

## Community Voice Meeting Minutes

### The Arc and Microsoft Teams



**Date:** Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August 2023

**Time:** 9.30am to 12.30pm

**Chair:** Tim Mills

**Present:** Tim Mills (Chair) Jill Milner (Vice-Chair) Dawn Johnson (Treasurer) Keith Lumbers, Stewart Pearson, Jim Newcombe, Tracey Bain, Anita James, Ryan North, Michelle Hodgson, Tami Reeve, Dawn Reed, Sue Whitelock, Judith Tomlinson, Jeanette Ellis. Tina Omari (teams in part)

#### **1. Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping**

Tim welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the housekeeping. Apologies had been received from Harry Jackson, Ian Bullement, Ron Weller, Tony Sanderson, Susan Hickling, Alexander Buckley, John Parsons, Keith Riley.

Members were reminded about the enquiry log and to write down any issues that have previously been reported but hadn't received an update. Those attending via Teams were encouraged to email these directly to Customer Engagement (CE).

#### **2. Chairs Report – Tim Mills**

A copy of the chairs report is attached to the minutes.

#### **3. Treasurers report -Dawn Johnson**

The accounts when submitted to the finance team at Ongo were checked and all in order. The balance in the Community voice bank account stands at £2458.29 with petty cash of £4.00. The letter from the finance team is available from the treasurer if anyone would like to see it.

#### **4. Election of Officers**

Wendy thanked the officers for their commitment and support given to the group over the past year and announced the nominations for the election of officers as follows:

Chair: Tim Mills Proposed & seconded - Tracey Bain & Keith Lumbers  
Vice Chair: Jill Milner Proposed & seconded - Judith Tomlinson & Anita James  
Treasurer: Dawn Johnson Proposed & seconded - Tami Reeve & Stewart Pearson

### AGM CLOSED

#### **1. Minutes and actions of Previous Meeting**

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes were a true and accurate record.

#### **2. Board Observers -Tim Mills**

The next board meeting is to be held on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2pm – 5pm. Three CV members can attend, please notify CE if you are interested. Melvyn mentioned that the board always welcome members from CV at their meetings. Dawn and Stewart mentioned that they are interested in attending the next meeting.

## **Decision Items**

### **3. RSP Report – Tim Mills**

Tim provided some background for the review the scrutiny panel have completed on ASB and communication to customers and went through the recommendations within the report.

An acknowledgment will be sent to the complainant within 48 hours, this ensures greater tenant satisfaction and less calls to the customer contact centre. Each case has an agreed timescale, e.g., monthly, to advise of any decisions taking place or whether this case has been moved on to another department/police/social services etc. Also identifying costings for each case so that Ongo can provide value for money and provide a baseline for continued tenant satisfaction and benchmarking for future cases, we will know how much, on average, 1 ASB case costs. Kevin explained that Ongo also need to redefine what is Ongo's responsibility and what isn't, in what circumstances does it fall under the police's remit, this needs to be made clear during the first point of contact to avoid unrealistic expectations. A member asked if the costings would take into account any works that need to take place, and this was confirmed it would be just staff time.

Once recommendations have been accepted, an action plan is produced, and updates provided to RSP a year after they have been implemented. Tim asked for approval on the report, and this was given by the group.

### **4. Community Voice Constitution – Karen Cowan**

Karen explained the recommendations received from Tpas highlighted that the constitution didn't include any reference to CV having devolved decision making and some other points to consider ensuring the document is still fit for purpose. Karen proposed two additions, under 3.2 Role, 4. Aims and objections, and asked members for their feedback.

