

COMMUNITY VOICE
Meeting Minutes 18th April 2024



Present:

CV Members: Jill Milner (Vice-Chair), Tracey Bain (acting Secretary), Jim Newcombe, Anita James, Keith Lumbers, Kevin Yearnshire, Tami Reeve, Eddie Stringer, Paul Pearson, Judith Tomlinson, Alan Dinnadge (observer) Tima Obo Omari (teams)

Ongo Staff: Kevin Hornsby, Neil Keay, Wendy Wolfe, Karen Cowan, Bev Miller, Steve Hepworth, Jo Sugden, Erica Sanderson.

Apologies: Dawn Johnson, Tim Mills, Matthew Waddingham, Ryan North, Harry Jackson, Sue Whitelock, Tony Sanderson, Paul Smith, Ron Weller, Ian Bullyment, Tracey Borill, Dawne Reed

1. Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping

The vice chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and brief introductions were given. It was explained that there was no planned fire drill, but the fire exits were pointed out. She also reminded members to not bring up personal issues and to raise their hand if they have a point or question to raise during the meeting.

2. Minutes & Actions of Previous Meeting

Tami and Eddie proposed and seconded approval for the minutes from the last meeting. Wendy updated the actions from the last minutes as follows:

- CV reports to contain reference to a particular consumer standard to be included in reports for future meetings
- Ongo are building up a partnership with Scunthorpe United and will work together with them to include children with additional needs
- The ALLPAY payment system has been checked and no changes have been made
- It was confirmed that smoke alarms that are battery powered can be removed if there is one on each floor that is working

3. Treasurers Report – Wendy Wolfe

Wendy has booked the Tpas conference and details have been emailed to the treasurer. Arrangements are being made for the accounts to be submitted to the finance team for their annual check.

4. Board Observers – Vice Chair

Next Board meeting at Ongo House Board Room or via Microsoft Teams is taking place on 15th May 2024 at, 2.00pm. Three CV members can attend, names interested to notify customer engagement.

Decision Items

5. RSP report (damp & mould) – Karen Cowan

The scrutiny panel have completed their latest investigating on damp and mould, a list of recommendations has been included in the report. Karen provided a brief outline on the review and what this included.

Members were asked to approve the recommendations in the report. Approval was received.

Discussion Items

6. Executive update (verbal) – Kevin Hornsby

Update from executive team included the recruitment of Steve Ellard as Director of Property services, who starts his role in July, thanks was given to the tenants panel who helped with the interview process. Neil Keay retires in May and ELT will fill the gap until Steve joins in July.

An update was given on the office changes with staff from Ongo Communities currently based at Cole Street moving to Ongo House. A design consultant is involved in looking at best design and fit for Ongo house, using current spaces in different ways including private spaces for confidentiality with soundproofed areas for counselling. A member asked about wheelchair access to all floors at Ongo house. Part of the planned work will include assisted door openers. This plan will be brought to CV next month. Another member asked about the toilet in reception which customers can use and is this now unlocked during the day. Confirmation was provided that the toilet is now available.

Since the launch of the Housing Perks discount app, 471 tenants and 249 colleagues have signed up. A member noted that they recently used this and received 6p a litre off fuel at Morrisons Petrol Station which was a great saving and they found it easy to use. Kevin advised that other outlets no doubt will sign up. Ongo will keep promoting the app and obviously word of mouth will help spread the word.

Work continues sustaining tenancies and rent arrears which is currently at 0.94% in comparison with many organisations at 4%. It shows the excellent work the teams are doing.

7. Terms used for Customer Facing roles & teams - Kevin Hornsby

Ongo wants to consult with community voice and the wider tenant base on what they want to see from Tenancy Services.

Community Voice had stated some time ago that the title of job roles and teams should be in simple clear language, e.g. complaints officer rather than resolution officer, therefore this can also be included in the consultation. The consultation will focus on tenancy enforcement and support but tenants will also be asked to feed through their views on how Ongo should engage with its tenants (this is an exercise carried out every three years).

Karen asked if it would be a good idea to hold a workshop with tenants, a member noted to also include the Lincoln and Doncaster properties. Erica suggested some research across the sector on what other Housing Associations use as job titles. The first workshop should involve all current tenant volunteers. Following this, consultation would take place with the wider tenant base using all of the communication and engagement methods available, e.g. digital surveys, Key News, face to face focus groups etc.

ACTION: meeting to be arranged and a draft scope to be developed and shared with community voice.

8. Corporate Strategies – Erica Sanderson

The corporate strategies were included in the paperwork, these explain what Ongo will do against each strategy. These are presented for consultation and feedback and in the report, it provides the details and priorities of the strategies, including the growth and sustainability of the company.

Setting a customer satisfaction level with Ongo of 90% is a tough target to reach but hopefully this is achievable. At the beginning of the year it sat at about 68%, by the end of February this was 77%. Steve wants the figures to be as transparent as possible and therefore wants to get responses via different forms of communication. Historically telephone surveys returned a better satisfaction rating but text surveys give a bigger response rate return and a more accurate level of customer satisfaction in real time. Negative publicity has affected several organisations within the housing sector, so we need open and honest responses from tenants to increase satisfaction levels.

