



MINUTES OF THE FULL MEETING

Held on Monday 2 April 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

Stafford & Rural Homes, Stone Room, 1 Parker Court, Dyson Way,
Staffordshire Technology Park, Beaconside, Stafford, ST18 0WP

PRESENT

Executive

Doris Potts, Chair
Shirley Wheat, Vice-Chair
Pat Wynd, Secretary
June Bradshaw, Treasurer
Dennis Williams,
Committee Member
Pam Cherry, Committee Member

Stafford & Rural Homes Officers

Anna McLauchlan, Tenant Participation
Officer
Hazel Greatholder, Sheltered Housing
Manager
Carla Rendell, Director of Stock Investment
Frank Foy, Building Supervisor

Tenants

Marion Arana, Tithe Barn Court
Derek Clark, Jubilee Court
Ellen Gifford, Hall Close
Jacqui Holmes, Meadow Court
Margaret Hughes, Blythe Lodge
John McCormick, Dobree Close
Celia Walker, Doxey House
Harry Watts, Doxey House

Margaret Shaw, Hall Close
Brenda Petrie, Hall Close
Bill Sharman, Meadow Court
Phil Sutton, Lotus Court
Jessie Thomas, Dobree Close
Mr P G Waring, Jubilee Court
Sylvia Whiteside, Meadow Court
Henry Middleton, Tithe Barn
Janet Lawton, Shakespeare Road

Apologies

Geoff Ibbs - DMT, Keith Bellingham – Care and Support, Dorothy Hopkins - Meadow
Court, Eric Woolridge - Hall Close, Brenda Shirley - Shakespeare Road, Alex Baker -
St Georges, Peter & Maureen Taunton - Marsh & Hopton Court

ITEM

ACTION

NO.

1.0

Welcome

Doris Potts, Chair, welcomed everybody to the meeting. Due to the
number of 'new faces', round the table introductions were made.

**ITEM
NO.**

ACTION

2.0 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 5 March 2007**

2.1 Attendance List

Henry Middleton was in attendance

2.2 Item 2.1.1- Marsh & Hopton Court Sheltered Scheme - Alarm

Hazel Greatholder said she did not query why the alarm had sounded and was not sure who had. Currently there is nothing further to report back from KB on this matter. PW expressed that she would like the location of the fire alarm panel at Blythe Lodge to be put outside the office so that the fire service can quickly turn alarm off on arrival.

KB

2.3 Omissions:

Jessie Thomas said 2 issues she broached on behalf of Dobree & Wolsey residents were not minuted:

- i) Exercise classes – KB had said that there may be news on these in April, JT wondered if there was any yet. KB on leave so unable to respond yet.
- ii) Would it be possible for Workmen to give times for appointments? Shirley Wheat who is part of the DMT group reported that currently there is not a system to be able to manage this.

KB

2.4

The Previous Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record. Proposed: Dennis Williams. Seconded: Pam Cherry.

3.0 **Matters Arising**

3.1 Low Water Pressure – Hall Close

Margaret Shaw stated that this remains an issue and that she feels installation of a pump is the only resolution. Later in the meeting MS raised this with Carla Rendell. CR stated she thought loss of water pressure could be as a result of all the new build properties in the vicinity of Hall Close. CR said she will chase this as SaRH are able to measure the water pressure and if it is lower than is standard they can contact the water board and they will have to make adjustments,

CR

3.2 Shakespeare Road UPDATE

Janet Lawton stated that the internal works at Shakespeare Road were still ongoing though they should have been completed by 31st March.

**ITEM
NO.**

ACTION

4.0 **Direct Maintenance Team**

Geoff Ibbs sent apologies to the meeting. A couple of issues were raised in his absence.

4.1 **Tithe Barn Court: Drying Area Gates**

Marion Arana reported that she was happy that the gates had been replaced but unfortunately they do not remain closed and she is concerned that they may get damaged in the recent winds. MA stated that she reported this to GI on 2nd March but it has not been resolved yet.

