

# Minutes

Leaseholder Forum  
31<sup>ST</sup> January 2011  
17:00 – 19:00  
Board Room,  
14 Hounds Gate



## **Present:**

**Staff:** Simon Temporal (ST), Jon Short (JS) (notes), John Marsh (JM) (NCC City Services) Andrew Filer (AF) (NCH), Kay Gott (NCH), Ian Perry (IP) (NCH), Jackie Handley (JH) (NCC Insurance)

**Leaseholders:** Kate Bowley (KB), Robin Stalvies (RS), Sandra Stones (SS), Audrey Davies (AD), Billy Pollock (BP), , Carol Tomkiss (CT), , Dave Dunne (DD), Natasha Pennant (NP) (NCH Board Member)

**Guests:** Sarah Taylor (Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing), Helen Issa (Chair Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing Leaseholder Forum), H Plumprtre (Leaseholder – Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing),

**Apologies:** Ann Gardner, Jennie Bellamy, Eddie Johnson-Flint, Sheila Thwaites,

	<b>Items</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b>	
	<p>KB opened the meeting and everyone introduced themselves. KB advised there were some visitors from Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing in attendance as KB and Sheila Thwaites met them at a EMPTF (East Midlands Tenancy Participation Forum) meeting in Leicester and invited them to attend.</p>	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Annual General Meeting</b>	
	<p>AF addressed the meeting and advised that part of the meeting would be the AGM where a new Chair &amp; Vice-Chair would be elected. AF said the process would be fairly straightforward as there had only been one nomination for post. AF asked the current Chair to go through some of the key achievements during her tenure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The repairs statements being issued in advance so people could query them earlier.</li><li>• The quarterly Leaseholder newsletter was now an insert in News from Nottingham City Homes</li></ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaseholder Surgery before the Forum where personal issues can be raised.</li> <li>• Efficiency savings – Leaseholder Forum was now held quarterly rather than monthly or bi-monthly</li> <li>• Pilot of weekend caretaking had been carried out at Newark Crescent which had been successful and was being reviewed for possible use in other areas across the City. IP added that the savings in this area were being used elsewhere in the Caretaking service.</li> </ul> <p>AF said NCH received good input from the Leaseholder Forum.</p> <p>DD raised the point that the newsletter often arrived after the meeting had been held so it was too late for him to attend.</p> <p>ST said LRRT would check with Communciations &amp; Marketing regarding delivery dates.</p> <p>KB was then asked to formally stand down as Chair and was asked to leave the room so the voting could take place. Sheila Thwaites stood down in absentia.</p> <p>AF asked for a show of hands to support KB as the new Chair and 5 leaseholders in attendance raised their hand. JS advised that prior to the meeting, 3 other leaseholders who were unable to attend had already submitted their votes for KB.</p> <p>AF then asked for a show of hands in support of Sheila Thwaites as the new Vice-Chair. Two nominations for Sheila had been received prior to the meeting from leaseholders unable to attend and 4 others in attendance raised their hands in support of Sheila.</p> <p>AF then invited KB to re-join the meeting and advised that KB had duly been re-elected as Chair and Sheila Thwaites had been re-elected as Vice-Chair in absentia.</p>	<b>ST</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Customer Service Centre - Consultation</b>	
	<p>ST was asked by Mark Lawson (Performance Improvement Manager) &amp; Kate Watret (Repairs Contact Centre Service Manager) to get feedback from attendees regarding the proposed Customer Service Centre and how they would like the service to operate. ST went through a powerpoint presentation and a number of questions were posed.</p> <p><u>What do customers feel is important when contacting NCH?</u></p>	

Feedback provided was:

- personal contact,
- talking to the right person first time rather than being passed on to different sections,
- customers felt that they shouldn't have to write in all the time,
- being fobbed off,
- making sure information provided was in plain English and making sure customers are told the right person to write to in response to their queries.

What services would people want to see provided by the Customer Service Centre?

- An up to date statement of what people owe.
- Dates repairs have/will be done and what was done.

What hours would you like the centre to be open?

Feedback provided was 24/7 & 8am until 8pm

What would be a good name for the centre?

Suggestions provided were CT - 'One Call' and many said Customer Service Centre was fine.

We were thinking of a new phone number to reflect the change; any thoughts?

NP said not to use an 0300 number as some mobiles don't recognise them and they are not always free.

