last AGM.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Bankwood Estate TARA, Rossington | Area 6 |
| Cow House Residential Park, Armthorpe | Area 3 |
| Campsall TARA | Area 2 |
| Gornies Hill, Mexborough | Area 5 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| Howbeck Estate TARA, Edlington | Area 4 |
| Mexborough Common TARA | Area 5 |
| The 4 Roads TARA, Rossington | Area 6 |
| Polton Close TA, Stainforth. | Area 1 |

9 Interval and Raffle (Collection of ballot papers) The raffle raised £ 112.50

10 Address from Councillor Gerard McLister-Portfolio Holder Neighbourhood Services

"I am delighted to speak to you this evening. The Doncaster Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations is an important organisation in my political life, some may say that it is the most important organisation. When I first became the cabinet Member for Mayor Winter I was very aware that Lyn and Moira were my mentors. They kept me out of trouble and on the straight and narrow, there are not many people that can say that or do that and I value their relationship and partnership. I value their counsel and advice; I value their contribution to the development of our housing service. You have a real voice at the heart of the decision making process, you should be proud of your representatives.

One of the highlights of 2002 was a conducted tour around Stainforth with Emrys and George, my thanks to you both.

The statement from the Deputy Prime Minister on 5th February highlighted the fact that there are too many empty houses in the north of England giving an impression of blight and decay. The Mayor made reference in his speech of his commitment to build sustainable communities and affirmed his commitment to safer communities.

We are currently undertaking a test of tenants' opinion; there are four key options: 1

Stock retention with existing financial arrangements.

2 Stock transfer

3 Private Finance Initiative

4Arms Length Organisation-we keep our stock but enter into a relationship with others

The future of Council housing is in your hands, not mine, nor with my colleagues, or officers.

I am currently involved in the South Yorkshire Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, which covers Mexborough, Conisbrough and Edlington. It is about bringing private and public sector housing up to a standard that along with our other funding like Surestart will regenerate these communities

We are preparing for reinspection on our two best value reviews on voids and repairs and maintenance. Our delivery plans for the Best Value Housing Inspectorate have to be robust and demonstrate benefits for you our tenants. Our relationship with the Best Value Housing Inspectors and the Audit Commission is a positive one, which has enabled us to focus on delivering a better housing service to you. You will see the benefits within the next few months.

I am committed to the decency standard. All of our 25,000 council houses will be brought up to a decent standard by 2010. We have an aspiration to achieve this by 2008. Houses fit for a great people who deserve only the best. We are working closely with you and your SJC to develop a Doncaster Standard; the decency standard is a basic standard that deals with bricks and mortar. Your SJC is seeking other measures that will create safer communities, e.g. fencing, better lighting and measures to deal with our open spaces and anti-social behaviour.

Housing is a hot potato; you are concerned at the way in which the Housing Revenue Account is being spent. I am committed to using the HRA in an appropriate way for you our tenants.

We are developing community-based management; it will enable you, as tenants will have the say on the type of services that you want. This measure will assist you to address your priorities. It will be extended from housing matters to include neighbourhood wardens, grass cutting, weed control etc. I urge you again to take part in the Test of Tenants' Opinion, the outcome of this consultation will impact on the way in which your housing service will be funded and managed.

I am committed to social housing that is affordable, that is a quality product and valued by you our tenants' We have to embrace changes in order to build not only decent homes but decent communities.

Partnerships, trust, cooperation are the key ingredients of a working relationship. We have a very interesting year ahead with many challenges, however we will get through it if we are united, supportive and strong."

12 Questions and Answers

Q-Roger Haldenby, Intake high Rise TARA-Anti-social behaviour is a problem in our area so our members would like to see introductory/probationary tenancies brought in. Can they be brought in across our area or borough wide?

A-Kate Reeves-Anti-social behaviour is a problem on most estates, if we were to have introductory tenancies it would have to be across the whole of our stock it cannot be introduced in just one locality. We are looking at a joint initiative in the Balby Bridge area to introduce a local lettings policy.

Cllr McLister-Lots of tenants worked hard to get a secure tenancy so are concerned at the idea of introductory tenancies. I want to see support put in place for the most vulnerable areas.

Q-Duncan, Cantley 1&2, Is the new system of waiting lists fair when some people are waiting years and others just leap frog them to the top of the list?

