

## **COMMUNITY VOICE MINUTES**

Held at 9:30am on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
The Arc and MS Teams



**Community Voice Members:** Rhiannon Jeans (Chair), Tami Reeve (Vice-Chair), Sue Hickling, Trevor Davey, Tracey Bain, Keith Lumbers, Jim Newcombe, Stewart Pearson, Simon Milner, Charmaine Mande, Tima Omari, Jill Milner, Sharon Bernard-Earnshaw, Ron Weller.

**Ongo Staff:** Wendy Wolfe, Steve Hepworth, Maureen Mathieson, Erica Sanderson, Kevin Hornsby, Louise Usher, Sarah Wilson, Lucy Taurone and Melissa Cooper.

**Apologies received:** Toni-Anne Deas, Paul Pearson and Jo Sugden.

**Also in attendance:** Ross Best (observer)

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

Rhiannon opened the meeting, thanking Jill for chairing over the last year and reminding attendees of the appropriate way to raise any personal issues during the meeting.

### **2. Minutes & Actions of Previous Meeting**

Tami and Sue proposed and seconded that the April meeting minutes were accurate. The actions from the previous meeting were updated as follows:

- Kevin confirmed that although he has been unable to speak to the member directly about their My Home app reporting issue, he had consulted with the tech team, and they had checked the system to confirm it works. Kevin confirmed there is an option on the app to “report a bug” and encouraged any members facing issues to do so.
- Wendy is planning a meeting with the current Scrutiny Panel to discuss widening the membership of the group by establishing a standalone panel.
- The Social Value figures were sent out alongside the April minutes.

### **3. Board Observers**

- Ongo Communities Board on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026, Board Room, Ongo House at 9:30am.
- Customer Focus Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2026, The Arc at 1:00 pm.
- Ongo Homes Board on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026, Board room, Ongo House at 2.00pm.

Three CV members can attend, contact the customer engagement team if you'd like to go.

### **4. Executive update (verbal) – Kevin Hornsby**

#### **Customer Focus Committee**

Kevin provided updates on the Customer Focus Committee, which has now been in place for just over 12 months. A review has been completed to assess its effectiveness, with both the Executive and Governance teams considering the recommendations. These focus on refining membership, strengthening the clarity and outcomes of meetings, and ensuring the committee remains firmly customer focused. A new performance dashboard has been introduced to enable more detailed analysis of performance across the business, including regional insights. Matt Sugden has been appointed as Interim Chair for the next 12 months. Further updates will be shared as changes progress.

#### **Community priorities survey**

Kevin outlined plans for the annual community priorities survey. Approximately £1.1 million is donated to Ongo Communities each year to support delivery of corporate and community

objectives. To inform future priorities, a survey will be launched in late June to gather views on how this funding should be allocated. Engagement will be primarily digital but supported by alternative formats. Members were encouraged to participate and promote the survey.

### **Grass cutting**

The discussion moved to grass cutting, where Kevin acknowledged that current service delivery has fallen below expectations due to poor contractor performance. A recovery plan is in place to restore standards by the end of June, and the contract will be re-tendered, with Customer Voice members involved alongside the Procurement Panel.

There was wider discussion around service expectations and accountability. Members raised issues when contacting Ongo around grass cutting, noting that it is not always clear whether land is owned by Ongo or the local authority. Steve Hepworth highlighted the importance of improving transparency in both service delivery and communication. He also explained that the absence of financial penalties in the current contract has limited accountability, but this will be addressed in future arrangements.

Members discussed the balance between cost and quality, recognising that service levels are directly linked to service charges and that tenants should play a role in determining what the acceptable standards and cost are.

Some positive feedback was shared, with one member highlighting that in their area the “cut and collect” approach is working well, particularly within over-55 schemes where higher service charges are delivering a noticeably improved service. However, other members questioned whether more time could be allocated per visit to improve quality. Steve explained that visit durations are currently standardised to ensure fairness across all areas, but this will be reviewed as part of the new contract to better balance consistency, quality, and cost.

**ACTION:** It was agreed that communication processes will be reviewed with Becky Johns to ensure a clearer and more responsive approach going forward when tenants telephone around grass cutting and which areas are Ongo/Council responsibility.

### **Repairs update**

The repairs service continues to show strong performance with ‘work in progress’ at its lowest recorded level, with approximately 2,900 outstanding jobs, while average completion times have reduced significantly from 42 days to 20 days over the past year. Satisfaction levels remain high, reaching 100% in June to date.

