

Cheshire Regional Consultative Committee

MINUTES

of the meeting held on Tuesday 8th December, 2009

Present: Eric Jones, Grant McKenzie, Rachel Shearin, Margaret Frain, Alan Winchester, Stan Snowdon, Sylvia Holland, Brian Campbell, Bridie O'Reilly, Philip Bradley, Sheila Clarke, Andrei Szatkowski, Alex Morrish, David Wride, Geraldine Porter (Minutes)

Observers: Bill McQuinn, Janet Ellis

Apologies: Jean Fagan, Bill O'Hara

		Action
1	The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming Bill McQuinn and Janet Ellis as Observers to the meeting. Bill is a resident of a rural rented scheme at Kettlethulme and Janet is a resident at Bakers Villas, a sheltered scheme in Congleton.	
2	Minutes - A correction was made to the list of attendees and apologies for absence. Jean was present.	
3	Matters arising <i>Asset Management</i> – Rachel had received notification from Asset Management that Greengates would be painted internally before the end of the financial year. <i>Communication with Neighbourhoods</i> – Eric asked if there had been any communication with the neighbourhood team about future projects and the budgets. Alex said that the budget setting process was underway and Asset Management had been in touch with the Neighbourhood Team to ask for information on possible future projects. However it was an improvement on last year's process. <i>Away day</i> – The proposed Away day for RCC members, mentioned in other RCC minutes had been postponed. <i>Priesty Fields Community Chest bid</i> – Alan asked about the Priesty Fields revised application which had been approved by the Informal meeting. A discussion followed about the procedure for dealing with bids. A proper procedure needed to be put in place. Rachel reported that the gardeners had replanted the Community Chest area at Greengates and were putting in bushes and roses for no charge. <i>Complaints DVD and Harrogate Conference</i> – Stan had noted that there was mention of a Complaints DVD in the Maritime minutes. Andrei said it was shown to staff as a training aid. There was also mention in some Minutes of the Harrogate	

	<p>Conference which some RCC members had attended. Andrei said that the Harrogate Housing Conference was held every year. Eric said that if anyone wished to attend the Conference they could and they should look out for details of it for next year.</p> <p><i>Resident of the Year</i> - Stan had read in the other Group's minutes that the Resident of the Year had been cancelled. This had been reported some time ago in Belong.</p> <p>4. Sale & Timperley into Cheshire</p> <p>Alex was very pleased to announce that there was to be an informal transfer of management arrangements of Sale & Timperley properties from Maritime to Templar. Alex passed round a consultation letter which was intended for circulation to all residents concerned and asked for comments from the RCC members before it was sent out. The management arrangements would be slightly different for Leaseholders and Graham Bennett, Director of Home Ownership, would be involved in discussions on protocols, e.g. re-sales etc. Sheila said that there was a meeting the following day with leaseholders and Graham, and this matter may be raised there. Grant said that this was a good start. The RCC had talked about this for years and it was good that some action had been taken. Eric Jones said that there were management implications – the legalities would follow. Grant said that communication was very important so that everyone, staff and residents, knew what was happening. Sheila said that she and the other residents felt remote and out of things. There will be one week for CRCC member comments then the letter could be distributed.</p> <p>5. Rent Increases</p> <p>Regenda would follow the Government line and decrease the rents by 0.9% at the next review date. Brian asked if Housing Associations, etc. would get a Government subsidy. Rents this year had risen by 5.3%. Members asked why isn't the percentage the same at Ullswater Mansions (7.3%) and Covington Place (7.1%). Alex explained that there were variations across the Cheshire region. Some people live in higher value and some in lower value areas. There is an ongoing process of rent restructuring which is due to end in 2012 to try to make rents similar across the region. A number of problems with Service Charges had been reported and these were being sorted out. Most of the Service Charges would not change from what had been quoted but some of the descriptions will change, e.g. electric gates should have been door entry systems. Eric said that the rents should only be raised by 2.5%. Alex said that Regenda don't have authority to</p>	<p>AM</p>
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	<p>veer away from the formula. The formula is for Rent Restructuring imposed by Government and monitored via the TSA. He said that other costs were increasing e.g. energy costs, cost of borrowing, etc. Rachel said that she paid £20 more than others in the same building. Alex said there was a difference between those on Fair Rents and Assured Tenants and that individual concerns should be raised outside of the meeting. Philip said that the legislation states the maximum figure and there should be leeway below that. Andrei said that rent setting was hugely complicated across all areas. Regenda has to abide by Government rules. He suggested that a member of the Finance Team be invited to the next meeting to explain and answer any questions. Eric said he would look into the legal situation. Brian remarked that Cheshire Peaks and Plains had a lower percentage rent increase. Grant suggested that there should be a separate meeting about rents and service charges as the Committee needed as much information as possible to understand and discuss the matter further. Philip said there should be a moratorium on rents until the matter had been fully discussed and explained. Andrei said that he could organise a meeting in January. It was proposed by Alan, seconded by Philip and carried unanimously that Andrei should organise a meeting in January about rents and service charges.</p>	AS
6.	<p>Website</p> <p>Grant reported that the Website was running as normal and visual links had been added, e.g. Fix my Street. The TSA comparison site had been added with rent levels, etc. Members were asked to contribute to the website and to encourage others to do so. Alan suggested that there could be Podcasts.</p>	
7.	<p>Belong</p> <p>Eric Jones said that Stan's report will be in the next edition of Belong.</p>	
8	<p>Recycling</p> <p>Sylvia said that she was most concerned about the lack of recycling at Greengates. She wanted the best for her children and grandchildren's futures. Residents at Greengates were carrying material for recycling to the recycling centre. Alex said that the Neighbourhood staff had been pursuing the Council on the matter of recycling and had eventually received a response from Cheshire East Council which was not very satisfactory. Members of staff were still going to try to arrange a meeting on site but in the meantime Alex suggested that</p>	

