

2	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes from the meeting held at Bourn on 18 April 2019 were taken as read, agreed as a true record, and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3	<p>Matters arising There were some disapproving comments about the charges for the use of the Communal Rooms at Christmas. See item 6 for further discussion and comment.</p>	
4	<p>Hazel Smith – SCDC Lead Councillor for Housing Councillor Smith explained some of the major changes and reorganisation taking place within SCDC at various staff levels. A new CEO, Liz Watts, currently working with East Herts District Council but living in Suffolk, has been appointed and will taking up the position in September. There will be no permanent replacement for Stephen Hills as Director of Housing but the work is currently being shared by Geoff Clark and Heather Wood. Peter Moston's job as Resident Involvement Team Leader is currently being advertised for a replacement.</p> <p>Central government have changed some of the rules and is now allowing local councils to borrow more for use in building council houses at both affordable and social rent levels. SCDC are taking 36 units on the new development being built opposite Comberton Village College.</p> <p>At Northstowe, in the planned new town centre, a development of 81 affordable flats for the over-55s with close access, not only to shops, but also a community hub, doctor's surgery, parish council offices, etc. is being planned. These are going to be built by a company called Urban Splash who use modular homes, built elsewhere and delivered to the site to be simply bolted together resulting in quicker builds. They are also designed to be much more energy efficient.</p> <p>It is intended to future-proof housing with new properties being zero carbon rated. It is also being considered, on some sheltered schemes, that a central system supplying heating from ground source pumps could be fitted with both oil and gas being phased out.</p> <p>Responding to a question about the availability of money to build new housing but that there was not enough to repair roads and properties, Cllr Smith explained that the borrowing from central government was similar to a mortgage whilst the cost of repairs was taken from the housing budget and rent accounts.</p> <p>Cllr Smith was asked about the size of the waiting list for housing from SCDC. All social and affordable housing was dealt with by HomeLink and that included other nearby councils and many of the housing associations across the area. The SCDC waiting list was over three thousand a few years ago but those on the list were asked to re-enrol every few years and the number is currently down around 1200. SCDC had an average in excess of fifty new properties planned over the next three years. That figure does not include those at Northstowe for which planning permission has not yet been applied though hopefully that will be within the next couple of years.</p> <p>A resident from Duxford complained about the number of potholes on that sheltered scheme's roads. Shirley Stephen responded to this question explaining that Liam Flatters had been out and photographed the area and the evidence had now been passed to the surveyors for consideration. Shirley contacted Sharon estate officer and works have now been completed.</p>	

<p>5</p>	<p>Mears – Helen Leftley & Steve Ball Helen apologized that Lee Clements had been unable to attend and that Steve Ball had come along as a replacement. Rather than attempt to explain anything about the Mears set-up the floor was open to any questions and/or problems.</p> <p>On behalf of another resident they were asked, following an assessment for a new kitchen, how long would it be before work commenced. At the same time it was pointed out that Duxford Communal rooms had also been promised a new kitchen. Shirley Stephen explained that kitchens were not fitted by Mears and that Wayne Newman was trying to get things organized. Shirley contacted Wayne and plans have now been approved and works due to start imminently.</p> <p>It was asked why the Handyman service could not supply parts for comparatively minor repairs. Whilst some work could be easily identified, many residents would be unable to identify technical/specialist parts. Helen and Steve explained that it was the resident's responsibility to supply parts but that they could visit to assess what was required so that the resident could obtain them and that they would then visit a second time to complete the repair. This would of course mean that the resident would have to pay twice, for a minimum of thirty minutes, even if identifying the part only took a couple of minutes. The resident was not impressed. The Handyman service was generally praised. Another resident had asked whether it would be possible to have an electrical socket fitted inside a large walk-in cupboard so that such as a freezer could be installed but that had been refused, not by Mears, but by their Estate Officer. Shirley Stephen said that should be queried with Wayne Newman.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Questions - Shirley Stephen – SCDC Community Impact Team Leader A resident from Coolidge Gardens, Cottenham asked about an overgrown hedge at number 64 which was obstructing the footpath and also about the amount of rubbish being left at the nearby garage site. Shirley said that the rubbish amounted to fly-tipping and that she would speak to the correct department to get it sorted. Email sent to Michelle Benstead SEO to arrange for collection.</p> <p>Despite having been discussed at the previous forum meeting there was considerable disquiet about the charges being upheld by SCDC for the use of the Communal Rooms by residents for family parties over the Christmas holiday period whilst at any other time of the year there was no additional charge. Either way this amounted to the hall not being available for general use and therefore penalised those with large/r families who wanted to get together. Once again it was pointed out that leaseholder agreements stated that 'it was an extension of one's living space to be used as required' for which all residents contributed through their service charge. Birthday or family parties at any other time of the year could have the same effect of excluding other residents but was not subject to any additional charge. One resident said that any private party should not exclude the use of other facilities such as the laundry by other residents which was agreed by everyone. The access to such as the laundry varied for scheme to scheme but nobody had ever been refused access, even if it meant going through the main hall. Shirley produced a copy of the booking form and explained its contents. Another question raised was where residents living alone could go at Christmas if the hall had been booked for a private party. One scheme cooked and offered Christmas dinner to all those living alone. It was then raised about what happened when someone's birthday fell on Christmas Day. It would not be a Christmas party, just a birthday gathering.</p>	<p>SS</p>