A-Sue Riordan, We are reviewing the letting system which has to try to reflect those in greatest need. We are willing to listen to any suggestion that people may have. There is no such thing as the perfect system.

Q-What was wrong with the date order system?

A-We had to meet government instruction, need gets priority.

Q-Duncan Matthews, Repairs issue, had new wooden doors on my French windows in June but they have been left since then without any paint, where do I get help?

A-Cllr McLister, I cannot defend this I will make sure that the housing manager has the details. On the subject of lettings Sheffield were taken to court by Shelter over their allocation policy which was date order and they lost in court, we were threatened with the same action if we did not change. Point system based on the greatest need, the policy needs reviewing every 2 years.

Q-Frank Knapton, Morton & Chaucer. On the front of the annual report are photographs of two roads, which show the wonderful regeneration of our area. High praise for all concerned in turning these 2 roads around it is much appreciated.

A-Cllr McLister. I am grateful to Frank for those remarks it's good for the morale of elected members and staff.

Q- Olive, Blowhall & Stubbins. All the grass cutting, I raise my hat to you but vandals outside the shop area, urinating, and dropping litter spoil it. It is nice to see the trees and the grass cut but it is spoilt by the shopkeepers, what can we do?

A-Lyn-Write to these shopkeepers in the first instance.

Olive, we have approached them and their response is "what can we do?"

Alan Fiddler. I will speak to area management and try to organise a meeting between the TARA, housing' officers and the shopkeepers.

Cllr McLister, This is quite a common occurrence, these problems can be resolved through getting together.

Q-Bob Allen, Broomhouse TARA-Are the wardens going to be rolled out across the whole of the borough and will they tackle jobs like gates hanging of and guttering falling down?

A-Cllr McLister-the wardens will be extended across all wards by the end of Mayor Winters first term of office. Mayor Winter is trying to get away from " that's not my job" attitude. Joined up thinking, not just doing a bit, a new approach.

Bob-I want a pride in where I live, I want to see staff on the job.

Q-Eric Wilson, Campsall-Our problems appear miniscule compared with other areas but I was delighted to hear Mayor Winter say that if a workman came out in the future he could do another job as well instead of just sticking to what was on his docket. Will this same principle apply to other parts of the service including the private sector like SETA who empty the bin but leave the black bag at the side?

A- Cllr Mc Lister-It is important that bins are emptied and streets swept, we must get away from the system where the streets are swept on Monday and the bins emptied on Tuesday.

Q Scawthorpe-When I was standing at the bus stop in town there were three men mending a hole 12" square, why does it take 3 men?

A- Gary Williams-The highways department are trying to get away from this, these things will change Cllr

McLister- When I walk through the Waterdale there are always people with clipboards.

Q-Moira Hood, Clay Lane TARA- As TARAs if you are trying to get things done in your area don't give up if at first you don't succeed keep nagging the person or department you want to take action and in the end you hopefully will succeed in getting what you want. On Clay Lane we have been lobbying all sorts of people to get a crossing to Sainsburys which is on the other side of the A18 from our estate, nine years it has take us but at last with a little bit of help from our members, local councillor and Mayor Winter there it is a light controlled crossing to get us safely across the road, (we call it Ted's crossing after our chairman Ted Wilburn who is here tonight) so if you are getting dependant over something you are trying to achieve, think of us.

A-Cllr McLister- Thanks to Moira for her comments.

Q-Scawthorpe-why have Council taxes gone up so much when we have had £8 million from Central Government?

A-Cllr McLister-I supported the rise; we have the lowest council tax in South Yorkshire, the lowest council tax in the North East and amongst the lowest rents. We have been talking about grass cutting, litter clearing and tackling anti-social behaviour, if you want quality services you have to pay. We now have to deliver quality services; we now have no excuse, like no money.

Q Radburn Road TARA-Continental Landscape don't cut the grass they hack it, isn't it time they were scrapped and we had a decent job done?

A-Cllr McLister-As far as I am concerned there is the need for change.

Q-Vera Boughen, Balby Bridge-I would like to give my thanks to Dave Bell and Julie Jablonski for their work on the concierge system, which we desperately need. I am very grateful to everyone concerned.

A-Alan Fiddler-Thanks for those remarks, the staff all try to provide a good service.