GI

4.2 **Tithe Barn Court: Residents Only Parking**

Henry Middleton stated that the above sign has been removed. HG said she would sort this via repairs.

HG

4.3 **Hall Close: Nesting Birds**

Ellen Gifford stated she has a problem with nesting birds above her flat and whilst some entry points have been blocked off not all have been.

GI

5.0 **Care & Support**

5.1 **Update**

HG informed everybody that Kathy Bee (from SP Solutions – consultants on ‘Older Persons Service Review’) has been to look at some of the sheltered schemes and seems impressed so far. Pat Wynd asked for Kathy to attend the next Alliance meeting. HG to confirm this with Kathy.

HG

6.0 **Window Cleaning Contract**

Frank Foy – SaRH Building Supervisor

6.1 FF stated that there is another year left on the window cleaning contract and currently health and safety regulations are restricting some of the work that can be done e.g. 3 storey work cannot be done without another person present. Derek (the new Atlas Window Cleaner) was given some incorrect information when he took over the contract but these issues are now being resolved. Unfortunately due to this complication, illness, requirements of Health and Safety training and the previous backlog there is still a backlog of about 2 months. FF assured the Alliance that Derek is trying his best to catch up. Any future contract will hopefully be taken out with a company with adequate equipment to reach 3rd storey and above windows.

ITEM
NO.

ACTION

6.2 Questions/Comments from members:

Doris Potts: Asked if deregulated schemes still receive the window cleaning service? HG stated they would.

Margaret Shaw: Stated Derek has not returned to complete the top storey on the 3 storey block. June Bradshaw said Oxleathers Court has not been completed either. FF to chase this up.

FF

Marion Arana: Enquired whether it would be better to cancel the current contract and get a new one with a company that has the appropriate equipment to deal with the requirements of the job? FF stated it is too late on in the contract to cancel it and unfortunately will have to wait for it to go out to tender.

Shirley Wheat: Asked that Portland Close is included on the Blythe Lodge contract? FF says they are now included.

Celia Walker, Margaret Shaw and Phil Sutton all stated that whilst it was a long time to get the windows cleaned that Derek was doing a fantastic job.

Phil Sutton: Stated that he thought the extension poles and pipes may not be long enough to get round Lotus Court. FF reassured him that all these things will be assessed when getting new contract.

Pat Wynd: Asked if a new employee could be taken on by Atlas to help Derek? FF said this was not a possibility and that he had already asked.

Dennis Williams: Said they haven't had a proper clean of communal areas at Jubilee Court for over 6 months but expressed he is no longer overly concerned by this given that they are down for refurbishment.

7.0 **Update on Sheltered Scheme Review**

Carla Rendell – SaRH Director of Stock Investment

7.1 CR reported that the Board have approved the 'Capital Investment Programme' of £14 million (excluding VAT) for the entire housing stock, this covers kitchens, bathrooms, etc and includes £2 million for improving sheltered housing. In the coming year these improvements will be focused on Oxleathers Court and Jubilee Court. These schemes were chosen as they are most likely to maintain their current purpose after the sheltered scheme review,

ITEM which is still underway.
NO.

ACTION

CR stated that the initial idea for these schemes was to improve communal rooms and decorate and do individual flats as they would a house. Once surveys were done however they showed a lot more work would need to be carried out e.g. removal of steps. There is now a design team in place who will in time be talking to residents (and the QDF) about their needs and they hope to get started on the work in late summer. CR emphasised they want to get the right solution for the right scheme and not have a standard plan e.g. is size of communal room representative of the number of tenants. Jubilee Court consultation probably 3rd May.

CR apologised saying that currently what happens to the other schemes is less certain and the review should be completed in the following months and that the review is looking at getting the right use for the right building.

7.2 Questions/Comments from members:

Margaret Shaw: Asked when will work be completed if it all needs to be done for 2010? CR responded stating that not all works will be refurbishments and that further re-designation may occur and extra care units, floating support etc are other options.

