



**Community Voice Meeting**  
**via Microsoft Teams - Minutes 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Time:** 1:30pm to 4pm

**Chair:** Wendy Wolfe

**Present:**

Keith Riley (Vice Chair)  
Jill Milner (Treasurer)  
Keith Lumbers  
Jane Ellerby  
Tim Mills  
Ian Bulleyment  
Christine Osimbo  
Alan Dinnadge  
Tony Sanderson  
Greg Carter  
Sue Nicholson (Observer)  
Barry Morley (Observer)  
Peter Dennington (Observer)  
Tommy-Li Sheridan (Observer)  
Steve Hepworth (Ongo)  
Kevin Hornsby (Ongo)  
Matt Kelly (Ongo)  
Russ Edwards (Ongo)  
Martin Anderton (Ongo)  
Ryan Heseltine (Ongo)  
Karen Cowan (Ongo)  
Wendy Wolfe (Ongo)  
Rachael Haynes (CE Assistant)

**1. Welcome, Apologies & Introductions**

Wendy welcomed everyone to the meeting and ran through the apologies received from Avril Bairstow, Alan Gouldthorpe, Colin Cranidge, and Richard Leach. Wendy then explained the use of Microsoft Teams and advised there were four new members who were observing the meeting. Introductions were given for the benefit of the new members.

Previous minutes were sent out from the meeting in March, and these were approved as a true record. The actions from these included: diaries sent out to members, CV workshop

held on 7th April and Karen will provide the update from this, minutes will also be sent out to members once completed.

Karen provided an update from the workshop, which had taken place last week to go through the recommendations from the Tpas report. The main areas were to develop training for members and to amend both the Code of Conduct and the Constitution. Once the documents have been revised, the group will need to give formal approval. Karen asked for any questions on the above information. There were no questions.

## **2. Board Observers**

Wendy advised the next Group Common Board meeting is due to take place on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May at 2:30pm via Microsoft Teams, if any members of the group wanted to observe (up to five members), to be asked to notify Customer Engagement.

## **3. Treasurers Report – Jill Milner**

Jill advised that the account is now with Virgin Money and has received the last bank statement for March. This shows the balance of £2,673.41 and from this there are some payments for taxi invoices due to be taken out.

The accounts are now with finance for the annual check and Jill advised that if finance had any queries with the account, she was happy for them to contact her directly.

**ACTION:** Jill to send latest statement to Ongo House for auditing purposes.

## **Decision**

## **4. Income Policy – Matt Kelly**

Matt explained that the new policy is a revised version and is largely the same as the previous one. He provided an update on the current performance, explaining that currently, rent arrears owed are around £550,000, which is down from over £1,000,000. Less than 5% of tenants are in arrears of over £500.

A member asked if we used bailiffs to collect arrears. Matt explained that in regards to arrears from people who are no longer a tenant and have not made contact, we would arrange a debt collector to get in touch with them. In regards to current tenants, we would not use debt collectors, as an income officer would arrange with them.

A member asked if the policy document could be altered to explain the difference between rent in advance and rent in front. Matt advised this document would not necessarily be shown to tenants and is used more internally by staff, the income officers would clarify this direct with individual tenants. It was confirmed that there is reference made to this in the policy under point 4.3.

**Decision** - Members approved the Income policy.

## **5. Lettable Standard – Russ Edwards**

Russ briefly explained what the Lettable Standard is for the benefit of the new members and gave some examples of the positive changes Ongo are making for new tenants. The new standard is more detailed and contains additional information.

A member asked why we remove carpets from void properties. Russ advised that he could not comment on the individual repair query but before the previous tenant leaves, a lettings officer will check the condition of the carpets and advise if they are in a condition that could be left in the property. On some occasions carpets can look in good condition, however, there may be other reasons for removing them, e.g. infestation.

The proposal to review the standard came from a full review completed by the Resident Scrutiny Panel.

A member asked if Ongo is notified when there is a fire in a property. Russ confirmed yes and that an area manager would then go out to help the tenant and check the property.

A member paid complimented the condition of the property she recently moved into and said she was impressed with the standard.