The fewer numbers customer have the better so if they only need one number for every service then that will be better for them.

Some mobiles/phone-lines don't accept unknown numbers either.

Are there any tenants & leaseholders who may be adversely affected by the changes?

Some attendees referred to people with mental health problems, but ST advised that they should continue getting the same support they currently get.

Are there any issues that you would like us to be aware of and take into account?

An attendee said that one of NCH's performance indicators was to respond to calls within 18 seconds and the question was posed whether this would still be achievable.

	<p>Also the cost of calls.</p> <p>IP said that mobile caretakers do have hand-held technology so can report repairs straightaway. He also advised that Nottingham On Call would provide a back up number.</p>	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Minutes of the Last Forum – Monday 11 October 2010</b>	
	<p>The Minutes of the last meeting were projected on the screen as KB advised it was agreed at the last meeting that we would not send out hard copies of the Minutes to save money.</p> <p>JM Public Realm Manager from NCC City Services was in attendance and fed back on some actions from the last meeting.</p> <p>JM said that legal opinion varies between NCH and NCC, NCC are bound by the Highways Act and it is important to keep the main highways open to keep the City running. Responsibility for this lies with Highways.</p> <p>From an NCH viewpoint it is difficult to say if gritting is a caretakers responsibility or not.</p> <p>IP met with JH from NCC insurance section and a Solicitor and there is no legal obligation to spread grit. However a gritting policy has been developed which identifies NCH will endeavour to grit areas where most vulnerable tenants are with priority being given to sheltered schemes. Grit is spread on pathways up to communal areas subject to there being an adequate supply of grit available.</p> <p>JH said there is inconsistency in this area regarding who did what as there is no duty on NCC or NCH to grit footpaths and NCH have no responsibility where the highway is adopted.</p> <p><b>The major trunk roads and main roads are priorities.</b></p> <p>It is in the eyes of the law what duty on NCC/NCH is. However JH confirmed that there is no LEGAL duty to grit. In key areas NCC/NCH risk assess communal routes especially around sheltered complexes.</p> <p>JM reiterated that NCC have to comply with the Highways Act and the current scheme in operation is that the main trunk roads are gritted dependent on grit supplies.</p> <p>At the last meeting Ann Gardner (Leaseholder) asked about additional garden waste bins being provided, JM advised that an additional garden waste bin had been delivered to the area concerned the week after the last meeting.</p>	

	<p>JM also advised that Estate Inspection were being carried out with Mark Sunderland to check the state of grounds maintenance etc across the City.</p> <p>Repairs Working Group – ST said that Chris Raynor had left NCH and that Simon Marlow (Quality Systems and Improvement Manager) had taken over some of his duties. Simon will be asked to attend the next Forum to discuss quality of repairs. ST advised that all the repairs queries received as a result of the repairs statements issued in April had been passed to Simon Marlow for verification.</p>	<b>ST</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Insurance Explanation – Jackie Handley</b>	
	<p>JH addressed the Forum and advised that the majority of Leases sold after October 1990 clearly state that the Leaseholder has to have the external parts and structure of their building insured through NCC. There is also optional extended/top up insurance for the internal parts of the building available for an additional premium.</p> <p>JH gave an example that if the flat burned down, and the leaseholder only had the basic insurance then only the bricks and mortar would be rebuilt and the leaseholder would be liable for the remaining costs if they did not have the extended cover.</p> <p>Contents insurance – Leaseholders are able to take advantage of the scheme offered to our tenants.</p> <p>As regards any Leases which were first sold prior to October 1990, there was no obligation on the leaseholder to take out the NCC scheme so the onus is on them to take out their own insurance.</p> <p>The question was asked about claiming in the case of an incident which was not your fault, JH advised she would recommend that leaseholders claim on their own insurance and if they are not on the NCC scheme to seek clarification from their own insurance company regarding this matter, or try and claim from the other party. Basically clarification from the relevant insurance company is the key.</p> <p>BP asked JH why LRRT took over her job. JH advised that this was not the case, NCC Insurance re-structured and JH was successful in her application for another job within the Insurance section. JH advised that it made more sense for the day to day administration of the Leaseholder Building Insurance scheme to move to LRRT as it would save Leaseholders time having to contact NCC for insurance queries and NCH for leasehold</p>	