### **Sharing best practice**

Ongo hosted a successful Placeshapers visit, [a blog by Charmaine](#), reflecting her experience as both a Board and Customer Voice member, has been well received. Kevin spoke at a social housing roundtable around our work with local sports clubs, with the [video available here](#). Plus, Dawn Hill, Head of Neighbourhoods will be speaking at a Disruptive Innovators Network session around our new neighbourhoods model.

## **5. Lettings & Allocations internal audit – Erica Sanderson**

Erica presented the forthcoming internal audit of lettings and allocations, due to begin in early July, following an initial introductory session with the internal audit team. It was confirmed that

audit scopes directly impacting tenants will be shared with Customer Voice before being finalised. The audit will review the full end-to-end journey, from “keys in” to “keys out.”

Members agreed the scope was clear and comprehensive but raised concerns about how medical needs and internal transfers, particularly for adapted properties, are reflected within the current banding system. Erica confirmed that while the banding policy itself sits outside the scope of this audit, the exceptional allocations process will be included, and a wider review of allocations policy is already underway. It was also confirmed that tenant feedback will be considered alongside policy and process as part of the audit.

#### **6. STAIRS update – Louise Usher (presentation circulated with minutes)**

Louise provided an update on the STAIRS work, which aims to meet new legislative requirements around improving transparency for tenants. These requirements are set through government legislation, which Ongo must implement, but there are some limitations on the information that can be shared, for example where it is personally or commercially sensitive, overly resource-intensive to produce, or requested by individuals outside of the sector.

The new website area is on track for initial publication by October. It will evolve as further information is added over time, for example if repeated queries are identified, Ongo will take a proactive approach to publishing this information.

Members were asked to help prioritise what information should be included by identifying what is most important to tenants. It was discussed how different tenants will have different priorities, and all areas raised were considered important. Louise confirmed that a wider tenant survey will also be developed and shared in due course to ensure all tenant voices are heard.

Discussion moved on to cover the clarity and consistency of service charge information, particularly the terminology used and understanding what services are included and who is responsible for them. Steve explained that while the wording within tenancy agreements cannot be changed, there is an opportunity to improve how information is explained when the STAIRS information is published.

**ACTION:** Kevin agreed to review specific tenant queries that had been raised regarding service charges that may not be appropriate for their property.

**ACTION:** It was also agreed that Louise would seek clarity on the government terminology, particularly around areas such as home improvements and permissions, to ensure tenants better understand what these terms mean when the webpage goes live.

#### **Tpas update (verbal) – Wendy Wolfe**

Wendy gave an update on Tpas confirming that the accreditation process is nearing completion, with all focus groups and an internal staff survey now concluded, and a final report expected mid to late June. Wendy thanked all members who participated in the focus groups.

The upcoming TPAS conference in July was discussed, with four tenants and Ollie from the Customer Engagement team attending. Workshop options will be released shortly, providing opportunities for learning, networking and sharing good practice.

The Customer Engagement team recently attended the Tpas regional event in Hull which provided a useful learning and networking session. This included information on a Women's Voice Group in the city which brings together residents from a wide range of backgrounds, and including 24 different languages, to deliver community activities. Discussions with other organisations also identified shared challenges around recruiting and retaining volunteers.

A community event in Broughton successfully engaged rural residents through door-knocking and surveys, raising awareness of Neighbourhood Services, with issues identified either resolved or planned into future work, and further partnership activity is planned in Crosby with Safer Neighbourhoods.

Updates on community groups noted that despite ongoing support, the Hilton Avenue and Lodge Moor Association has closed due to lack of local interest but continues as a social group. The Warley Road Community Group has secured £1000 in funding to support community events and is exploring additional external funding opportunities.

