

MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM
12th January 2010

Present:

Mr J Newton (Chairman)	Queens Park Residents Association
Mrs C Thornber	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs M Everett	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs C Hardiman	Edmonton, Linden and Washington Residents' Association
Mr T Clayton	Edmonton, Linden and Washington Residents' Association
Mr B Rogers	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Miss G King	Queens Park Residents Association
Mr M Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mrs E Christian	Ingthorpe Tenants' and Residents' Association
Mr A Pilborough	Munster Avenue Residents' Association
Mrs C Pilborough	Munster Avenue Residents' Association
Mrs B Ratcliffe	All Hallows Residents Association
Mr R Masson	All Hallows Residents Association

In Attendance:

Councillor Mrs Henderson	Blackpool Council
Mrs S Tomlinson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs M Cornall	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms J Ellis	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Grundy	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr M Glennon	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs D Williams	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs S Buckley	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr C Holland	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs Brenda Giles	Sheltered Housing Forum
Mr L Streefkirk	Streetscene, Blackpool Council
Ms H Master	Reassurance Plus, Blackpool Council
Mrs P Dimuantas	Adult and Community Learning, Blackpool Council
Ms P Whitworth	Assessment, Prevention and Support, Blackpool Council
Miss G Atkinson	Democratic Services, Blackpool Council
Miss S Baxter	Democratic Services, Blackpool Council

Action

1. WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed those in attendance.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Mrs D Wightman, Mrs J Sanderson and Mr T Clayton.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 10th November 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

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4. ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING

Mrs Dimuantes, Positive Steps Co-ordinator, advised the Forum that Blackpool Council's Adult and Community Learning division provided a wide range of programmes and courses to residents. A new course directory had recently been published and members of the Forum were invited to contact the division if they were interested in completing a course. Specific courses tailored to individual training needs could also be provided.

The Forum was invited to submit ideas and suggestions with regard to the redesign of the division's web site, Blackpool For Me, that would enhance the site and improve accessibility.

It was reported that an informal learning directory, that had been published on the Blackpool For Me web site, included a range of community centre based activities that were open to all members of the public. The Adult and Community Learning division could provide support to community groups to develop activities for the public.

Mrs Dimuantes added that the Blackpool Heritage Champions was being launched today (Tuesday 12th January) at Blackpool Central Library, with a presentation scheduled for either 1.00 p.m. or 6.30 p.m. Members of the Forum were invited to attend the event.

5. STREETSCENE SERVICES

Mr Streefkirk, Senior Streetscene Enforcement Officer, was in attendance to respond to any queries or issues relating to the service provided by the Council's Streetscene services.

On occasion, there was a level of confusion relating to whether it was Streetscene or Connaughts (on behalf of BCH) that was responsible for certain areas surrounding social housing. In response, Mr Streefkirk advised that responsibility was dependent on whether the highway or land had been adopted by either the Council or BCH. In all instances, Connaughts was responsible for grass cutting and maintenance of the pathways leading directly into social housing estates, together with communal areas and bin rooms. Issues relating to poor maintenance should be directed to BCH as a matter of urgency.

It was reported that Connaughts was currently providing a winter maintenance programme until March 2010. Due to the recent adverse weather conditions, they were behind schedule and had planned to draft in teams from the Manchester branch on a temporary basis until they were back on schedule.

In response to an issue raised regarding the gritting of bus stop areas, Mr Streefkirk advised that due to the national shortage, gritting had been undertaken on a priority basis. Once stocks had been fully replenished, more extensive gritting could be undertaken. With regard to the use of beach sand as a substitute for grit, the Forum was advised that the Council had experimented with this option; however, due to the high water and low salt content of sand, it had froze rapidly and therefore was not suitable for gritting.

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With regard to an issue raised regarding ice on Ashfield Road, Mr Streefkirk advised that all local authorities were experiencing problems with heavy ice and a national shortage of grit. Mr Streefkirk agreed to refer the issue back to Streetscene for consideration.

Lister
Streefkirk

To conclude, the Forum was advised that the scheduled inspection of each pothole across Blackpool was currently being undertaken to identify priority repair works.