A member asked, "when are we a tenant and when are we a customer?" A good discussion was had by the group and staff about this. Ongo considers everyone living in the household/someone that we provide a service to a "customer" as they have valid opinions about their home and the community they are living in, although there may only be one person named on the tenancy. Also, if you are not living in an Ongo property but have issues caused by Ongo tenants through ASB cases you are going to be affected and therefore have a right to have your views heard. Non tenants can be given the opportunity to sit on community voice (anyone interested would be considered) if most of the group are tenants, e.g., a homeowner of a house paying a service charge, a private tenant living on an Ongo estate. To sum up a tenant has to be named on the tenancy agreement but a customer is anyone who receives a service from Ongo. These "customers" however would not have a vote if this was what was involved. Ongo always use the term customer in a positive way. Members gave approval to the changes in the document.

### **5. Customer Engagement Framework – Karen Cowan**

Karen explained following the Tpas recommendations it highlighted some areas that required the wording to be strengthened to make it clearer, these have been included in the document.

Karen informed members that following the TPAS Exemplar accreditation Customer Engagement have received invitations from several large organisations that want to talk to Ongo with reference to the work they are doing to engage our tenants and customers, it's been noted that Ongo are in the top bracket for customer engagement. A member asked if we should charge consultancy fees for this and the response was no, currently its more about networking and getting the word out there of what Ongo's customer engagement team and the groups that we work with are achieving, e.g., promoting and influencing diverse representation, reaching a wider audience, encourage digital feedback and champion Ongo's achievements.

Karen asked members for approval to the changes, and this was given by members.

### **Discussion Items**

#### **6. Renters Reform Bill (Key changes) Presentation – Claire Coyle**

Claire gave a presentation to members on the changes to the reform bill, which has implications for social landlords. Copies of the presentation are included with the minutes. The proposals in relation to the changes are included in the presentation and the bill is going through parliament, then notice will be given for the bill to come into force. Claire explained that Ongo will have 6 months' notice and then 12 months to implement these changes.

A member asked if Ongo still monitor new tenancies and can these be kept with the relevant tenancy officer. Claire explained there won't be a 12-month short term tenancy. Claire advised that new starter tenancies are very complex administratively to monitor so the changes are positive. There will still be support available if required for vulnerable tenants beginning their journey with Ongo. For any evictions these will still require a full investigation which has its own procedures.

Individuals mentioned not being allowed to fit handrails when they are on a 12-month tenancy. **ACTION:** It was agreed to check with Richard Clarke about removing permissions for alterations / grab rails to be fitted within first year. Also to check with Jane Crookes if mutual exchanges could go ahead within a year.

It was noted that this will enable people to feel more comfortable in their new home without the "big brother" element of being scrutinised for a year.

A member of the group asked what ability Ongo will have for taking a tenant to court for whatever reason. Claire advised that Ongo could use "Mandatory grounds" e.g., serious crimes which means that the court will not contest these. Overall, the bill should be a positive step forwards, the private ombudsman will raise the bar for private landlords, however they will need to be registered, there may be an increase in rogue landlords that continue to rent working under the radar, some private landlords may back out and sell their properties rather than continue to rent them. This could result in an increase for more social housing.

#### **7. Performance Reports – Karen**

Karen talked through the figures. A member noted that the turnover on properties is quite high, do we have any data for this? Claire advised that we have just started doing exit surveys to find out why a tenancy is being ended. Due to the financial crisis, there are more people than normal having to end their tenancy due to affordability and therefore moving in with family.

A member pointed out that the Customer Engagement long trend against young person's figures need changing. **ACTION:** refer to performance team for amendment.

A member referred to properties they have put bids on 3 months ago and these haven't been let and have come back on the list and wasn't sure why.

A member gave an example of 11 people queuing to view a bungalow, Kevin explained the process for open house viewings which take place and can involve a few people. These normally happen for the hard to let properties. A suggestion was made to reduce the number of people attending a viewing and prioritise these, e.g., people with a disability (check the list interested).

Karen asked members for feedback on performance and any items which aren't mandatory if they wanted this keeping. The Chair referred to employment support not always being relevant, however other members wanted this leaving on.

