

COMMUNITY VOICE MINUTES
Held on Wednesday 15th October 2025
The Arc, blended style (face to face & via MS Teams)



Present:

Community Voice Members: Tami Reeve (Vice Chair), Ron Weller, Rhianon Jeans, Keith Lumbers, Tracey Bain, Tima Omari, Judith Tomlinson, Charmaine Mande, Trevor Davey, Stuart Pearson, Angie Smith, Jim Newcombe, Paul Smith, Susan Hickling, Eddie Stringer, Simon Millner (observer), Marianne Sonksen (observer)

Ongo Staff: Wendy Wolfe, Steve Hepworth, Jo Sugden, Kevin Hornsby, Lisa Smith, Jordan Barr, Steve Ellard, Andrea Morley, Dawn Hill, John Hughes, Jake Stockwell, Martin Cowling (observer)

1. Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping

- The vice chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that she will be chairing the meeting today as the chair will need to leave the meeting early. For the benefit of the observers attending, introductions were given.
- Apologies had been received from: Dawn Johnson, Graham Lloyd, and Sarah Wilson (staff observer).
- Members were reminded that personal issues should not be raised during the meeting. If a previously reported issue has not yet been resolved, they were encouraged to record it in the enquiry log for follow-up.

2. Minutes & Actions from Previous Meeting

- Keith proposed, and Tracey seconded, that the minutes of the August meeting were an accurate record.
- Wendy provided an update on the actions:
 - Confirmation was given that the procurement panel would be involved in social value and future contractor meetings. The member of staff who previously worked in the role has now left and when recruitment to the role has taken place they will be involved in future meetings around social value.
 - The achievements of the Social Value projects will be included in the Autumn edition of Key News.
 - Becky provided a response on the longest call wait time, which was approximately two hours, with 29% of calls answered within five minutes. Peak times continue to see longer waits, and overall performance is currently below target. Contributing factors to this include new staff still in training, as well as sickness and annual leave. The planned changes to the contact centre structure are expected to help improve performance. While some customers abandon calls and ring back later, there is no evidence of calls going unanswered. The call-back service is being promoted as a better option, and missed calls are followed up wherever possible.

- The emergency criteria for reporting repairs will be communicated, and the link provided in the action plan. Becky will prepare a summary of this information to share with tenants.
- The contact centre Manager will review the IVR options and will consult with Community Voice members through a workshop event to gain members views and feedback.
- An internal meeting was held in relation to window restrictors and these have been added to the Tenant Inspection forms.
- A copy of the presentation on new Neighbourhood Model was sent out with the minutes.
- The performance team are looking into what changes can be made to the performance reports to make it clearer to understand and the format of the document.
- The TSM report for June's complaints had noted a drop of 50%, this data was inaccurate. June provided 100% complaints handling timescales for stage 2 which makes the best performance over a quarter we've had.
- Publicise work completed this year around Compliance / Building Safety to raise awareness with wider tenants. Jordan provided an update and PR / Comms are creating a communication plan to include tenant newsletters, social media, annual reports and community engagement events with a focus on education and transparency. The final plan will be shared with members at a future meeting.
- The meeting with Customer Engagement and Community Voice members who attended the Tpas conference was held and members shared details of the workshops they attended and any learning from these.

3. Board Observers

Meetings taking place in person or via Microsoft Teams include:

- Customer Focus Committee, 11th November, at 1.30pm, The Arc
- Ongo Homes Board on 26th November, at 1.30pm, Ongo House
- Ongo Communities Board on 2nd December, at 9.30am, The Viking Centre

Three CV members can attend any of the meetings, and those interested were asked to inform Customer Engagement.

4. Executive Update - Kevin Hornsby

- On 1 October the new 'Neighbourhood Delivery Model' was launched and is designed to provide a more personalised, responsive, and visible service across the communities.
- The changes are based on feedback from tenants during consultation carried out in 2024. The key things important to our tenants are having a named officer and single point of contact, greater visibility in neighbourhoods, teams that meet service demands, and clearer communication.
- This is not about making cuts; it's about investing in better services. Ongo has added new roles and restructured its teams to ensure tenants receive the support they need, while also meeting regulatory requirements including new consumer standards and Ombudsman best practices.
- The key changes are:

