



Minutes of TPG meeting at Denson Close Waterbeach on 4th June 2018

Attendees (Tenants/Leaseholders)

| Name | Address | |
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| Wendy Head(WH (Chair) | Balsham | TPG |
| Angela Lewell (AL(Secretary) | Impington | TPG |
| Patti Hall (PH(Vice Chair) | Cottenham | TPG |
| Edna Ingrey (EI) | Gt Wilbraham | TPG |
| Glynis Goff (GG) | Waterbeach | TPG |
| Kathy Rice (KR) | Elsworth | TPG |
| Dave Hammond (DH) | Gt Abington | TPG |
| Joan Ball (JB) | Histon | TPG |
| Les Rolfe (LF) | Bourn | TPG |
| Jim Watson (JW) | Willingham | TPG |
| Val Hickey (VH) | Waterbeach | TPG |
| Helen Ballantyne (HB) | Dry Drayton | TPG |
| Paul Bowman(PB) | Willingham | TPG |
| Adrian Prentis (AP) | Cottenham | TPG |
| Bob Petch (BP) | Gamlingay | TPG |
| Nancy Chisholm (NC) | Gamlingay | TPG |

Attendees (South Cambridgeshire District Council Representatives)

| Name | Position in Council |
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| Helen Pagram (HP) | Resident Involvement Officer |
| Martyn Hilliam (MH) | Housing policy Officer |
| Chelsea Hilliam (CH) | Resident Involvement Project Support Officer |
| Peter Moston (PM) | Resident Involvement Team Leader |
| Anita Goddard (AG) | Head of Housing Property Service |
| Duncan Vessey (DV) | Housing Company (Ermine Street) |

| No. | Topic | Actions |
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| 1. | Apologies - Carol Akربي Please ring Wendy on 01223 894394 or E-mail:- wendymhead@yahoo.co.uk if you are unable to attend the next meeting. | All |
| 2. | Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, agreed as a true record, and signed by the Chair. | |
| 3. | Matters arising None | |

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| <p>4.</p> | <p>Mark Gibbs - Mears General Manager MG sent his apology along with the following report:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Response works under PPP are going well with the average number of days to complete a repair currently at 10.99 days 2. Cyclical Painting works started in April so are now entering their 3rd month and is on course to complete on time by year end. An issue raised at the last meeting by Patti Hall whereby Patti asked me to suspend/remove her works from the programme, we relayed to Wayne Newman at SCDC, Wayne visited Patti and I believe the works will go ahead after SCDC resolved with her. 3. Mears are now surveying properties (kitchens & Bathrooms) as part of the award of part of the planned contract. Windows & Doors will also continue into 2018. 4. Social Value - Aside sponsoring £350 to the TPG for their re-branding, other projects are also ongoing. Mears Foundation has contributed £1000 to a new Super Kitchen idea which we can update you on at the next meeting in terms of what it is and what it brings to the community. Both myself and Anita Goddard are involved in helping it to start..We have also donated a garden picnic bench to the children of Over Primary School, we have some photos of the delivery and also of it being used immediately by the children playing games on it in the shade. 5. Apprentices - we have added a further two apprentices in recent weeks, now giving us 5 on the contract in total. 3 - Electricians, 1- Plumber/Heating & 1 - Business Admin <p>I will attend in July and provide an update on the Super Kitchen and some other community projects we are looking to help this year, should add this is all in partnership with SCDC.</p> | |
| <p>5.</p> | <p>Anita Goddard - Head of Housing Property Service AG said, I have come to give you an overview of what we are doing (Social Value).</p> <p>Mears went live in 2012 but started about 2 years before and the contract was shaped with inputs from tenants. What's in it for South Cambs, getting apprentices for every million pounds made, knitting of bears to go to Africa. The contract is for 5 years with possibility of a further 5 years (5/5). Also there is a heating contract. Mears social value commitment in their social value plan includes schools and apprentices. 2 years into the contract legal advice was taken (which Mears paid for), to extend the contract., which is slightly different.</p> <p>There are lots of people with rent arrears. Where do they get the money? It was noted that when people are about to be evicted they pay the arrears, but then it happens again. There are often other issues going on. The Neighbourhood Service Officer Paula (who works Monday, Wednesday & Thursday), identifies rent arrears and works with them. There may be mental health issues. 56 families we've worked with and a third of them had their children taken into care.(Each child in care cost 3 times as much as it would to go to Eton). Lots of people themselves were in the care system. A couple had 9 children and all are in care and won't return back to their parents. 24 children been in care and</p> | |