Q-Bob Allan, Broomhouse TARA-Litter is clearly an issue across the borough but our estate is near the dumpit site and since the opening hours have been changed rubbish is being dumped outside the gates and on our estate. A-Cllr McLister-I will take your name and address at the end of the meeting and pass the information on to Cllr Parkinson.

13 Result of ballot

Tenants

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| Lyn Ralph | 3 years |
| Moira Hood | 3 years |
| Michael Solomon | 3 years |
| Vera Boughen | 3 years |
| George Hardy | 2 years |
| Trevor Ashman | 1 year |
| John McGuinness | 1 year. |

Residents

Eric Wilson

14 Closing Remarks-Lyn Ralph, Chairperson

"Well that's all folks, well just about. May I please thank you all, you the chief players, the association members without you we would not be able to do our job, what would be the point? If it weren't for us the council officers, elected members, directors in fact all the council wouldn't need to be here either, in short, neither of u can function without the other. Together we make a great team.

All of you will be fed up of hearing me say, Doncaster is already doing that, Doncaster piloted that, we did that years ago, we do this in Donny or we do that in Donny, I promise you this is just what we do say when we go away to seminars or conferences all across the country. Only last Friday we were at a seminar in Manchester about stock transfer. Paul Schofield, a member of the Community Housing Task Force, a branch of the ODPI' was one of the speakers. He wasn't very impressed when I asked just what had the Government got against Council Housing and even less so when in the afternoon workshop I really got on my soap box and told him just how badly Doncaster fared in its subsidies from Central Government. What shook me more was the genuine look of surprise on his face that for all its faults we still wanted to keep the Council as our landlord. He asked why do you want to stay with them then?" My answer, I can ask to talk with the Executive Mayor, the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Head of Housing in fact anything that is worrying us that's all it takes is a phone call to ask them to come and discuss it with us. I cannot do that with a Housing Association, it is about accountability. When other delegates from all over the country said well you are lucky we can't do that, I replied: this kind of rapport isn't luck it hasn't come easy: it has to be worked for from all sides. Officers have realise that we want to learn, we have the knowledge and the brains to realise what we want and to discuss professionally, even to compromise!

Elected members' realise we don't want their jobs, they support us fully. Directors realise that our input is invaluable. The executive Mayor is made aware of our concerns and takes them on board. Look at the FLAG scheme.

The Chief Executive, Building Services DLO, the Police, Social Services, Education and environmental Services are aware of and work with us to achieve what we all want for Doncaster.

Tenants are more aware than ever how their money is being spent and by whom. Even Central government, although exceedingly patronising realises that tenants and the other people who live on council estates may just have something useful to say.

The road shows as you are aware from the display during the break started this week to test tenant opinion on the future of our homes. These have been very poorly attended so far; please I urge you go along to any of them that you can get to. Ask questions, form your own opinions; we the federation will be on hand to answer any questions or you can telephone us in the Haywood Room. Don't just ignore it because it will affect your future forever.

May I please ask you to put your hands together for the Community Liaison Team, Mick has been off work for 6 weeks recuperating, it felt more like 6 months, but his team coped admirably with David at the helm. Thank you for your support.

Around the room, yet again are the dedicate officers who have given up their evening to attend tonight. Incidentally one, Mr. Steve Proctor has just been released from prison to attend tonight, he was arrested on £500.00 bail for the Anthony Nolan Trust. The staff from Area 2 arranged this; I am delighted to say they have raised £8,000 so far. There is a photo of Steve in his white prison suit and his fluffy pink handcuffs and a collection box by the door on your way out. All the staff work under extreme pressure for our benefit 365 days of the year, ladies and gentlemen I give you your DMBC workforce!

Can I also ask you to put your hands together for my colleagues on the SJC; I certainly would be lost without their support and under standing, thank you all.

Unfortunately it is my very sad duty to inform you of the death of Mina Allen who led Central Control for many years. Many of you will have spoken to or had dealings with Mina; we offer our sincere condolences to her family and friends. She will be sadly missed.

The beauty of Doncaster is that all the villages and towns have their own individuality, their own independence and their own fierce pride in their local heritage. That is what makes Doncaster strong, you, me, us, them, all the folk who live wherever in Doncaster. It's our community; long may we all support it?

Finally may I thank you all for attending and that I humbly ask that whoever or whatever is your own God that you say a prayer for a speedy end to the war in Iraq and wish our troops a safe return to British soil.

I wish you all safe journey home, goodnight.