- Three new regions, made up of 29 neighbourhoods, each with around 400 homes, allowing for more localised and tailored support.
 - Three Regional Managers and six Neighbourhood Manager's, focused on improving local communities and inviting tenant input to shape future improvements.
 - Dedicated Neighbourhood Officers, merging Tenancy and Lettings Officer roles to give tenants one consistent point of contact from the moment they sign up for their home.
 - Regional Repairs and Maintenance teams will help to reduce travel time and increase efficiency, meaning tenants will see familiar faces when reporting repairs.
 - Specialist Housing team will provide dedicated support to customers living in the sheltered schemes, dementia services, and the homelessness provision.
 - A newly formed Customer Hub will deal with administrative tasks and advertising homes, freeing up Neighbourhood Officers to spend more time in the community.
 - Early feedback received from the new structure is positive, showing improved efficiency and reduced travel time. The teams are now focusing on the performance from the changes made across each region.
 - A member asked how non-digital tenants will be kept informed of the changes. Kevin explained that the tenants newsletter has been regionalised, and each region will have separate information relevant to their area. There are also plans to increase face-to-face engagement (e.g. door-knocking), although details have not been finalised.
 - A member asked about promoting information in the Councils Newsletter. Kevin explained he attends meetings with the council, and this could be raised with them.
- ACTION:** Kevin will discuss at the next monthly meeting and look at how we can improve communications with the Council.
- Sports Health & Housing partnerships now include free tickets for football and rugby and will be promoted to tenants.

5. Performance & Customer Satisfaction – Steve Ellard

- The focus of this update was on Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM), particularly around repairs satisfaction. Steve explained that transactional satisfaction surveys are gathered from residents on the day of a repair, while perception surveys are completed annually and measure overall impressions rather than recent experiences. Perception results tend to be lower, and current data shows room for improvement. It can take around 18 months for real-time satisfaction improvements to be reflected in perception scores. As of October, transactional satisfaction stood at 97%, although slightly lower than last year.
- Feedback indicates that repairs are not always completed as quickly as desired, and efforts are underway to improve this. The new neighbourhood model is expected to help reduce repair numbers and improve efficiency. Kevin noted a gap between transactional and perception results, and asked members for ideas on

how to shift customer perceptions and build greater confidence in Ongo's performance.

- Jill requested that future reports show the actual number of responses alongside percentages, noting that in October, 90 responses were received and 80% of customers were satisfied. Wendy explained the performance reporting will be on the agenda for further discussion at the CV away day and will include the type of performance information members want to be reported on. A member asked about repair response times, and Steve outlined that emergency repairs are completed promptly, urgent repairs within a few days, and standard (non-urgent) repairs take longer but are being improved.
- A member raised a concern about repairs becoming emergencies over weekends, where weekend teams may not have the latest information. Jordan explained that Ongo operates 24/7, but repeated emergency callouts can affect progress on longer term planned repairs. Plans are in place to address this, and early indicators suggest improvements, with more progress expected early next year.
- Steve explained about the recent changes to out of hours service and bringing this in-house, which has seen some improvements, allowing more jobs to be completed out-of-hours.
- A member asked whether the same tenants complete both Transactional Performance Surveys (TPS) and perception surveys. **ACTION:** to be checked for clarity with the performance team.

6. Energy Efficiency Planned Improvement Project – Andrea Morley

- Members were updated on the grant funded planned improvement works carried out to properties to improve the EPC rating.
- Three video links were shared showcasing the positive impact of the energy efficiency works. These highlighted themes including the benefits of completed work, improved warmth and heat retention in homes, loft insulation, and the installation of individual room thermostats.
- It was noted that the external work on the properties was good quality, with significant improvements to the appearance of the homes.
- 96% of customers reported being satisfied with both the quality of work and the professionalism of the tradespeople.
- The program faced several challenges, including delays that placed the project at risk. Initially, extensions were not granted, but through the efforts of Eqans, Hales, and Coultas (who increased the number of heat pumps installed) the project successfully achieved full spend.
- Andrea highlighted that managing the administration of this grant-funded project was extensive, involving complex data management and cross-referencing. This experience provided valuable learning points for future projects.
- In total, 204 properties received improvements, including an additional 43 homes beyond the original target. As a result, homes are now warmer and more energy efficient. CV members commended Andrea and the team for their outstanding efforts and hard work in ensuring the project's success.

