

Leasehold Forum Meeting Minutes

Venue:	Meridian House
Date:	19 th April 2016
Time:	5.30-7.30pm
Ongo Homes Attendees:	Lesley Warburton (LW) Beckie Willing (BW) Richard Clark (RC) Caroline Twilley (CT)
Leaseholder Attendees:	10 leaseholders
Apologies:	8 leaseholders

1. Welcome, Introductions and Housekeeping

All parties present at the last meeting agreed that minutes were a true reflection of the meeting. LW welcomed everyone and went over the fire regulations and ground rules.

2. Purpose of the meeting

LW explained the temporary changes to the team with BW going on maternity leave. Stacey Hammond will be covering the maternity leave until BW's return.

3. Leasehold Information

LW explained the situation regarding the decoration to the communal entrances. She explained that it is cyclical maintenance following on from the major works that were done. Therefore, the scale of the work will not be anywhere near what it was last time. We had been pre-warned of this work and simply wanted to pass this advance notice onto our leaseholders.

She explained that it may not even fall under the legislation for consultation but as soon as we have more information we would pass that information on to everyone.

A leaseholder suggested that the work should be carried out by insurance, which as leaseholders, they already pay for.

It was pointed out that the work that is being carried out is wear and tear which is not

generally covered by any insurance.

LW then proceeded to go through the Customer Satisfaction Data. She explained the anomaly in the data over the last few years as last year we tried to simplify the questions to our own detriment. People were generalising and the questions didn't differentiate between different departments.

She explained that in 2014 10% of leaseholders responded, 2015 21% responded and this year we had a response rate of 34.6%.

LW went through the presentation slides comparing the results to previous years.

LW said that she finds it worrying that there is no trend in the repairs and maintenance. As a team, we would like to provide information on the different types of repairs and what timeframe we would be looking at to complete those works. We believe the root of some people's dissatisfaction may be that they think the job is taking too long to complete but it is actually done in the repairs team's timescales.

Someone suggested that it should be easy to give people an idea, but that isn't necessarily the case and we need to make sure the information we give out is accurate otherwise we would be setting ourselves up to fail.

A couple of leaseholders raised the point that they often don't know about a repair carried out until a year later because of how it is billed.

A couple of suggestions were made about providing a repairs report more frequently so people can address them sooner.

One suggestion was that a ticket be put through a door when a job is to be carried out. This however, is not likely to be particularly practical as we are moving away from a paper system.

The back door at Cherry Grove, was repaired but the leaseholder didn't know about it as they do not use the door. It seemed to be suggested that they therefore shouldn't have to pay, however, whether or not the door is used, it is available for use. Transparency was also questioned. However, whilst some leaseholders may not be happy with the speed in which the information is provided, it is always provided and fully transparent.

LW explained that we will work towards providing this information sooner, if possible but

that errors are put right when questioned.

In relation to Grounds Maintenance, a level of dissatisfaction remains apparent. The team are not picking up litter prior to cutting the grass and it is dangerous.

RC confirmed that this is something they should be doing and we can feed it back to them.

JT asked whether it was a case of getting what you pay for but RC confirmed that we spend a considerable sum of money per annum on grounds maintenance.

JT said that when the contractors were nominated the bosses of the contractor gave reassurances about the quality of the work before they were selected.

RC pointed out that it is a grounds maintenance contract and not a gardening contract. We would have to pay extra for that.

JT explained that people sometimes cut the grass themselves and RC explained that can also cause us problems as the contractor only cuts the grass to a certain length so if it has already been done it will not be done again.

LW concluded by stating it is very difficult contract to manage and we will feedback all of the comments. Overall, the feedback from the survey is good.

CT explained that the contractor won the contract extension due multiple factors including the social aspect.

Overall comments about the surveys seemed to be similar to the last forum meeting in that customers thought it was sale call. We did try to combat this by sending a text message ahead of surveys informing customer to expect the call.

LW then moved on to discuss the structure of the forum meeting and whether or not this should continue. It is not always an effective way of consulting with leaseholders and one option we have considered is having a Panel.

She then introduced CT to explain more about panel membership and how her team would support that.

CT explained that they currently support resident panels and leaseholders are involved in



some of them. The explained briefly about the Tenant’s Inspector Panel and the Maintenance Panel.

CT explained that she works on the side of the Resident. She is a facilitator.

She started by listing the difference aspects of Forums and Panels.

Forum	Panel
Not structured	Terms of Reference are set for minimum and maximum numbers
Terms of Reference are less rigid	Set members with a variety of leaseholders (those with communal entrances, those without, in a certain area etc)
Not set attendance	More structured meetings – forward plan etc.
Can go over the same topics	Action Plans
Can challenge issues	Consistent approach, not bringing the same issues to every meeting.
Can get involved with Community Voice	Agenda can be forward planned over the year

LH said that she finds panels too structured and not workable.

MS said that he didn’t feel any issues would be sorted, at least at an open forum everyone has the opportunity to air their views and notes are taken.

General feeling at the meeting was that a panel is too structured and a couple of comments were expressed that they don’t like the thought of a handful of people making a decision for 280 leaseholders. It was explained that this is not the case and that the panel simply helps steers and influence decision, not make then on behalf of all leaseholders.

Someone suggested that if it is a matter of consultation, consult with everyone, which is an ideal way forward, not everyone engages.

LW said that she was pleasantly surprised with the positive feedback about the forum and



we will have to consider a way forward and other options.

JT then advocated the panel and finds it useful. She also likes the fact that you can approach the panel members about certain issues as opposed to the organisation.

LW said that we perhaps have to think outside the box and look at what other organisations do.

A few people said they would like the agenda prior to the meeting. It was suggested that an agenda be provided prior to the meeting because if people know what is going to be discussed it may mean they are more likely to attend or not attend if they don't feel it is necessary.

4. Any other business

The matter of the garage rent increasing was raised.

The letter was sent in April and garage rent has increased from £5.47 to £8 per week. This is an increase of 46.5%. It has been an increase of 2.2% in previous years.

Comments were that we would lose the rentals and it was confirmed that there has been a high return rate since the rent increased.

CT said that she believed it was a board decision and it is has brought it in line with what other Housing Associations are charging.

LW confirmed that she would do more digging and put the answer in the minutes for the meeting.

The letter was signed off by Steve Hepworth. The question was raised as to whether the matter was brought up at Community Voice. CT confirmed she would check.

LW thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Action Points

1. Check the reasoning behind the garage rent increase.

The decision was made by the board to bring the garage rent rates in line with what other Housing Associations and organisations charge.