Erica will be keeping the channel for feedback open for response or comments until Wednesday 17th April. Email: erica.sanderson@ongo.co.uk.

9. Key Performance & Satisfaction Results – Karen Cowan

The latest performance figures are for February (as it is year-end currently, the performance team have yet to collate the more up to date figures). Karen ran through some of the stats from the normal balanced scorecard included with the paperwork.

Abandoned calls is 10% against a target of 7%. Percentage of calls answered in 30 seconds is 75% Feb with 80% target. 63% of contacts are via telephone.

Empty homes tenancy turnover 9.7%, target is 9%. The number of empty homes was high historically and we have achieved 87% now which is good compared to where we have been. Targeted work streams and turnover is improving.

Health and safety in compliance, we are 100%. Rent collection levels compared to the sector is good, and we should be proud of this as an organisation.

Percentages of emergency repairs is improving; target is 97% and recorded 87%. Neil Keay pointed out that we no longer record next day repairs. Karen agreed we will need to remove this target from the performance information as it's not a true indicator now that the priority timescales have changed.

Tenancy Services Team is the ASB and housing team. There are currently 255 live ASB cases which is high. Kevin said this is because Ongo have created easier ways to report ASB now.

A member asked if complaints shown are actual live cases of complaints or just dissatisfaction, Kevin answered that the initial dissatisfaction could be higher, but the figures are actual live complaint cases. Another member asked how Ongo handles serial complainers. Kevin confirmed there is a policy to deal with these people, we wouldn't take action against those who waste our time, this is dealt with case by case as there could be many other factors like mental health issues, and Ongo support tenants where necessary.

Information Items

10. Policy Review Schedule progress report – Erica Sanderson

Erica provided an update on what customer facing policies have been reviewed over the past 6 months, and what is due to go through a review bearing in mind some timescales may change. There are some occasions when 2 policies are brought under one title if they are very similar and naturally cross over into each other's area.

Further updates on policies will be provided at future meetings.

11. Customer Engagement Activity update (verbal) – tenant reps

- **Complaints Panel**

The panel have been working through the complaint's code and service improvement self-assessment, to assist in compiling the full report to be sent to the governing body. Most of the requirements are already complied with, and some needed recommendations for improvement, around improving communication. The group had some very good discussions about further recommendations to add. Becky Johns will compile the full report and bring this to CV before sending to the governing body for comment.

- **Property Services Panel**

Recruited 15 new members of staff to the Repairs Team. Contractor Coordinator has been in place for a while and focusses solely on the management and monitoring of the contractors carrying out repair works. Recruited 2 extra Planners to the Repairs team. There has been an increase in the number of jobs and the days taken to carry out work. This gradual increase surpassed last year's figures, jobs completed are near to 40K, up from 30K the year before. There has also been an increase in the number of jobs being carried out by our in-house team, reducing the contractor resource needed to carry out day-to-day repairs and Damp and Mould work (this is more value for money).

The Augmented Reality facility (AR) has helped diagnose issues at first point of contact especially with damp and mould.

Neil noted that differences between standard and urgent repairs had been looked into and that times are reducing gradually. A member advised that when they recently used the Myhome app they received a 3-month appt date but after they called the contact centre to advise they had health/vulnerability issues the date was brought forward. Unfortunately an engineer still turned up on the original date too. This highlights a fault in the system for repairs, with jobs completed needing to be closed down on the system.

- **Publications Panel**

The panel focused on discussions in relation to the content of the latest Key News magazine that was sent out in April. A value for money saving of over £1k for each printed version was made due to a change in supplier.

12. CE update – Wendy Wolfe

Wendy updated everyone on the customer engagement report included with the paperwork. A reminder was given of the community voice away day on Monday April 29th at Heslam Park where a pie and pea lunch will be provided. Those who require transport need to go through the treasurer.

A member asked about Key News due to not receiving that latest copy in the post. Wendy will look into this.

ACTION: check member details are included on the distribution list for Key News.

13. Any Other Business

Jill thanked Neil Keay for being very helpful and for supporting community voice and the volunteers over the years, and wished him luck in his retirement. Karen said from an officer point

of view Neil has always been very customer focused and a pleasure to work with. Neil responded that it has been an honour to work with the group over the years.

Reflection on meeting - Karen congratulated Jill on doing a great job with chairing the meeting in the absence of Tim.

14. Date and Time of next meeting

Next meeting is on Wednesday 15th May 9.30am at the Arc.

15. Action Plan

	Action	Who	Update
1.	Focus Group workshop to be arranged with volunteers to commence consultation on what they want from Tenancy Services, and also on how tenants want to be engaged. Draft scope to be developed and shared with members.	Customer Engagement/ Kevin & Karen	Workshop to be arranged. Draft scope to be shared with members.
2.	Distribution of Key News to be checked for member who didn't receive this via post.	Customer Engagement	Details have been checked and arrangement made to send the next edition via post.