	<p>residents should tackle Councillors and officers of the Council as Council Tax payers. Regenda would help with information on who to contact and in drafting letters. The Local Authority has targets for landfill and incineration.</p>	SH
9	<p>HSC Report</p> <p>Eric reported that there would be no rent increase next year. Regenda had purchased M&Y. There were many advantages to having M&Y in the Regenda Group. Apprenticeships would be offered by them for Regenda residents, and also Seddons and the Wyre Contractor, LBM would be offering apprenticeships. Sheila asked about the three year contract with Seddons. Again, the advantages were that as well as offering apprenticeships there would also be funding available for community initiatives. Various matters were brought up about the quality of work from Seddons and the fact that they had been given a contract for three years.</p>	
10	<p>Communications</p> <p>Grant was asking how communications could be improved. Although the Cheshire web site was up and running how could we ensure people used it as a means of communication. The consensus was that it was up to individuals but wherever possible people should be encouraged to contribute to and use the web site as much as possible.</p>	ALL
11	<p>Sheltered Single Interest Group</p> <p>Janet attended the last meeting of the SSIG with other RCC members. They were being taken out to various schemes to have a look at them. Andrei said that Regenda had 25-30 sheltered schemes. Sheltered schemes were eligible for community chest applications</p>	
12	<p>Community Chest</p> <p>Ringstead Close had applied for £500 to develop a small area, which is a small dirt track between numbers 15 and 14, into a small garden. This proposal was recommended by Alex, proposed by Eric Jones and carried by the Committee.</p>	GSP
13	<p>Neighbourhood Plans</p> <p>Alex submitted a report which was included in the Papers</p> <p>£10k expenditure had been allocated, the majority for Paladin Place fencing to be added to a low wall to deter nuisance</p>	

	<p>youths.</p> <p>Stan asked about the money that had been donated to the Tytherington Links Open Space Project. Alex explained that this was a £100k project which had been funded by Landfill tax, Groundwork Trust, etc. Regenda had given a relatively small donation to the project as our residents use the area for recreation.</p>	
14	<p>Regional Director's Overview</p> <p>Andrei submitted a written report which was included in the Papers circulated</p>	
15	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Philip commented that the residents would prefer to have local contractors where possible. It was explained that there were cost savings with the economy of scale by one contractor being used for a larger area.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the timing of meetings. The meeting room was booked up to 1 p.m. and the committee should be aware of that when conducting meetings as often there was another group booked in to the next slot. It was suggested that the meeting be held once every two months but it was thought that this wasn't feasible – for various reasons. However, the minutes should be available for the Informal meeting.</p> <p>Eric had produced a list of future meetings and dates which Gerry would book . The next meeting was the informal meeting at Wilmslow Library on 2nd February 2010 at 11 a.m.</p> <p>N.B. The date for the Informal CRCC meeting was subsequently changed to Wednesday 3rd February because of the unavailability of the Library on the date requested.</p>	<p>GSP</p> <p>GSP</p>