



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Minutes of the TPG meeting at Denson Close, Waterbeach on 1st July 2019

Attendee's (Tenants/Leaseholders)

Name	Address	
Wendy Head (WH (Chair)	Balsham	TPG
Angela Lewell (AL (Secretary)	Impington	TPG
Patti Hall (PH (Vice Chair)	Cottenham	TPG
Joan Ball (JB)	Histon	TPG
Les Rolfe (LR)	Bourn	TPG
Adrian Prentis (AP)	Cottenham	TPG
Dave Hammond (DH)	GT Abington	TPG
Val Hickey (VH)	Waterbeach	TPG
Howard Pheasant (HPh)	Cottenham	TPG
Ron Ryan(RR)	Cottenham	TPG
Nancy Chisholm(NC)	Gamlingay	TPG
Bob Petch(BP)	Gamlingay	TPG
Paul Bowman(PB)	Willingham	TPG
Jim Watson(JW)	Willingham	TPG
Edna Ingrey(EI)	Gt Wibraham	TPG
Maureen Crabbe(MC)	Girton	Observer
Gillian Payne(GP)	Girton	Observer
H. Donchie(HD)	Girton	Observer

Attendees (South Cambridgeshire District Council Representatives)

Name	Position in Council
Peter Moston (PM)	Resident Involvement Team Leader
Hazel Smith (HS)	Lead Cabinet Member

No	Topic	Actions
1.	<p>Apologies - Mears - Carol Akrbi - Keith Nash - Don Carver</p> <p>Please Ring Wendy on 01223 894394 or email: wendymhead@yahoo.co.uk if you are unable to attend the next meeting</p>	All
2.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read, agreed as a true record, and signed by the chair.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>AP said in 6 it should read 'will be able to be re-co-opted at a later date' (not 'may').</p>	

4.	Mears - Apology sent.	
5.	<p>Hazel Smith - Lead Cabinet Member for Housing HS said she had been asked to talk about what's new in Housing in South Cambs, so will start from the top.</p> <p>a) The council's reorganisation is starting at the top with the appointment of a new Chief Executive later this week at a special Council meeting. You may be aware that we haven't had a 'Director of Housing' to replace Stephen Hills who resigned just before the election last year and left in July. Presently we have 2 interim Assistant Directors, Heather Wood (homelessness, Shire Homes, self build and council house building) and Geoff Clark (Housing management and operations). Also experienced officers Debbie Barrett, Sherri Lee and Sue Hinawski have been given more responsibility in the interim. Peter is moving on too. The new structure will be based on 'one council' rather than different departments, so there will be fewer directors in future. More detail will be available once the new Chief Executive takes office.</p> <p>b) The Council agreed to resettle 5 refugee families in South Cambs before the end of this year. Lib Dem's decided to go for it. Work with the Home Office on this is moving forward. We have groups in South Cambs that are keen to help, but the Home Office scheme is prescriptive about the help to be offered, with the emphasis on the paid professionals from the City Council team helping the families to settle in and live an independent life as quickly as possible. They provide help and support to each family for up to 5 years, and this is paid for by the government.</p> <p>c) The work on how the Council helps in cases of Domestic Violence is still progressing. There will be a council-wide policy which will be aiming at the DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) standard, which is the standard the City Council works to. A new Act of Parliament which would give County Councils duties to coordinate work on DV is out for consultation now, and we're expecting the guidance to change as a result of that.</p> <p>d) New council houses: We've now agreed to purchase the 36 affordable homes on the new development opposite Comberton Village College which is actually in Toft. The schemes coming into the pipeline are now tending to be larger: we are hoping to be involved in affordable homes, mostly for older people, which will be on the modular housing development in Northstowe Town Centre. To have a stake now in the development of the town centre would be a good way to develop the joint working with Homes England, which already includes the Healthy Towns work and the community hub which we have agreed to build. There are other opportunities to put up modular homes elsewhere, which we're also looking at. New staff have been recruited into this department, which is also dealing with council investment properties. You may have seen we have bought a long lease on an office building in the Science Park which will give us rental income to subsidise council services.</p> <p>e) Our Council voted to achieve net zero carbon by 2050, in response to the Climate Emergency. The work starts now. We are already the best council in the council for</p>	

