



Community Voice
16th June 2020 via Microsoft Teams
Meeting Minutes

Present

Janine Garner (Chair)
Keith Riley (Vice Chair)
Amanda Caladine (acting Secretary)
Jill Milner (Treasurer)
Tony Sanderson
Kath Tuck
Christine Osimbo
Alan Gouldthorpe
Ian Bulleyment
Greg Carter
Keith Lumbers
Tim Mills
Ryan North
Steve Hepworth (Ongo)
Pete Stones (Ongo)
Kevin Hornsby (Ongo)
Karen Cowan (Ongo)
Wendy Wolfe (Ongo)
Clair Coyle (Ongo)
Ollie Mortimer (Ongo)
Neil Keay (Ongo)
John Lawrence (Ongo)

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Housekeeping**

Janine (Chair) welcomed CV members and staff to the meeting. Janine explained the process for asking questions while using the Microsoft Teams facility.

Apologies received from:

Pam Slack, Mo & Ron Weller, Avril Bairstow, Jane Ellerby, Alan Dinnadge, Jim Newcombe and Simon Falshaw.

Discussion

2. **Executive update from Kevin Hornsby**

Kevin started with the empty homes update. Since the newsletter was sent to CV members, there has been a big turnaround and void properties are down to the lowest figure in the last twelve weeks to 139 properties, with a previous high of 166, which signifies a downward trend. Terminations of property are still coming

in at 15-20 which is back to normal, more business as usual, using more digital methods to sign people up for homes. This is great news.

Safe and well calls previously were at just under 2500 per fortnight, surveys have been done to identify if people do still require the service and as a result from this Kevin believes the number will fall by 50% in the next few weeks.

The food parcels have been a very positive service over the last 10-12 weeks using the Communities fund.

After surveys and calls to see if people are shielding or still require the food parcels, the number of food parcels now being distributed per week is down from 600 to 250, this is a huge reduction. Communities have applied for a further 100k from Barclays to continue the service and introduce counselling for our vulnerable tenants and people most at risk of loneliness.

Members asked about abuse of the food parcels as they have seen misuse by tenants. Kevin said that the introduction of further checks should help with that.

Repairs Recovery Plan –Neil Keay

Neil advised that the joiners are back to work on suspended tasks and as of the 9th July they should be back to work on normal jobs. The bricklayers are expecting to be in the same position.

58 properties were made ready to let out of 59 that came in this month which is well in front of where they expected to be.

Contractors will be required to help get on top of the expected rise in repairs.

Decision

3. Anti-Social Behaviour Policy from Claire Coyle

Claire explained the report around the changes to the policy that members have received in their newsletter from Customer Engagement.

Members asked about mediation. Claire explained that this is a really important point for Ongo and we would ask that where possible, people try and talk to the persons they are having problems with before making a formal complaint. Ongo understands that this is not a failsafe option and that not everyone feels they can approach the people they are having problems with, and with Covid 19 now being in the mix, talking with people is even more complicated.

This was a decision item. A vote was taken and passed unanimously to change the policy with 2 proxy votes being received by members unable to attend.

4. Complaints Update from John Lawrence

John ran through the report, acknowledging that the complaints stats and figures are not where Ongo would like them to be. There is a slight difference in figures as a result of errors when recording complaint outcomes.

Members asked what will be done going forward about the year on year increase and the handling of complaints. John accepted that Ongo are not where they would like to be or should be with complaints. Various new ways of working and reporting are in place, more training for staff and contractors was ongoing, firming up arrangements. The results at this point were not coming through as significantly as Ongo had hoped and this is an ongoing situation that John, Neil and the whole team will continue to improve on, they are confident that this will be sorted. John agreed to speak with Becky about arranging a Complaints Panel meeting which tenants sit on (has not been able to meet due to Covid 19).

Action: update to be given about the Complaints Panel at the next meeting.