6. HOUSING MATTERS

(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

A brief summary of the activities undertaken within Blackpool Coastal Housing was provided to the Forum.

Mrs Cornall reported that as part of the Homes and Communities scheme to build 42 new family homes across the borough, a number of tenants had been recently relocated from the Grange Park area. All individuals would automatically be rehoused as a priority, with the type of accommodation allocated in accordance with their individual needs.

With regard to the Decent Homes programme, Mr Jefferson advised that BCH had been awarded funding of £13m for 2010/11, which would be added to the 2009/10 under spend of £2m.

(b) Sheltered Housing

A brief summary of the activities undertaken within Sheltered Housing was provided to the Forum, as follows:

- There was now full staffing provision for Scheme Managers;
- Furniture for Argosy Court and Sevenoaks Community Centres had been purchased through the Elected Member ward budget; and
- Remaining funds within the Sheltered Housing budget would be allocated on a priority basis.

In addition, Mrs Buckley advised that work had been undertaken with the Customer Involvement Team to bid for funding, which would be allocated to the development of the Sheltered Housing Forum. This would also include the purchase of IT equipment to allow for the training of Forum members and an increase in the provision of Sheltered Housing services and activities. BCH would learn if they had been successful in the first stage of the bid by the end of January 2010.

Satisfaction questionnaires had been circulated to all Sheltered Housing tenants on 1st January 2010. The format of the questionnaire would allow for comparison with the results of the satisfaction questionnaire that had been submitted to general needs tenants, and for comparison with national results. An independent organisation had administered the questionnaire and the results would be collated at the end of March 2010.

At the previous meeting of the Sheltered Housing Forum, members had reviewed the Action Plan to assess progress against each action. The next meeting had been scheduled for 26th March 2010.

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(c) Performance Indicators

It was reported that there was no information to report under this item for the meeting. An outline of the next quarter of the Performance Indicators would be presented at the next meeting.

7. TENANT PROJECT FUND

Mr Glennon reported that BCH had been exploring the possibility of commissioning the Community Foundation for Lancashire to administer the Tenant Project Fund. This organisation was a charity that had experience and expertise in managing public and private sector charity funds. As this would incur a fee, which would be sourced from the Tenant Project Fund, it was essential that value for money was achieved. Working with the Community Foundation for Lancashire would also assist BCH to apply for other funding sources for tenant-related projects. The Forum was assured that the appointment of the organisation would not alter the application process.

8. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT

Mrs Grundy advised that the LGBT Forum had approved the final design of their Forum leaflet and that this would be submitted for printing within the next week. The Forum had agreed that the LGBT Conference would be scheduled for February 2010. In addition, February had been scheduled at the LGBT History Month.

With regard to the Tenant Inspectors, it was reported that there had been no recent inspections due to the Christmas period and the adverse weather conditions. The next inspection was due on 19th January 2010, the results of which would be presented at the next TLF meeting. Furthermore, repairs monitoring was progressing positively and the results of the third round of the Mystery Shopping exercise would be presented at the next TLF meeting.

Mrs Tomlinson reported that the Green Wardens would be providing feedback on Connaught's winter maintenance scheme in March 2010. Following that, feedback forms would be distributed more regularly.

The next edition of Viewpoint would be distributed in early March and Mrs Tomlinson invited the Forum to submit any news or information items for inclusion in the edition by 28th January 2010. The Forum was advised that two versions of a new front cover for Viewpoint had been circulated to tenants for consultation and that Option B had been selected.

It was reported that the next meeting of the Anti-Social Behaviour Focus Group had been scheduled for 14th January 2010, at which further meetings throughout 2010 would be scheduled. The Lettings Focus Group had last met in December 2009 and it had been agreed that the group would meet on a quarterly basis. Further meetings throughout 2010 were yet to be scheduled.

Ms Ellis advised the Forum that each tenant would receive a copy of their quarterly rent statement within the next few days. This would include a new Rents Newsletter which had been designed by the Rents Focus Group and provided advice and support relating to rent and

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tenancies. The next meeting of the Group had been scheduled for 19th January 2010, at which the next quarterly newsletter would be developed.