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| | <p>nearly half of these had their children taken in care. Paula is not seen as council ,but someone who can help them. She has been very successful.</p> <p>A lady had high rent arrears and her window's were boarded up. We engaged with her to find she had inherited £100,000 and had given some to her children, but her brother was a heroin addict and he was taking money from her. Had got her card and was using it. Also been injecting her with heroin. Paula got her benefits, the rent was paid, mental health services were involved and the brother is now in prison.</p> <p>Another case - Children were in care as the lady was an alcoholic. So much so that drink is now poison to her and she has liver sclerosis. Paula got her support. Universal Credit, so now paying the rent, she is hopeful to get a job and then get her children back.</p> <p>Universal credit comes out in October and this is the biggest threat to our business plan, If we don't get our rents in.</p> <p>Super kitchen, a charity (not here, in the midlands), is interested in coming to our area. £1,840, which Mears have already paid and every 2 weeks get food to cook a fresh meal. Charge people roughly £2-50 (happening a lot in the Midlands). Start small and see how it goes. Volunteers needed and Care Network and Super Kitchen will help to get it going. this is an example of what we can do with our contract.</p> <p>Election - We've gone from blue to yellow. The board consisting of Mears, tenants and elected member Jose Hales and 1 other who go through the budget. Contract up in 2022. There is a 2 year percrument which next year we will look at options.</p> <p>PB asked what resources were needed to do the meals. AG said will use one of the communal rooms, but not chosen one yet. WH said we will keep you informed. AP asked if it would be paid for as normal, or an annual subscription. AG said she has a vision were tenants will not need to pay for the communal rooms at all . Biggest headache but I am with you.</p> <p>VH asked if tenant get all the universal credit. AG said yes. VH said this is pure insanity, a roller coaster. AG said this is very complex and has to be done on line. They get a month of money to pay rent, get food etc. South Cambs is cushioned as have high older population not included in universal credit, so difficult. Not quite universal.</p> <p>PB said review of hall. At other side of road in Over there is a community centre that makes lots of money letting out rooms. Teachers go to meetings a lot, an idea for use. AG said have been contacting people. AT Fulbourn contacted Health and Education, but got no response. Open to suggestions. CH and myself are working on a digital project. PB said libraries are closing. A long discussion followed including the warden used to organise everything, people don't know the rooms are there, not getting value for money, 5 halls in Cottenham and it's not only elderly people that are lonely.</p> | |
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| | <p>AG finished by saying it's a new system, but don't know what it will be, a very different population. What will hook people in. Remember though that it will only take 1 leaseholder to vote against what is happening to their hall and until that person goes, won't be able to change anything.</p> | |
| 6. | <p>Duncan Vessey - Housing Company (Ermine Street) Council hard hit by government, funds nearly down to zero. Ermine Street (ErS) established as housing company in the private sector. Market rent can be higher than housing benefit. ErS will make money for the council.</p> <p>Council lends money to ErS at 1% interest What council has borrowed has higher rate of interest 4% but making 3% from ErS. 1 million last year which is 10% of councils budget. Got off to a good start by leasing houses from the MOD in Waterbeach. This was on a 5 year lease which expires next year but are confident it will be extended. We now also have 14 properties in Bassingbourn and over 100 in Brampton. This allows the company to wash its face. Would not be viable if it made loses. The MOD lease is critical as trade, staff have to be paid.</p> <p>ErS also buy properties. Brought around Cambourne initially but getting more expensive now. Have 2 in Papworth and Willingham. High prices lead us to move north - Peterborough where properties lot less but rents are similar. Satirizing Peterborough. 140 MOD leases to keep us going and have 200 properties we rent out of which 130 are in Peterborough. Cash buyer will knock on our doors. Blocks of flats with tenants already in are doing well in Kettering, Nottingham and Leicester so will look at this. Continue to go where prices are right.</p> <p>To abide by the law, the council auditors ErS books. If interest rates go up it may mean we don't get enough money to pay the council back. This year the council may need to borrow to give to us. 3% will be a squeeze. Don't pay £1000 back, it soon mounts up. Council owns properties through own company so have 40 years to pay their loan back. May want to sell our properties in 5 years time. 6 million profit if we sold today. There would be corporation tax if we sell. None to date yet.</p> <p>We are a small team of 6 but get help from HR, accounts etc. In fact all the council help us.</p> <p>Have to charge some fee. Tenant needs to have means to pay so have to reference them. Cost goes to applicant. We keep costs to a minimum and take people other landlords won't look at. We allows pets but tenant has to fumigate property when they leave. Couple with 9 children needed bigger home. We go a 3 bedroom house which had been made into 2. We got that and re-housed them in Bassingbourn.</p> <p>We work closely with the homeless teams in South Cambs, Huntingdon and Peterborough. additional gypsy and traveller sites in our District. Also buy houses where tenants are living, so we inherit these tenants. We do this on a regular basis.</p> <p>PB asked what resources do you use_ DV replied £400,000 in housing reserve account. Not a profit making company. Lib Dem's now in control of council so</p> | |

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| | <p>hope they see there is no other way to keep council afloat. Could mean 1 million worth of job cuts and more.</p> <p>JW said when first started built houses in Swavesey and Foxton. Any plans to re-start building for council tenants. DV replied that ErS has not built anything it was the council. JW then asked about Right to Buy or if the selloff of high value houses happen, will you replace them. DV said if it happens won't replace. Been no guidance, unrealistic. PM said Gill came recently (See Feb minutes), a separate issue where council aim to build 40 properties each year.</p> <p>DH asked what happens if high value houses are sold off, could you buy them DV replied could happen, have options, company structured for if and when, we are poised.</p> | |
| 7. | <p>AOB</p> <p>WS said next meeting is the 2nd July.</p> <p>Task and finish going well. Meeting next Monday 11th June from 10am to 12noon</p> <p>If any further questions for Anita please let Wendy know.</p> <p>HP said the newsletter had gone to the printers and will be delivered end of June.</p> <p>VH asked reporting barking dogs etc., is there a number to call. Was told can find it on back of newsletter (out of hours number too).</p> <p>MH said he would be sending an e-mail out in the next 2 weeks to the tenant approved group.</p> <p>WH said BP and NC have attended over 3 meetings and would someone like to nominate them to the TPG. PH nominated and AP second it. AP was also nominated by AL and seconded by JB.</p> | All |
| 8. | <p>Date, time and venue of the next meeting</p> <p>Monday 2nd July 2018, 18:30 to 20:30 at Denson Close Waterbeach</p> | |