Additional reports from John Lawrence

John had sent two additional reports to CV members about future arrangements for coming out of Lockdown, he then explained the details from the reports:

Re-ordering non-essential repairs

We have got to the point now where people by the end of June can start to re book non-essential repairs. There is anticipated to be a huge backlog with having done emergency only repairs since Lockdown began.

To help with this back log and make further use of Ongo's digital platform, Ongo would like to promote the use of the My Home app and limit only non-essential repairs to being booked through the app for a period of 3 weeks. This would help increase the number of people registering for the My Home app, various communications have been sent out.

The app has also had some issues with reporting and the team want to re-launch the app and be confident that it fully works. The Landlord strategy target is to get 75% of people accessing self-service through My Home, currently only 25% of an estimated 80% of people who have access to the app are reporting digitally, the current preferred method is by telephone.

Members were very worried about the fact that only 4515 customers were currently signed up for the app which is less than 44% of our households, this would lead to people being 'left behind'. It also raised questions about the accessibility law under the Equalities Act, which Steve was confident the unchanged proposal would not be a breach. Cost was also an issue, not everyone has access to the internet, or mobiles etc. and there are people with disabilities who cannot use the internet.

John shared the members concerns but hoped that not giving people any other option would get more people to use the app.

Members were still not happy with the proposal and Kevin gave members a compromise that means Ongo will continue to ask all tenants/customers to use the My Home app when they phone, but it would be more of a triage, this meant where the customer/tenant was not open to using the app then telephone repairs

would still be taken. Members felt this was a good middle ground and were happy with the proposal.

Shielding Applicants who are unable to move

We are catching up on the voids and all lets now, not just critical lets. We currently have 5 people who are shielding that have been made and accepted an offer on a property, but they are unable to move at the moment. We also have a further 5 people in a similar situation and those properties are not ready to let but will be ready any day now.

The proposal is not to keep the properties empty as the situation for shielding people could be indefinite. Ongo propose to ask if those people are able to move by the end of June 2020, but if they are not in a position to do so the offer is withdrawn. They would be informed that their details would be kept on a separate list and do not have to bid further and as a property comes available close to the one they took when offered, Ongo will prioritise them for that property. Ongo will do all they can to enable these people to get properties when they are no longer shielding. Specialist properties would not be withdrawn from offer.

Members agreed that the properties should be let for financial reasons and were happy with the proposal.

Information

Due to time restrictions Karen and Wendy were happy to skip forward to any other business, as their items were comprehensively written in the newsletter and were for information. No questions were raised about either item and Wendy reminded members that they can email Customer engagement if they have any questions. There was positive news about engaging under 30's age group.

Action: update on new volunteers and groups to be provided at the next meeting.

Wendy reminded members that when they are sent information out asking for comments, not just for CV meetings but other groups, they acknowledge this and send a response. This will save Customer Engagement from having to send reminders.

Wendy also confirmed that Hayley (CE Officer) is currently helping to do an audit on what equipment / devices CV members have access to. We will then look into the possibility of loan equipment for those most in need.

Action: update on progress to be shared at a future meeting.

5. Any Other Business

Janine reminded members that the CV Facebook page is for CV business only and that all personal information should be posted on each member's personal timeline.

If anyone has any Community Voice business please post it on our CV forum as we would encourage members to use this more, especially since we are unable to meet in person.

New members were invited to join the FB Group.

Janine then closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and input. The meeting had been a successful and we look forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting which will take place on **14th July 2020**, via Microsoft Teams at 1.30pm. Paperwork will be sent out prior to the next meeting to all CV members and the email will include the link to join the meeting.

Community Voice Officers Contact details:

Janine Garner (Chair) - (01724) 330589 - Mobile: (07707) 659289
E-mail: Janinemee@hotmail.co.uk.

Keith Riley (Vice Chair) – Mobile: 07599104532
Email: keith13riley@hotmail.co.uk

Amanda Caladine (Acting Secretary) – Mobile: 07395816315
E-mail: aj.sc@hotmail.co.uk

Jill Milner (Treasurer) - Mobile: 07746124253
E-mail: jillmilner6@hotmail.com