- A member asked whether a waiting list could be introduced for the next round of work. Andrea explained that property selection is data-led, focusing on improving homes to meet EPPC regulations.
- Another member enquired about fixed-term contracts and whether penalties apply for incomplete work. Andrea confirmed that funds must be spent within 12 months and that Ongo's matched funding runs until the end of the current financial year. Contract prices are fixed at the time of award, protecting against later price increases.
- CV members again congratulated Andrea and the team, acknowledging the positive work that has been achieved.

7. Neighbourhood Standard – Lisa Smith

- Lisa explained that the standard has been created into a one-page document with some minor changes made to the wording to make it clearer to understand.
- Members had previously asked for reference to sterile communal areas to be included, which have now been added.
- Members gave their approval to the document and agreed that the document is easy to read and understand, written in plain English, and the changes are clearly visible.

Neighbourhood Operatives (Consultation) – Dawn Hill

- Dawn explained that an email had previously been circulated to members asking for their views on changing the title for the Neighborhood Operatives. On reflection, it has been decided to pause making a decision on the name change to ensure the title reflects the team's role accurately and fits within the wider Neighbourhood Team model. The aim is for tenants to know who the operatives are, understand their role, and recognise them by name. Dawn thanked members for their feedback and noted this will form part of a larger piece of work to be revisited at a later date. A member asked what the timescale was for revisiting this. Dawn confirmed this could be reviewed within four weeks and agreed to include it as an agenda item. **ACTION:** Include on the agenda for the next meeting in December.
- A member asked about looking at changing the service charges to align with the Neighbourhood Standard document, providing clearer links to tenant statements and improving understanding of what tenants are paying for.
- A member suggested the operatives wear high-visibility vests to include a transparent panel, so name badges or ID cards remain visible. Members and officers agreed it is important that tenants can clearly see and recognise neighbourhood operatives when visiting their areas.

8. RSH self-assessment update - Kevin Hornsby

- Kevin explained that the internal audit on the self-assessments look at how Ongo meet the consumer standards. The audit provided strong assurance that Ongo has effective systems and processes in place to meet the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards. No major issues were identified and the audit highlighted good practice in complaints handling and tenant involvement. One minor action

was noted regarding the update of the Domestic Abuse Policy review date, which is being addressed.

9. Strategic Asset Management Plan – John Hughes

- The plan had been emailed to members for consultation prior to the meeting and John provided an overview of the new Asset Management Plan, explaining what it is, why it is been developed, and what the organisation aims to achieve.
- The existing asset management plan is coming to an end, and with regulatory requirements changing, this is an appropriate time to introduce a new plan with clear, updated objectives.
- The plan takes into account Awaab's Law, decarbonisation targets, and other key regulatory themes. It also provides an indication of how many homes will require works under the new plan.
- **The Key Themes and Priorities are:**
- **Customer First:** Emphasis on good communication and a clear, accessible customer journey. This includes ensuring property data is available and easy to understand, e.g. allowing tenants to see when planned works are due.
- **Permitted Tenant Alterations:** A review will be undertaken to consider what conditions should be applied and how permissions will be managed.
- **Improving Perception:** The plan also aims to enhance the overall perception of Ongo through improved communication, service delivery, and outcomes for customers.
- A member asked whether it would become easier to gain permission for installing electric vehicle charging points. John advised that he was unsure of the current process but confirmed this type of alteration is generally supported. He noted that permissions should depend on the quality and competence of the contractor completing the work, and this will be considered as part of the review.
- A draft policy and procedure are currently being developed, and consultation will take place once the draft is complete to gather feedback from stakeholders.
- **Understanding Our Homes:** Improving the quality and accuracy of property data to identify homes susceptible to issues and exploring the use of new software and AI to improve data analysis and evaluate property viability.
- **Safe Homes:** Ensuring compliance with all safety regulations, gaining a deeper understanding of property conditions, and working to minimise damp and mould.
- **Cutting Carbon:** Supporting corporate sustainability goals by ensuring all properties meet EPC Band C by 2029. This includes work linked to roofing programmes and maintaining Ongo's SHIFT Gold accreditation.
- **Modernising Our Approach:** Moving towards a more planned and design-led asset management model, increasing efficiency and quality in how works are delivered.
- A member noted that there is a significant amount of work ahead for the team but commented that the new plan is clear and well thought out.

