

**MINUTES OF TENANTS' LIAISON FORUM**  
**16<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

**Present:**

Mrs M Horn (Chairman)	Grange Park Residents' Association
Mrs C Thornber	Boston Way Tenants' Association
Mrs A Stringer	Grange Park Residents Association
Mrs C Hardiman	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Mrs J Sanderson	Linden and Edmonton Residents' Association
Mrs D Wightman	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Mr B Rogers	Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Residents' Association
Mr C Randall	Munsters Residents' Association
Mrs G King	Queens Park Residents Association
Mrs C Cook	Queens Park Residents Association

Councillor Mrs Henderson      Blackpool Council

**In Attendance:**

Mr P Jefferson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Grundy	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr M Glennon	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs D Williams	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mrs L Barlow	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Buckley	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms S Tomlinson	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Ms J Ellis	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr C Holland	Blackpool Coastal Housing
Mr L Streef Kirk	Streetscene, Blackpool Council
Miss G Atkinson	Legal and Democratic Services, Blackpool Council

**Action**

**1. WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Lee, Mr and Mrs Christian and Mrs Feeney.

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

**4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

*(At this point Mrs Horn vacated the Chair and Miss Atkinson, as Clerk to the meeting, presided.)*

It was reported that Mrs Horn was the sole nomination for the position of Chairman and had received four nominations. In light of this, Mr Horn was duly elected as Chairman of the Tenant Liaison Forum for 2008/09.

At this juncture, Mrs Horn retook her position as Chairman of the Forum and announced that Mr Randall was the sole nomination for the position of Vice-Chairman and had received four nominations. In light of this, Mr

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Randall was duly elected as Vice-Chairman of the Tenant Liaison Forum for 2008/09.

**5. HOUSING MATTERS**

(a) Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH)

The Forum was provided with an update on progress achieved under the Decent Homes scheme. The Local Employment target, which had been established to ensure that at least 70 per cent of employees had been contracted from the Blackpool area, was currently at 65 per cent.

A number of issues had been identified with the standard of work provided by the contractors and it was reported that BCH would maintain a vigilant approach to ensure that the work undertaken was to the high standard required.

Repair and development work had now commenced in all housing estates and a copy of the first two-year programme of work, which had been recently approved by the BCH Board, would be circulated to all members for information.

(b) Sheltered Housing and Community Centres

It was reported that Ms Buckley had recently been appointed within the Sheltered Housing section of BCH and that the recently vacated post of Community Centre Co-ordinator had been advertised.

Three community centres had recently been installed with new furniture and the previous Sheltered Housing Forum meeting had reported positive feedback with regard to the repair works that had been undertaken. The Sheltered Housing Forum would continue to work through the Improvement Action Plan and a number of issues with Ibbison Court and Dunsop Court had been referred to the Council's Streetscene service for resolution.

A number of queries were raised with regard to the availability of Scheme Managers and in response, the Forum was advised that the Vitaline service would assist with visits and calls while the new managers were being recruited.

With regard to the Walter Robinson community centre, it was reported that BCH would be considering the adoption of a similar agreement as utilised for Whitegate Resource Centre with regard to the legal and Health and Safety requirements.

(c) Performance Indicators

Mr Jefferson advised members that the Performance Indicator information had not yet been presented to the BCH Board and would therefore be provided at the next meeting.

With regard to issues identified in 2007 relating to the number of rent arrears, the Forum was advised that the Council's Housing Benefit team had recently successfully piloted the Home Stop initiative. This had resulted in a significant reduction in the length of time associated with providing housing benefit for new tenancies, from six weeks to two weeks.

Cyril Holland

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As a result, the rent arrears for that period had reduced by £50,000 and had also freed up time for Housing Benefit officers to resolve other rent arrear issues.

#### **6. CUSTOMER INVOLVEMENT**

The Forum was advised that Ms Ellis and Ms Tomlinson had both been appointed as Customer Involvement and Projects Officers for BCH on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

The election of tenants onto the BCH Board had now commenced, with the assistance of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). A number of concerns were raised with regard to the level of communication and involvement from the Customer Involvement Team and it was agreed that this be reviewed to provide a more planned approach for 2009.

In response to a query raised regarding ballot papers for the election, the Forum was advised that identifier numbers had been printed on the papers to eliminate fraudulent and duplicate papers being submitted and would not be used for information purposes on a tenant's voting choice. It was stressed that voting would remain confidential.

Mr Glennon invited the Forum to take a copy of the Customer Involvement team's Operational Strategy which had recently been revised and updated.