Bill Sharman: Asked if chair lifts will be installed as standard? CR said not at present. Whilst accessibility is a huge issue lifts may be another option as some stair ways will not be wide enough. CR encouraged member to bid for improvements like this through the tenants initiative scheme.

Pat Wynd: Said there was £400k per year promised to Sheltered Schemes in the offer document for adaptations, what has happened to this? CR said that hopefully by May 1st SaRH will have a designated Occupational Therapist employed by Staffordshire County Council who will be based for half the week at The Rurals and the other half at SCC (but always focusing on SaRH tenants). SaRH are sourcing minor adaptations but SBC (through the Disabled Facilities Grant) does have an obligation to fund some things so SaRH does not want to replace the DFG so some people will still have to go through this route.

Celia Walker: Says that she and the other residents of Doxey House, had been told around Christmas time that a surveyor would be looking at their scheme in April with a view to refurbishment. There are particular problems with the windows at Doxey House. CR said that she will be happy to go and talk to the residents about this and will send somebody to look at the windows.

CR

ITEM
NO.

ACTION

8.0 **Treasurer's Report**

June Bradshaw, Treasurer, reported a balance of £421.69. There were no outstanding expenses.

9.0 **Any Other Business**

9.1 Contents Insurance – AMc reiterated that there were several dates and times available for 'briefing sessions' about this scheme as per the letters the groups should have received. If anybody else wished to attend to let her know.

9.2 Partnership Agreement Launch Rollout – AMc stated that TPOs will be wanting to visit all groups to give them an overview of the partnership agreement and we will be in touch.

9.3 Trading Standards - AMc made the Alliance aware that Trading Standards are available to come and talk to groups about any particular areas of concern. If anybody is interested let AMc know and she will put you in touch with them.

9.4 Annual Subsidy Grant – PW asked when annual grants of £150 would be issued to groups. AMc emphasised that the group needs to apply for it and as it is an annual grant is usually falls after the AGM. If there are any concerns or questions about the form to apply for this subsidy then they should call the TP team.

9.5 Direct Debit Form – John McCormick stated that some tenants are concerned by the direct debit form having 53 weeks on it as opposed to 52. Whilst he has spoken to Phil McVeigh and is clear about the situation himself he thought it would be of value for this to be provided in writing. DP said she would speak to PMc and resolve this.

DP

9.6 Grass Cutting – Margaret Shaw stated that whilst the front has been cut the back has not been and she has been in touch with Dave Grace.

9.7 Visit to Home Zone, Lichfield - Pam Cherry asked when this was likely to occur. SW said that they are waiting for the warmer weather.

9.8 Llandudno Trip – JB from Oxleathers says that their group are trying to get a group together for a day trip, on June 28th. It will cost £11 and leave at 9.30am – any interested people to call June on

ITEM 01785 259678.

NO.

- 9.9 Notice of Tenancy Termination on Death of Tenant – PW is still looking into the legal requirements of family members having to give 4 weeks notice/rent in this circumstance even if the flat may be empty sooner. Marion Arana stated she had heard that a family had been told they needed to clear a flat within one week of death. HG reiterated that this was not the case and she would be interested to know who had provided this information. She also reinforced the fact that the rent is charged to the deceased persons' estate and not the family. If the tenant had no assets then the debt would die with the tenant.
- 9.10 Pilot Scheme – Oxleathers & Shakespeare – PW asked if anybody had received any consultation about this scheme discussed at the last meeting. No residents seem to have been consulted with. PW requested that consultation and information be discussed before any completed paper is put before Alliance
- 9.11 Thanks from Jubilee Court – Dennis Williams thanked HG and KB for attending the scheme after the problems they had had with the electrics.

10.0 **Date of Next Meeting**

The next Meeting will take place on Monday 14 May 2007, from 10.00-12.45* followed by a buffet in the Stone Room.

***PLEASE NOTE EXTENDED MEETING TIME**