

Minutes

Leaseholder Forum

5th November 2009

17:00 – 19:00

Boardroom, 14 Hounds Gate



Present: Simon Temporal (ST), Richard Holland (RH), Jennie Bellamy (JB), Ann Gardner (AG), Martin Gardner (MG), Kate Bowley (KB), Sheila Thwaites (ShThw), Carol Tomkiss (CT), Billy Pollock (BP), Jim Allabarton, Robin Stalvies, Graydon Peacock (GP), Andrew Filer (notes), Audrey Davies (AD), Sandra Stones (SS),

Apologies: Jon Short , Maria Hemphill, Eddie Johnson-Flint, Val Cleaves, Anthony Slater-Davison (NCH), Philip Matley (NCC)

	Items	Action
1.0	Welcome	
	KB opened the meeting and thanked all for attending.	
2.0	Minutes of the Last Forum Monday 21 September	
	<p>Those in attendance went through the Minutes and the following comments were made.</p> <p>Page 1 – Digital aerial work – GP was in attendance at the meeting so any issues regarding the digital switchover would be dealt with then.</p> <p>LRRT were tasked to invite GP to future meetings – this action had been resolved.</p> <p>Page 5 – An action for LRRT was to get Chris Bailey to attend a future forum. Philip Matley is now the main contact point for StreetScene he was unable to attend the meeting but will attend the next one in January. Those in attendance were not happy that a StreetScene representative was unable to attend as they were given plenty of notice.</p> <p>Page 8 – representative from Planned Maintenance to attend Forum – Anthony Slater-Davison gave his apologies for the meeting, but GP was in attendance. Anthony will come to a future meeting.</p>	

	<p>AG pointed out a slight amendment to the Minutes – rather than ‘<i>other paintwork is being neglected</i>’ this should read ‘<i>other paintwork might be neglected</i>’</p> <p>JS has made the necessary amendments to the previous Minutes.</p> <p>Page 9 – AG window quote – replacement window quote permission dispensation is given if Leaseholders use our partners. If they are using another company then they need to get the required authorisation from LRRT. The same scenario applies with door replacements.</p>	
3.0	Update on Leaseholder Manager	
	<p>RH addressed the Forum and advised that ST was taking on Sam Else’s role and was the Interim Leaseholder & Rechargeable Repairs Manager.</p> <p>He advised that the post will be reviewed after consultation with the Forum.</p>	
4.0	Digital Switchover Update	
	<p>GP announced that he will be attending all future forums to provide a link with Asset Management to bring consistency and keep Leaseholders informed.</p> <p>Opting out – GP advised that NCH are not currently accepting opt-outs but this is being reviewed for smaller blocks – the aim of this is to avoid future problems where equipment will need to be installed.</p> <p>Of the 4200 properties requiring digital switchover work, around 3800 have been completed, they are currently ahead of the programme and aim to complete the work by October 2010.</p> <p>GP advised that the operatives are currently in the Bestwood area.</p> <p>GP stated that they are looking at removing all the dishes and aerials on blocks throughout the City to ensure all residents are using the new communal aerials. Redundant dishes/aerials are being removed initially with others being removed when properties become void.</p> <p>Rediffusion boxes? – these are being removed internally , no external works.</p> <p>AG – commended the team on doing a good job & the fact that</p>	

	<p>they cleaned up after themselves.</p> <p>JB asked what happens if operatives are not able to access the property or are not being let in.</p> <p>GP advised that an initial letter is sent to each property 2 weeks prior to the work taking place informing them that contractors will be on site. Engineers card 3 times and then a final notification letter is sent explaining that after 4 weeks their television signal cannot be guaranteed. HPM's then contact residents who the contractors have not been able to get hold of. GP stressed that contractors will not break into properties. GP advised that until mutual consent is received, contractors can leave discarded wires on the outside of buildings.</p> <p>SS – mentioned that she saw on Watchdog that they don't need new aerials,GP's response was that he didn't see the programme so was unable to comment on the context of the quote.</p> <p>GP advised that some systems allow a digital system but not the full array of channels, he also stated that the communal aerials being installed are cable aerials provided by Virgin Media.</p> <p>KB asked if set-top boxes will be obsolete – GP said not necessarily, but he did stress they don't want people to think they will need a new tv – they can get a freeview box unless they already have one.</p> <p>Some attendees recounted some negative experiences they had encountered with particular reference to contractors leaving a mess and joins in all the cables. GP apologised on their behalf for any inconvenience caused.</p> <p>ShThw asked whether the installation had been completed in any empty properties in Newark Crescent ready for when new tenants move in.</p> <p>GP said they were working closely with Voids and try and complete work when properties are empty. GP said he would check if any affected properties in Newark Crescent had been done and if this was not the case he will contact the contractors and deal accordingly.</p>	GP
5.0	Grounds Maintenance Update	
	<p>Due to no representative from StreetScene being in attendance it was agreed to refer this item to the next meeting in January.</p> <p>During the meeting AG raised the following questions:-</p> <p>1) Should grass cuttings be swept up as part of the service?</p>	