It was reported that the deadline for nominations for the Customer Involvement Awards was 21<sup>st</sup> September 2008 and that eight invitations for the award ceremony would be distributed to each Tenant and Resident Association.

With regard to the Green Warden and Mystery Shopping schemes, the Forum was advised that these would be launched in due course and would be scheduled on a more regular basis.

Mr Glennon reported that a number of young people, aged between 17 and 25 years had expressed an interest in producing a version of Viewpoint aimed at younger tenants. In addition, as an affiliated group of the Forum, all members were invited to use the services and resources provided by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service.

The Forum was also advised that £20m of funding for the North West area had recently become available. All small and voluntary groups with an annual income of less than £20,000 would be invited to apply for the Grassroots grants and further information on the application process could be obtained from BCH.

#### **7. HIGHWAYS SERVICES**

Mr Streefkirk, Senior Streetscene Enforcement Officer, invited the Forum to raise any issues or queries appertaining to the services provided under the Council's Streetscene department.

The Forum praised the achievement of the Council's recent Big Cat initiative, which had successfully raised awareness of littering issues and the benefits of recycling.

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The Forum raised the following issues:

- Benches on Hobart Place.
- Parking bays on Bostonway.
- Potholes on the main carriageways at Queens Park.
- Drainage of surface water at Queens Park.

It was agreed that a progress update on the issues raised be reported back at a future meeting.

Lister  
Streefkirk

### 8. CODE OF CONDUCT

It was reported that the Code of Conduct had been discussed at the previous Tenant Liaison Forum workshop meeting and a consensus had been reached that each Tenant and Resident Association should have its own Code of Conduct. A template Code would therefore be developed which could be adopted and amended slightly for each Association. This would ensure a certain level of consistency while maintaining flexibility.

It was agreed that the Code of Conduct be discussed further at the next Tenant Liaison Forum workshop meeting that had been scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008 and that progress be reported back to the next Forum meeting.

Mike  
Glennon

### 9. SCOTTISH POWER FUNDING

With regard to the provision of park benches, Mr Glennon advised the Forum that the Estate Management officers and Scheme Managers had been exploring potential sites for the installation of 30 benches. Once finalised, the list would be presented to the Forum at a future meeting to allow the members to select the locations.

Mike  
Glennon

### 10. FINANCE UPDATE

It was reported that the previous guidance appertaining to the spend of Tenant and Residents Association funding no longer applied. A set of agreed and endorsed written guidelines would be discussed further at the Tenant Liaison Forum workshop meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 and subsequently reported back to the Forum.

Mike  
Glennon

### 10. TENANT LIAISON FORUM CONSTITUTION

A copy of the draft Constitution was circulated to the Forum and it was reported that the document contained the provision of allowing other representative groups, such as the Green Wardens and Mystery Shoppers, in the membership of the Forum. The Forum was asked whether they still wished to make this amendment to the Constitution.

This had initially been raised due to the exercises that had been undertaken by the external groups which had a direct involvement on the tenants and residents. Members felt that the previous agreement had been to allow one member from each groups to attend a Forum meeting in order to provide information on the group or scheme that they represented, engage in a Question and Answer session and raise any queries or concerns.

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Discussions took place with regard to the involvement of a number of Equality and Diversity groups and it was reported that BCH attended various meetings to raise the profile of the Tenant Liaison Forum.

The Forum agreed to consider the draft Constitution and that this be discussed further at the workshop meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

Mike  
Glennon

With regard to queries raised regarding the establishment of a Tenant and Resident Association in the South Shore area of Blackpool, the Forum was advised that a small group had recently been formed to consider a particular issue and not to discuss general housing matters. The group would therefore not be interested in being part of the Tenant Liaison Forum.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In response to a query raised regarding the development of the Tenant Liaison Forum web site, it was agreed that an update be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

Mike  
Glennon

With regard to the letting of empty properties, Mr Jefferson informed the Forum that the average time for a vacated property to be re-let was 30 days which was a significant reduction from the previous 80-day average. The reported lack of available properties was a positive indicator of more sustainable tenancies and a high level of support from BCH officers.

A member informed the Forum that advice had been submitted from Lancashire Constabulary with regard to the recent door requests for clothing from a company displaying a ribbon motif on their leaflet. The companies were fraudulent and not registered charities.

A number of issues raised concerning the grass cutting throughout the summer period were acknowledged and this was attributed to the unseasonal weather. The tenders for the grass cutting contract had been submitted and these would be evaluated in due course.

**13. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008, commencing at 10.00 a.m. Venue to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 11.40 a.m.

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:  
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