### **8. Executive Update – Kevin**

Kevin said that he has been involved in conducting open house viewings, inviting the top few people on the list to see if the property is what they want/need as Ongo are seeing a massive increase in people not attending or refusing properties for whatever reasons. This saves staff time and resources cutting out time wasters. It was noted that a member had seen lots of people waiting outside a property for such a viewing and that it did not look great to observers. The pros and cons of having open viewings with large numbers of people were debated.

### **Information Items:**

#### **9. Customer Engagement Activity update (verbal) – tenant reps**

Resident Scrutiny Panel – the report was approved earlier in the meeting and the panel will be meeting in September to agree on their next review.

Tpas Conference - a member who attended the TPAS conference provided an update saying that it was a fantastic experience, they attended 4 workshops and noted that Ongo are ahead of the sector in so many of the subjects that were discussed. Nationally it highlighted that Ongo are a step further along other organisations in the sector.

A member mentioned they had had a contractor turn up to their property on a Saturday and asked if Ongo are paying extra for this service? Kevin advised that this is probably due to the high demand of work they are undertaking and having to catch up, also this could be due to the weather if they are returning to finish a job up.

Kevin advised that we now have a complaint learning process in place to embed the learning from the themes that occur so that Ongo don't repeat the same mistakes.

#### **10. CE update – Wendy**

Wendy ran through the information that members had received in their packs. There will be consultation on the new consumer standards to be arranged. A member noted that the information showed a great figure for engagement with the under 30's.

**ACTION** – Include training schedule when sharing minutes.

#### **11. Any Other Business**

The vice chair explained that December 13<sup>th</sup> has been booked at Ashby Decoy Golf Club for the Christmas meeting, and the details include: 9.30am arrival, meeting to start at 10.00am followed by a buffet lunch at 12.30pm. Names for attending will be taken at the next meeting.

CCTV policy - a member raised that Ongo do not have a CCTV policy (we have guidelines to follow), they said that it is vital that tenants feel safe in their own homes and brought up that some people have been advised to take down their ring doorbells and any CCTV (including pet cams or rotating camera's) they may have and some have been threatened with court action if they don't comply. This could be quite disturbing for some tenants. It was agreed that this needs to be looked at and will be covered by the tenancy team.

**ACTION:** Send out the guidance that we currently use for members of the group to read.

#### **12. Reflection on meeting.**

The chair asked for feedback on the meeting, Karen felt there was more time to discuss some points during the meeting and thought it was an idea to think about that for future meetings. The general opinion was that it was a very good meeting with more time to discuss things.

Tim thanked everyone for voting for the officers but queried why no one else had put forward nominations, a couple of people said they had only been with the group a short time so didn't feel they knew enough to become an officer. It was advised that if anyone wanted extra training this could be arranged. A member said that as the acting treasurer had only been in post for less than a year, they felt it was better to keep the same person for continuity. A member said that although they had been a secretary in previous roles, they would find it daunting to know what information should be included in the minutes. Staff advised that support / help can be offered and that the minutes are always checked thoroughly before being sent out, so the responsibility doesn't fall with just one person.

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

Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup> 10.30am to 1pm at the Arc.

#### **14. Action Plan**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Update</b>
1.	Renters Reform Bill (Key changes) - can we remove now the need to seek permission for alterations within 12	Richard Clark	

	months for adaptations, e.g., grab rails?		
2.	Renters Reform Bill (Key changes) – check does this mean mutual exchanges will be able to go ahead within the first year?	Jane Crookes	
3.	Change long term trends for CE performance on young person’s figures.	Performance team / CE - Bev	
4.	Include the updated training schedule with minutes.	Customer Engagement / Bev	
5.	CCTV guidance to be shared with members.	Customer Engagement/ Bev	
6.	Copy of Claires presentation to be sent out with the minutes.	Customer Engagement / Bev	
7.	December Christmas lunch, names for attending to be recorded.	CV Officers	