	<p>2) Weeding is never carried out in the drying area. Whose responsibility is this?</p> <p>3) Do tenants/leaseholders have to apply weed killer themselves?</p> <p>4) Should the raking of grass and clearing away be carried out as part of the grass cutting procedure?</p> <p>These questions were passed on to StreetScene for a response.</p> <p>Subsequent to the meeting the Garden Assistance Scheme Officer provided the following responses</p> <p>“Answer to questions 1 & 4 – Grass cuttings should be removed from any hard surfaces, our staff normally use blowers and blow the grass back on to the lawn areas. We do not at the moment remove the cuttings from the grassed areas once they have been cut.</p> <p>2) Weeding is City service responsibility and weeds are sprayed twice a year in the communal areas during the months of April-May and Oct-Nov.</p> <p>3) Tenants and leaseholders do not have to apply weedkiller themselves.”</p>	
6.0	Secure Warm Modern Communal Works Update	
	<p>Anthony Slater-Davison was unable to attend but is happy to meet with any individuals who have issues. It was suggested that the Forum compile a list questions which can be passed to Anthony and the responses can be fed back in the Minutes.</p> <p>One question raised related to Fascias – GP provided a response to this and advised that the wooden areas not replaced under the improvements scheme will be painted during this scheme and included in future planned programmes. GP did stress that the work would take place ‘where money allows’.</p>	
7.0	Value for Money	
	<p>LRRT are looking at trying to cut management fees. One means is reducing the frequency and size of the dedicated Leaseholder newsletter ‘New Lease’. One proposal is to send out a smaller leaflet (A5 size) of around 12 pages twice a year.</p> <p>The current arrangement costs £900 per edition so is £3600 per year as there are 4 editions. The new arrangement would still cost £900 per edition but the annual cost would be significantly</p>	

	<p>reduced to £1800 but each edition would contain more information.</p> <p>It was suggested that NCH News can be used to include any relevant information between issues. Postage could also be saved by sending 'New Lease' with NCH News.</p> <p>Those in attendance agreed to this change.</p> <p>LRRT will undertake a trial run of an electronic format to 200+ leaseholders who have provided an email address (this is 1/5 of our customer base) with the option of a hard copy being available upon request this would save printing and delivery costs.</p>	
8.0	Management Update	
	<p>ST advised that the Northgate Service Charge module has been implemented but there are some issues. This has meant that only a holding letter has been sent out regarding any queries. ST is managing the escalation policy part of the module and suggested that if Leaseholders are disputing only part of their invoice he recommended that payment is made towards aspects of the invoice customers are happy with to prevent any budgeting problems. ST is also looking at sharing payments to cover differing costs to stop escalation letters being sent.</p> <p>BP said he had negative amounts on one of his invoices so wanted clarification on what has actually been charged for. ST explained the new 2 invoice method which allowed Leaseholders to budget and plan payments rather than having one large payment.</p> <p>RH wants to work with the group to work out the best way for the Invoices to be presented and what information is required.</p> <p>ST is working with the Northgate consultants to resolve issues so will be able to answer the queries ASAP.</p> <p>A query was raised regarding Standing Orders e.g. paying £30 per month towards overall amount of £300 – it was advised that Standing Orders will stop.</p> <p>Why are estimated invoices being used?</p> <p>ST said that it was seen as good customer service to help leaseholders budget and not get one big invoice.</p> <p>ShThw said she wanted a system of basic repairs to show when works are being done – it was suggested a notice be placed in the blocks which operatives can mark off when communal repairs</p>	

	<p>have been done.</p> <p>ST said that quarterly statements showing which communal repairs have been done will be sent out from April 2010 which should help alleviate this.</p> <p>SS raised the issue about electric lighting checks – ST advised that Chris Raynor is taking this matter forward.</p> <p>CT asked if Leaseholders pay for scaffolding – ST advised that yes they do, the cost incurred for the scaffolding is included in the cost of the repair being undertaken – however LRRT will clarify the situation with Responsive Repairs and will feed back the response through the Minutes.</p> <p>CT raised the point that she had to pay for damage done to the property and was advised to contact her insurance company as she may be able to reclaim any costs.</p> <p>RH – Management charge options are being looked at by the Executive Management Team and will then go to NCC. The proposal of a 3 tier management charge looks to be the most favourable option.</p> <p>BP asked if this would be reviewed due to their being less resources in LRRT.</p> <p>RH said yes, this will be taken into account which could result in a reduction in the management charge – RH stressed that any decision will come back to the Forum for discussion/approval.</p>	LRRT
9.0	A.O.B.	
	<p>Caretaking – weekend work – a pilot scheme is underway at Newark Crescent with a view to removing this service which will alter service charges where appropriate.</p> <p>Major works consultation – a flow chart entitled ‘Nottingham City Homes – Major work Section 20 Consultation Process’ was passed around. LRRT are looking to improve the consultation process and give Leaseholders as much notice of major works as possible. If work is likely to cost each Leaseholder at least £250 then we need to follow the formal Consultation process under S20, if this is not adhered to then a maximum of £250 can be charged.</p> <p>Leaseholders were directed to the Lease Advisory Groups website www.lease-advice.org for further information.</p>	

	<p>Business Plan consultation – NCH are looking at holding a meeting to look into this and want to get Leaseholders views and opinions on priorities for the next 5 years. At the present time, the most likely date at the moment is Friday 20 November at 2pm.</p> <p>Janet Glass will write to any interested parties, any comments can be made through either Janet Glass or ST.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting: Monday 18 January 2010 Time: 5.00 pm Venue: 14 Hounds Gate</p>	