The Disability Forum had recently designed a booklet aimed at disabled individuals and their carers, which would be finalised at their next meeting in February 2010, prior to being submitted to the Reading Panel for consideration.

With regard to the Leaseholders Forum, members were advised that the next meeting had been scheduled for 21st January 2010 and it had been agreed that the group would meet on a quarterly basis. Further meetings throughout 2010 were yet to be scheduled.

Mr Glennon advised the Forum that the Blackpool Coastal Housing Academy had recently provided eight two-hour seminars based around various social housing topics. At present, five tenants had enrolled on the course and were due to graduate on 27th January 2010. Following this, feedback on the course would be collated and assessed, prior to launching another course in March 2010 which would be open to all tenants. It was anticipated that the Academy course would be provided two to three times per year. BCH had applied to the Chartered Institute of Housing for accreditation of the course.

It was reported that the invitations for the Customer Involvement Awards, which would take place on 27th January 2010, had been distributed to each member of the TLF. Each invitation included allocation for five guests. Members were advised that they may also receive duplicate invitations as separate invites had also been distributed to tenants who had been actively involved with BCH throughout the year, such as the Green Wardens, as well as individuals who had been shortlisted for an award. There was a maximum of 240 places available for the ceremony and 180 of these had been allocated to tenants or award winners.

Following a discussion regarding Mereside Tenants and Residents Association, who were no longer a member of the TLF, the Forum took a majority vote to invite the group to the ceremony.

Mike
Glennon

With regard to Grange Park Tenants and Residents Association, Mr Glennon advised that the group had been invited to the Customer Involvement Awards as they were still a member of TLF. However, as they had now missed three consecutive Forum meetings, contact would be made with the Group to confirm that they still wanted to be a member.

Mike
Glennon

9. TENANT COMPACT AND INVOLVEMENT STRUCTURE REVIEW

Mrs Cornall advised that the proposal to introduce more robust review and scrutiny of BCH services had been recently considered and agreed by the BCH Board. The next stage would be to formalise the existing Focus Groups, and establish a number of new Groups to ensure that all BCH activity was covered. In addition, a consultant would be appointed to review the current governance arrangements with the aim to implement a refreshed version in Summer 2010.

It was reported that the Focus Groups would continue to meet while the review was being undertaken so that upon completion, individuals from the Groups could be recruited to sit on the Scrutiny Panel which would

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then replace the current TLF. The Tenant Compact was also being reviewed as part of this process.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Mrs Henderson advised the Forum that she had been unable to attend the visits scheduled to Boston Way and Edmonton, Linden and Washington Tenants and Residents Associations due to adverse weather conditions, and requested that these be rescheduled.

It was reported that Connaughts had recently purchased some grit and had been working with the Council to grit Sheltered Housing areas across the town. Grit supplies had been distributed nationally on a priority basis and Blackpool did not fall within this category.

A discussion took place with regard to the provision of transport to the Customer Involvement Awards. The Forum agreed that those Tenants and Residents Associations that received a grant from BCH would pay for their transport out of the fund. Those Associations that did not receive a grant would provided transport by BCH.

The Forum was advised that Connaughts was currently running a Big Community Idea initiative which encouraged individuals to bid for funding for community-focused ideas. Copies of the leaflet were circulated at the meeting.

It was reported that Mrs Grundy had been shortlisted for the award of Tenant Involvement Officer of the Year at the TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) Awards 2010, which were being held on 3rd February 2010 in Manchester.

The Edmonton, Linden and Washington Tenants and Residents Association had recently experienced a break-in at their local community centre. This had caused significant loss to the community centre and it was agreed that Mrs Williams consult with a number of other community centres to consider options to recompense to the Association.

11. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 9th March 2010, commencing at 10.00 a.m. It was requested that an alternative room for the meeting be booked.

Mike
Glennon

Denise
Williams

Georgina
Atkinson

The meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Georgina Atkinson, Senior Democratic Services Adviser
Tel: (01253) 477164, e-mail: georgina.atkinson@blackpool.gov.uk