## **7. Customer Engagement Activity Update (verbal) – Tenant Reps**

- **Property Services Panel:** The update was noted in the Customer Engagement report.
- **Tenant Inspectors:** Keith and Stewart confirmed that 21 inspections have been completed. Keith noted that Steve Gilmour thanked members for their continued commitment and hard work at the last Tenant Inspectors meeting. Key issues identified included hedge maintenance and fly tipping. It was noted that mystery shopping activity will increase over the coming months, and staff have been reminded of the importance of introducing themselves following feedback from previous exercises. Inspection activity is being expanded beyond Scunthorpe, to include Grimsby and South Killingholme areas.
- **Complaints Panel:** Trevor advised that an external observer attended the most recent meeting to review good practice and found the session informative, particularly the case study discussions. The panel reviewed Ombudsman cases, including one with a maladministration and one without, considering the lessons learned, compensation, and processes followed. Membership remains low and additional volunteers are being sought. Following member feedback, complaints officers will now routinely ask and record whether complainants are satisfied with the outcome.
- **CV Focus Group:** Charmaine advised that new external auditors have been appointed, with initial engagement sessions taking place. The auditors provided an overview of the work they do and how internal audits and the outcomes from these will be used for future scrutiny topics. Wendy explained that the development of a separate scrutiny panel is in progress and promotion to engage a wider range of tenants to be involved will be arranged. The introduction of external auditors was welcomed by members as a positive step in strengthening independence and assurance.
- **Residents Building Safety Group:** Simon confirmed strong compliance performance across key areas including gas, fire, risk, lifts, asbestos and legionella, all currently at 100%, with electrical compliance at 99.5%. Leads for each area will attend future meetings to provide further detail. The group is planning to introduce job shadowing opportunities to increase understanding of the checks undertaken and associated timescales and will continue promoting the group to encourage wider participation.
- **Customer Focus Committee (CFC):** Rhiannon provided an update following the recent review of the committee's effectiveness, focusing on strengthening decision-making and

ensuring outcomes deliver added value. It was noted that the Chair has recently changed. Updates were also shared on the domestic abuse policy and complaints performance, including issues relating to electric vehicle charging points. The Tpas representative involved with the exemplar process attended as an observer.

#### **8. Customer Engagement Update - Wendy Wolfe**

Wendy provided the Customer Engagement update including these highlights:

- The Digital Tenant group has been working to improve My Home, including consulting on the web version, enhancing accessibility through increased text size and use of colour on the homepage, and exploring the inclusion of documents such as tenancy agreements alongside improved signposting to support and grant funding.
- The Sustainability Panel continues to support biodiversity activity, including work in Crowle and the development of future “no-mow” projects.
- Work is underway to improve representation across groups by reviewing demographic data and undertaking a targeted recruitment campaign to address any gaps.  
**ACTION:** Customer Engagement Team to involve CV Members, and wider involved volunteers, in recruitment campaign when ready.
- Opportunities for tenants to get involved in procurement activity were highlighted, noting that any customer-impacting contracts, such as planned works and grounds maintenance, are considered through the Procurement Panel.  
**ACTION:** CV members wishing to get involved in the Procurement Panel should contact Customer Engagement Team and express an interest.

#### **9. Future Agenda item / Focus group ideas – Wendy Wolfe**

Wendy led a discussion on future agenda items and engagement opportunities, stating that the next Focus Group meeting may be stood down as there is currently no subject identified to cover and it falls within school holidays which may affect attendance.

Members suggested a “Question Time” style session with senior leaders, providing an open forum for a wide range of questions, as well as a dedicated session to explain how customer feedback is managed end-to-end, with a suggestion to invite Becky Johns to present.

**ACTION:** Customer Engagement Team to explore these suggestions and arrange if appropriate.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

- A request was made for caretaking services to include more frequent cleaning of black fencing around high-rise properties at the Market Hill area.  
**ACTION:** Kevin to raise request with relevant teams around increased cleaning of high-rise fencing.
- There was also discussion regarding tenant perception, with members highlighting the need for clearer communication that homes are owned by Ongo and not the local authority, potentially supported by maps or published information to improve understanding. **ACTION:** PR Team to pick this up alongside the STAIRS work.
- Parking pressures were also raised, with suggestions including the potential for driveway conversions, creation of additional parking spaces on estates, or a grant scheme to support residents. It was noted that residents can currently apply for dropped kerbs at

their own cost, and that this may become a wider issue identified through neighbourhood surveys and considered as part of future planned work.

- Finally, members suggested a focus group specifically on grass cutting to gather views on service expectations and willingness to pay for different standards.

**ACTION:** Kevin to liaise with Dawn Hill to explore and arrange a focus group on grass cutting and service expectations.

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

- Focus Group (if not stood down): Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> July, 10am – 12pm
- Full CV meeting: Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1pm – 4pm

The Chair, Rhiannon, thanked all attendees for their contributions and closed the meeting.