10. Customer Engagement Activity update - Tenant Reps

Tenant representatives from the following groups provided updates:

- **Complaints panel** – The group have looked at complaint extension letters to include more detail, ensuring tenants understand the reasons for delays. Becky

gave an update on the Complaint Performance and Service Improvements and noted an Increase on complaints. This has been attributed to greater awareness of the complaint's procedure. 97% of complaints were handled within timelines. The panel looked at 2 complaints, a repair complaint, and a gas service complaint. The Housing Ombudsman has reviewed Ongo's complaints policy and made 18 recommendations and these have been used to update the policy which remains compliant.

- **Tenant Inspectors** – There have been 39 inspections, and none were rated red. Main themes included fly tipping, ground maintenance, and cleaning issues. All issues are now resolved and have been monitored. The inspection sheets have been updated to include checking the window restrictors. A member asked about the frequency of tenant inspection visits. Clarification was provided on the role and responsibilities of the tenant inspectors. Jo suggested that the planned inspection program be shared with the CV members for future information.
- **ACTION:** Customer Engagement will share 2026 Inspection locations when these have been agreed at the end of the year.
- **Property Services panel** – the panel were consulted on the reformed Decent Homes Standard, latest performance information and updates on the new neighbourhood model. A focus group meeting took place to look at the customer journey for planned programme of works. This includes a 13-stage process for the planned program of works and will improve communication for customers right from the start to the end of works carried out to properties. Members found the meeting to be informative and having a planned approach will be better for customers.

11. Customer Engagement Update - Wendy Wolfe

Wendy provided an update from the Customer Engagement report:

- Over the past two months the customer engagement team have engaged with 472 tenants, including 50 who were under the age of 30.
- There were 15 expressions of interest who are being contacted to find out what groups they are interested in.
- The Publications Panel is now reviewing additional documents, including the Compliance Letter, draft 2024/25 Annual Report, and the High-Rise Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy. The group is also working internally with PR on improving customer letters.
- The Resident Building Safety Group has reviewed performance information, the draft High-Rise Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy, and upcoming initiatives such as Gas Safety Week. The group provided feedback on the strategy and discussed how to improve promoting safety among high-rise tenants through increased tenant engagement.
- The Digital Tenants' Group has expanded, with 10 new members, under 40. The group reviewed the Anti-Social Behavior webpage and suggested improvements to the Frequently Asked Questions section.
- The next edition of the Key News is due out towards the end of October. Due to importance of the information included in the edition in terms of the new neighborhood's model, a printed version will be sent to all tenants.

- Recent neighbourhood engagement events were held in Belton and Grimsby and highlighted actions to be followed up with the relevant teams.
- Events which are being planned include Dine and Dance, which is on the 9th of December, and invites have been sent to those living in the retirement schemes.
- Community Voice will be holding their away day at Holme Hall golf club on 12th November, Wendy reminded members to register their attendance and let customer engagement know about any food allergies for the buffet lunch.
- Wendy also reminded members that the venue for the community voice meeting in December has changed and will take place at Holme Hall golf club.

12. Any Other Business

- A member asked whether Ongo could provide the Fire Service with a list of gas safety certificates to help avoid duplication of inspections. Jordan explained that he already has some contacts within the Fire Service and will follow this up.
ACTION: Jordan to follow up.
- A member raised concerns that Ongo has been unable to reach some tenants due to the telephone mast issues affecting a certain area (Crowle). Kevin acknowledged that contact is an important issue and confirmed that the team will look into ways to improve communication with customers in affected areas.
ACTION: Kevin to review communication options and develop a plan to reach customers in areas impacted by connectivity issues.
- Maureen explained that the Customer Engagement Framework is due for review, and this will be included on the agenda for the CV away day in November. Members are asked to give the framework some thought in advance of the meeting.
- Wendy asked members to think about future agenda items for meetings, and this will be discussed in more detail at the CV away day.
- The Vice Chair was congratulated on chairing her first full meeting.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

- The CV Away day will take place on 12th November 2025, at Holme Hall golf club, 9.30 arrival.
- The full CV meeting will take place on 15th December 2025, at Holme Hall golf club, 9.30 to 12.30 (with buffet lunch after the meeting).