	<p>The use of the laundry equipment was raised as, at one scheme, only five of twenty-five residents used it which meant that everyone else was paying for the use of the facility but not taking advantage so why was there not an additional charge for their use to those who used them. Shirley pointed out that it was resident's choice as to whether they used the facilities which were there for everyone. She also said that when the TPG surveyed the use of the Communal Rooms the majority of residents wanted there to be no charge for the use of the laundry. This was strongly refuted by those member of the TPG Scrutiny team present who said that the opposite was found to be true.</p> <p>Signs have now been placed in all communal buildings: re bookings to make a fairer system for all also communal use charging policy updated., this has been agreed by Debbie Barrett and Cllr Hazel Smith.</p> <p>Residents from Great Shelford asked whose idea it was to allow the parish council to take over the grass-cutting as it was not being done as well as before. They were advised to contact Debbie Barrett whose department that came under. It was asked whether a list of those members of staff who were on call for any problems could be displayed as residents often didn't know who they were contacting. Shirley said that they were currently short of staff but that all such calls would be transferred to another member of staff, or even herself. A list as suggested would be considered.</p> <p>Shirley Contacted Nicky ESO who has put up relevant info on notice board. Telephones should always be diverted to another member of staff but with holidays and sickness cannot always guarantee who will pick up.</p> <p>Shirley once again said that SCDC want the rooms used more and that some were hardly used at all. It is being proposed that St Vigors, Fulbourn is returned to its original status as a bungalow as it was the least used of all. One member of the TPG commented that the review of Communal Rooms undertaken by the TPG Scrutiny team had been rejected by SCDC despite the views of many residents being taken into account. He was very disappointed that the council had then put out a review questionnaire which appeared to reverse the TPG results and had subsequently started their own review which had not been completed, having stopped after less than half had been reviewed with no outcome being announced. This review should be restarted urgently and completed rather than leave many scheme residents in limbo as to the future plans. Contacted Kate Swann to ask where we are at now with review hand outs will be given at sheltered forum.</p> <p>Residents from both Duxford and Chapelfield Way, Sawston complained about the excessive use of weedkiller. Mant residents had lost plants in their garden because of this action. Shirley was asked who decided which shrubs on the schemes are cut back and explained that previously Estate Officers would walk their schemes to decide but that, more recently, SPLandscapes used their maps of each area. The map at one scheme is dated 2008, should that not be updated? Shirley said she would investigate. In Steven Close, Cottenham the hedges were only being trimmed at the sides whilst the top was being allowed to get higher and higher. Shirley said that whilst shrub cuts were currently in hand the hedges were generally only done in November each year.</p> <p>Passed all items re spraying and hedges to relevant SEO to contact SP.</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>SS</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Any other business All relevant questions had already been taken in the previous item.</p>	

8	Next meeting The next meeting of the forum will be 10.00am – midday, 17 October 2019 at Wisbey's Yard, Haslingfield, CB23 1NF.	
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