the energy efficiency of our council houses. The new **Asset Management Strategy** is taking shape. This starts with Housing assets, but will also encompass our management of investment properties and our own premises. In council housing it will probably mean fewer new kitchens and bathrooms and more emphasis on insulation and energy saving. The officer who is doing this work, is looking at how to future-proof the energy supply to our housing estates, for example by putting in centralised heating using a ground-source heat pump with a deep shaft into the ground rather than individual gas boilers. (The government has said no more houses should be built with gas boiler heating after 2025, and this will be the way of the future.) We have energy consultants, who will be advising us on this.

f) Our rent collection rates for last year have been shown to be the second highest in the country – this is not only down to the revenues people, but also to our Housing and Homelessness officers who give very good support to people when they contact us in good time if they're experiencing problems affording their rent, and I'd thank them all very warmly for that. The aim is always to avoid people becoming homeless rather than having to rehouse them when that happens.

g) Mears are above average on repairs. We will keep an eye on them. Have a quarterly meeting with them. Wendy will grill them at next meeting on satisfaction surveys.

I'd like to wish Peter Moston all the best in his retirement from South Cambs.

GP asked if knew who was highest in rent collections. HS replied didn't know but possibly Lancashire or Sheffield. Grace will come and present data later in the year. Probably on Housemark.

PB asked about affordable housing at Cambourne Would it be more than 20%. HS said it would be lower than that. Cambridge City are able to do social housing as re-developing their old sites, so can do social rents.

PB said what about garages. HS replied that had sold a few of these plots (mainly bottoms of gardens), also at Histon (ST.Audrey's). 100 different sites. 8 in Gt Shelford sold to builders to build 3 houses. They are now asking to build 5.

PM said on balance self builders, build to live in themselves, not for monetary gains. there are so many covenants which make land prices lower. HS said things are changing. we are holding a list of 300 people interested. When land comes up relatively few people interested. Didn't go quite as we expected. Local plan (September), new larger sites have to have a certain amount of self build properties. Can now borrow from government to build council houses. There is now module housing, which is off site construction and comes in pieces to assemble. JB asked if freehold or leasehold. HS replied mainly freehold.

GP asked what does South Cambs do for homelessness prevention, such as someone having difficulties paying their mortgage. HS replied that is tricky. Probably advise

	<p>going to CAB. May need to sell property. If home left to children who will be homeless. Will need only a quarter to buy new home, so yes we would help to prevent them being homeless. We have hostels, other houses (Shire Homes) owned by the council (Act as landlords). We also are rental agents who offer owner's a guaranteed rent. Have about 20 properties at present and are proving quite popular. GP said what about responsibility, the 2008 financial crisis. HS replied there will come a point when equity is negative. Ermine Street housing where houses are brought and rented to the private sector. (Investment rather than social housing). Example a couple divorced so house was brought and the lady stayed there with the children and pays rent. PB asked if Lib Dems had different views on Ermine Street as own places in Leeds and the government is also looking at it. HS replied we decided to go as far as East Cambs, not much further. Keep economy in South Cambs. Commercial income, always had a heart.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Peter Moston - Resident Involvement Team Leader</p> <p>PM handed out a report regarding TPG's to everyone present. He said moving forward we need to try and insure it has a positive outcome. Meetings slightly different, 6 official meetings and 4 informal meetings without an officer from South Cambs. Keen to have more workshop focus meetings. Review after 12 months. Read report and let me know what you think. Think about staffing and resources. My job is being advertised next Tuesday. There is a green paper from Central Government stating how we need to interact with residents. From April this year we have to do quarterly reports which show how we are involved with residents. Still do service reviews but more workshop focus, to be led by my successor.</p> <p>VH asked if minutes would be taken at the informal meetings. WH replied 'yes they would be, the same as a formal meeting.</p> <p>WH asked if the January meeting could be changed (see report), as we do not usually have a meeting then. The meetings are being changed at Helen's request. Originally wanted 4 to 6pm at Cambourne. PM said at workshop meetings will need service manager, supported by staff. this is why Cambourne was suggested as in winter months some staff have long journeys.</p> <p>AP said we need a discussion first before voting and it would have been better to receive this report before the meeting to take all the information in. Also what about the taxi's , could be a bad time for them. (PM will check with Panther re-taxi's).</p> <p>EI said 6pm a better time, really no difference. AP said didn't want to go to Cambourne. LR said not a problem at Cambourne (4-6), this way staff could be invited, especially for mini scrutiny or task and finish. DH said we tried different places and it didn't work.</p> <p>PM said Chris Pegg might want 1/2 meetings depending on policy being reviewed. AP said meetings have become stale. PM replied this is why my boss Julie wants to see what influence residents have, volunteering, hours given(very good).going to have to provide information. WH said Stephen Hill used to involve us.PM said that's why we</p>	