**Decision** - Members approved the new Lettable Standard.

Steve referred to social media comments made about a repair issue, explaining it may be that staff have not seen these posts, but that Ongo were aware of the repair and it has been dealt with.

**ACTION:** Steve will ask the PR team to add the Isle of Axholme Group Facebook page, so they can monitor comments and get involved with these kind of conversations.

## 6. **Performance Information – Karen Cowan**

Information was sent out with the paperwork for the meeting and an additional appendix by e-mail to the group this morning.

Karen explained that CV members already receive regular updates on performance and wanted to look at publishing performance information for all tenants to access. The new Social Housing White Paper includes a requirement for organisations to be more open with tenants regarding performance and regular updates. Karen asked for suggestions from the group on what they thought tenants would be interested in, asking for input from the new members. Karen went through some areas that she felt could be included in the Key News Magazine and on the Ongo website. Members were also asked to consider if they knew nothing about Ongo, what information they would like to know.

- Complaints – Satisfaction levels with how complaints have been handled. Members agreed this was important to share, together with numbers / percentages.
- Customer Service – What would be important to share regarding customer service? We internally monitor the percentage of digital contacts, is this relevant to tenants at large? Members agreed this was not relevant as it is an internal target measure but instead this should be available for CV. They felt that tenants would rather know the figures around the amount of contacts handled right first time by customer services.

- Balanced Score Card (Support Services) – Members agreed it was not important to routinely provide these figures to the wider tenants but that the figures are of interest to CV.
- Income Management – Members agreed the need to share the amount of rent arrears and percentage of arrears with tenants at large. Currently rent arrears are below 2%. This type of information in comparison to other housing providers rent arrears should be shared. Steve advised most tenants pay their rent in full and on time and that it is important to recognise the positives. Currently we are in the top quartile when compared to other housing associations, meaning we have one of the lowest levels of arrears. Members felt it was important for tenants to see how we perform on collecting rents. **ACTION:** Karen to ensure performance includes financial figures.
- Tenancy Management – Should we provide performance information around how we deal with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)? The group agreed this was important to share. They didn't however feel the Tenancy First figures were relevant to share with the wider tenants, but this is of interest to CV.
- Empty Homes – Ongo could share figures around how long it takes to turnaround a property, the timescale would be from when Ongo receive the keys back from the previous tenant, to when the property is ready to let, also, if the work is completed within the target timescales. Members agreed with this and suggested providing a breakdown to explain the timescales.
- Satisfaction Levels with the Condition of their New Home – The group agreed that it was important to share this information.
- Customer Satisfaction with the Repairs Service – The group agreed it was important to provide satisfaction level and to include percentage of work completed within different target timescales.
- Major Works – The group agreed not to share this information with wider tenants but for this to be available to CV.
- Neighbourhood Services – The group agreed this was not something that all tenants would be interested in but that this was of interest to CV.
- Ongo Communities – Targets for employment not to be shared with the wider tenant base but is something that CV is interested in.
- Customer Engagement – information is available on the percentage of engagement with younger tenants and the percentage of tenants who feel Ongo listens to them and acts upon their views. The group advised the percentage of younger tenants involved was not relevant to share with the wider tenants, although CV requires this, but that it is important to share the customer satisfaction figures regarding Ongo listening to their views and acting upon them.
- Health & Safety – Would the wider tenants be interested in figures relating to health & safety indicators such as the percentage of properties with a valid gas safety certificate, and percentage of properties with an up to date electrical check? The group felt health and safety data was vitally important and agreed this should be shared, they also asked for fire safety information to be included too.

A member asked if Ongo would be consulting with the wider tenants to ask what information they are interested in. Karen advised the agreed performance information would now be shared on the public website and in Key News for all tenants to view, and that we would ask for their opinions as to whether this is the right information for them, and if not, what is missing, and or, what should be dropped.

A member stated that a tradesperson had attended his property to do his gas safety check with no prior warning. **ACTION:** Russ advised he would speak to the contractors.

**7. Self-assessment against TPAS Engagement Pyramid – Karen Cowan**

Karen explained that the document challenges organisations to self-assess against a template of how tenants can be involved. She referred to the completed self-assessment that had been sent out to CV as part of the meeting pack, and asked members to state whether they agreed with the contents of the self-assessment or whether they felt there were any inaccuracies (e.g. over egging the situation), or whether there was further evidence that could be added.

**8.**

A member suggested the only thing to improve the document in their opinion would be to include information around the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion group (EDI). Karen agreed to add this and asked for the group's approval on the document.

**Decision** – Members agreed the document.

Karen informed the group she will be sending out the tenant involvement and empowerment review for feedback.

**BREAK**

**9. Executive Update (Verbal) – Kevin Hornsby**

Kevin gave an update on operational information:

- Ongo teams continue to work remotely where possible and only visit properties where needed.
- Operationally, Ongo have had a strong year and achieved our income collection target, by over £50,000.
- In regards to empty homes, the numbers are down from 166 at the highest point, to 91 at year-end. This includes 25 direct allocations to homeless households working in partnership with North Lincolnshire Council. He advised Ongo are also working on a homeless pilot from January and this is likely to last for 12 months.
- Ongo's digital sign up is now live and working really well.

Kevin then ran through the Ongo roadmap of services:

- The Arc Café is now open for takeaways and eating outside. The team are continuing with the takeaway service at the Viking centre in Barton.
- Carrying out some appointments from Cole Street.
- We will soon be communicating to customers within retirement living, to advise that we will be re-opening scheme lounges from June, and hope to allow activities again from July. The re-opening is dependent on Government advice and restrictions.

- The food parcels project is now complete with 15,000 parcels issued and 37,000 wellbeing calls made by Ongo to tenants.
- Almost completed the Safer Streets project and 650k home office funding invested in the Westcliff area, new doors and entry systems, bike pods, fencing and barriers/chicanes at the end of each close to limit motor cycles and ASB.
- Transforming The Way We Work (TTWWW) – change initiative will see us making more decisions from the centre through a customer triage as well as bringing our housing and support teams together. Team already working in a patchless way with lots of success. Already implemented a customer resolutions team to improve our approach to complaints and feedback. Will also soon be moving towards real time feedback that will replace our outbound calling.

Kevin asked if there were any questions.

A member asked if the homeless project properties were temporary or permanent accommodation. Kevin advised initially they would be rented out on a 12-month licence, with the view to moving them into assured tenancies. This will break down barriers to employment that homelessness causes, and allow them chance to build their life up.

A member advised she had seen the new fencing installed in Westcliff and that it looked great and appreciated that it had incorporated some of the local street names into the fencing.

A member raised a query over digital surveys, leaving people behind who couldn't use digital methods. Kevin advised Ryan could expand on this later in the meeting but that as long as the customer can send and receive a text message, they can respond to the digital surveys. In addition, a customer can phone Ongo and provide feedback.

A member asked how Ongo would police the rule of six in the communal lounges in retirement schemes. Kevin explained that this rule might be lifted by the time the lounges are re-opened. However, if the rule were in place then we would expect tenants to follow government guidelines and signage within the lounge.

#### **10. Customer Satisfaction Data – Ryan Heseltine**

Ryan explained to members about the use of digital methodology to gather customer satisfaction feedback and asked for comments or questions. A member mentioned his only concern was the possibility of leaving people behind, but that Kevin had cleared this up previously, and was happy with the response. Wendy asked for any other comments, no further comments made.

#### **11. Customer Engagement Update – Wendy Wolfe**

CV Constitution & Volunteers Code of Conduct - Following recommendations made by Tpas and the suggestions at the CV workshop, these documents will be revised and additional information included. Both documents will be sent out to members to read through prior to the workshop that is taking place on **Monday 19th April at 1.30pm**. The invite link will be sent out with the documents in the next couple of days. Final approval to be given at the June CV meeting.

**Training Schedule** - Wendy advised she would send out the CV training schedule to members, some dates may change or be added in the future but members will be kept informed. The schedule includes different topics such as E&D – unconscious Bias training and Social Housing White Paper training by Tpas. The first session is E&D, taking place on **26th April at 1:30pm-4.00pm**. Please register your names with Customer Engagement, the team can then send the links out for joining each session.