	<p>need to adopt this style of meeting. AP asked how we would know what is happening. PM replied it would be on the agenda and any information needed would be sent out beforehand. AP said information very lacking, need to be more informed on what is going on. PM said will meet occasionally and apologised for not sending report out earlier.</p> <p>LR said re the Green Paper there is nothing to prove listened to tenants. WH said South Cambs have stopped the current review. They sent the same forms out as we did on the scrutiny. There's nothing about washing machines and no change to £5 charge. PM said there is some positive come out of it, Papworth now using their communal room. WH said I'd like to close them all, very annoyed about it. JB said we don't know the outcome yet. WH said we don't do any for a while, will go off the boil. EI said give it a trial, council talk well but don't do anything.</p> <p>PB said when attending other meetings, report from these meetings should be on the agenda. Will fit in with South Cambs goals. There would be information going both ways and everyone in group more informed. WH said used to be on agenda, can do again. 15 minutes every meeting. Talking of meetings Glynis Goff has resigned so need someone to attend Mear's meetings with JW. 3 people came forward, PB, JB and PH. A ballot was held and PB was elected.</p> <p>JW was asked about the raffle draw for Mears. He responded by saying there is a draw for every month which takes place every 4/6 month. A letter is sent to tenant and if in 1st time Mears visit, automatically go into draw. JW has a copy of winning person and village they live in.</p> <p>After much discussion it was decided to have 6 official meetings a year. They will be in October, December, February, April, June and August (May be July as don't usually have meeting in August). Also 4 informal meetings in September, November, March and May. (September's meeting may be the first informal meeting or be used to finalise the election process.) Meetings will be at Waterbeach from 6 to 8pm (time was voted on, all said yes except for 2 who abstained). This will be reviewed in a year's time.</p> <p>PM said the next TPAS training is next Thursday 11th July, at Cambourne from 10am to 1pm.</p> <p>TP elections - Need to send in statement by end of July if standing for election. At present looks like there will be 15/16 standing. Discussion followed regarding if only 15 are they duly elected. PM will look into this. Will know by the end of the month how many standing and can talk further at September's meeting. AP pointed out that there needs to be an AGM and election of officer's next March.</p>	PM
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>PB asked if Mears not turning up to meetings, could this not be part of their service contract. Would be duty bound then to come and give report. We should put this forward to South Cambs. HP said you are always on about Mears but they have</p>	

	<p>always done a good job for me. I know they are not squeaky clean, but I am sticking up for them and suggest someone goes and sees them. WH said will look at business part of contract. KPI's are sent to us. PM added that the majority of time they do a good job. Different views on getting to meetings and report.</p> <p>HP said the grass at Cottenham (Coolidge Gdns), had not been cut properly. Was told to report this to his Housing Officer. WH said they have new equipment, will go back to SP Landscape and find out why. PB said they do a good job at Willingham. AL said Don Carver has said at meetings if any problems go to him.</p> <p>WH said this is PM's last meeting and we wish him best wishes for the future.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Date and Venue of next meeting</p> <p>Monday 2nd September - 18:00 to 20:00 at Denson Close, Waterbeach</p>	