**EDI group** – Karen provided an update on the last meeting for the group and explained the group is going through the process to become Leaders in Diversity accredited again. An EDI action plan is being agreed.

**Plain Language Panel** - This meeting was held to discuss the initial content planner for the next printed edition of Key News due to be sent out at the end of May and to also go through the results from the satisfaction surveys from the last two digital editions. The recent survey responses show that, on average, over 95% of survey respondents (157 people completed each of the last two surveys) are either very satisfied or satisfied with Key News. Suggestions for future editions include information on work being done to invest in existing homes, examples of partnership working to tackle issues in communities and covering a wider range of areas that we represent. In addition, to show examples of when things have not gone right and what we are doing to make improvements.

**Resident Association Networking Forum** – This was the first virtual meeting held involving reps from the community groups they discussed how they had been supporting their communities during lockdown, sharing the difficulties they had had and successes too. They also shared ideas on what they want to achieve once restrictions are lifted, and events can take place in the communities.

**Tenant Inspectors & Property Services Panel** - A joint meeting took place held for members to discuss the cleaning standards for the different schemes. This feedback provided input on the review of the cleaning standards. All members agreed that the cleaning standards were a lot better now under the Neighbourhood Services team, than previously when the contract was outsourced. It was highlighted that the cleaning contract specification, in particular how many hours a cleaner is assigned to a certain scheme, needed updating. Following this, plans are being made to consult with residents in the individual retirement schemes to get their views on the cleaning standards at their schemes.

**Social Media Promotion** – Customer Engagement have started promotions each month, via Facebook & twitter, this includes promoting the CE handbook, ‘Involved with Ongo’ postcard and video’s from some volunteers. Wendy advised the next one is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> April and would like members help with promoting this.

**Easter Competition** – Shortlisting completed with final judging taking place later this week.

**Digital Experience Group** - This a new group who will be working with Chloe from IT and the next meeting will approve the Terms of Reference (TOR). Currently five members have

expressed interest in joining the group, if anyone from CV is interested who hasn't already registered, please let Customer Engagement know. **The meeting will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> May at 1.30pm**, the link for the meeting will be sent to those who are interested.

**Leaseholders** – The first leaseholder newsletter has been completed and sent to out. This was suggested following a survey to leaseholders, asking how they would like to be kept informed.

**Carbon Reduction workshop** – to help Ongo move forward in our approach to carbon reduction and develop future strategies, we are holding a workshop to look at how we can reduce carbon consumption. This workshop is open to CV members, tenant inspectors and other volunteers who want to take part. **This workshop is due to take place on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April at 1.00pm**, we would like members who are interested to contact Customer Engagement. The link to join the meeting and a draft plan will be sent out to members.

In addition to this, we are developing a new project for:

**Environmental Champions:** Customer Engagement are now in the process of organising information to help promote champions and want to encourage our volunteers to get involved. The champions will have a checklist to use when out in their local neighbourhoods and will work in partnership with North Lincolnshire Council for litter picking to provide the equipment and collection of waste. Training will be provided to individuals who want to get involved and risk assessments in place.

**12. Any Other Business – Open to all members**

Wendy reminded members that the link for the Code of Conduct workshop to join the meeting and the paperwork would be sent out. It is due to take place on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April at 1:30pm.

**13. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next CV meeting will take place on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May at 1.30pm** via Microsoft Teams, the link and paperwork will be sent out nearer the time.

**14. Action Plan**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Update</b>
1.	Arrangements will be made for the Treasurer to send the latest bank statement to Ongo House.	Jill (Treasurer)	The bank statement has been received and passed onto finance.
2.	PR to join the Isle of Axholme Facebook group, so they can monitor future comments.	Steve Hepworth	Information shared with PR to be involved in this Facebook group.

3.	Figures against the percentages to be included for rent arrear in performance reports.	Karen Cowan	Future reports on rent arrears for tenants at large will include financial figures.
4	Workshop dates and training schedule to be shared with CV members. Members to notify Customer Engagement to confirm attendance.	Wendy Wolfe	Schedule produced and sent out to members.