	<p>queries.</p> <p>JH mentioned that it had been discussed with ST that the aim was to get insurance added to service charge invoices through Northgate as a service charge element rather than a separate invoice.</p> <p>ST then said that if due to IT constraints we were unable to include insurance as an element on service charge invoices. A separate invoice would be raised but all queries payment and payments would still come to LRRT and NCH respectively. ST said we still have JH's support and backing and JH advised that NCC would still tender the block policy to ensure Leaseholders are getting the best premium.</p> <p>CT asked if it was possible to combine buildings and contents insurance as some other providers do. JH said they were currently different schemes with different providers and although the NCC Buildings Insurance was a mandatory requirement under the terms of all leases after October 1990, there is no stipulation that leaseholders have to take our contents insurance through NCH.</p> <p>JH concluded leaseholders should check the wording of their lease to see what they are liable for.</p>	
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Grounds Maintenance – John Marsh / Ian Perry</b>	
	<p>JM addressed the Forum and said he was happy to take on any queries.</p> <p>He advised that the weed control season was about to start as well as hedge-cutting.</p> <p>IP said that they were looking at communal areas in general across the City and were looking to set up focus groups to prioritise where work was required.</p> <p>SS said there was an apple tree to the rear of 1 to 17 Newark Crescent which dropped its apples and nobody picked them up, SS said that she did it last year but wasn't going to do it this year and is concerned that rotting apples will attract flies, wasps etc.</p> <p>SS mentioned that an operative came out in June 2010 and advised that tree branches should be a metre or so away from the buildings which was not the case with some of the trees as SS said branches and leaves fall in gutters and drains and block them up.</p> <p>JM said that until June 2010 there was a combined service which</p>	

	<p>included trees but the service was split last year and the tree section now falls under the Parks service. BP asked why this was, JM said the decision was made by NCC in the best interests of the service and some the tree team had moved to the Parks section but it was unclear how the on-going funding may affect this.</p> <p>NP said referred to hedge cutting and advise that there are usually two cuts a year, one in Spring and another in September/October. If paths are blocked then JM said teams should be proactive and cut them back if they are in the area working and see that an obstruction has been caused but he will take this back to the office and make operatives aware of this.</p> <p>DD asked if the Streetscene staff were trained gardeners? He said they are causing more problems because they often cut plants and leave weeds and when they cut the grass they make it worse as they don't pick up the cuttings and leave the area in a mess.</p> <p>In response JM said they were multi-skilled staff and they should have the skills to carry out the work they are instructed to do, they just need to re-enforce the message that they shouldn't leave areas untidy when they have visited them.</p> <p>KB said that this was a City-wide problem.</p> <p>JM said there are local Supervisors on each Ward who should be aware of issues in particular areas of their wards.</p> <p>Some attendees mentioned that as it was entering lawn cutting season there were often incidents where the grass was not being collected from the street, residents were bringing the grass into their blocks on their shoes which resulted in more work for the Caretakers.</p> <p>DD did ask would it cost more money if the operatives collected the grass as well? The mowers they use did not have grass collection boxes.</p> <p>JM reiterated that they should not be sending operatives out without the requisite skills or experience to do the job they have been instructed to do.</p> <p>IP said that NCH tenant inspectors work closely on the findings of the Estate Inspections and that JM had only been in post since August/September 2010. Residents need to know who the right person to contact is and asked the leaseholders to think about the following question in regards to future funding - where do leaseholders want money spent? Is it on cutting back trees or</p>	<p><b>JM</b></p>
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	<p>picking up fallen apples, so NCH need to make sure that priorities are met.</p> <p>Operatives work to a planned programme of works which means they are all working more efficiently, but it was stressed that although work was planned NCC/NCH also listen to customer feedback and will work to ensure particular areas of concern are addressed.</p> <p>DD said there had been particular issues with grounds maintenance around the Broadwood Road area and said that if the majority of the operatives had been transferred to the Parks section then they should have the required skills to do the job they have been instructed to do.</p> <p>IP said there is no extra money for additional services to be provided so if residents are saying they want NCH/NCC to spend money on something in particular then some other services will have to go.</p>	
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Leasehold Management Update – Simon Temporal</b>	
	<p>ST confirmed that from April 2011, Leaseholder Buildings Insurance invoices will be issued by LRRT. As indicated earlier it is not clear whether this will be included as an element on service charge invoices or will be sent as a separate invoice, it all depends on our IT systems and the software.</p> <p>Insurance payments will be collected by NCH rather than Sundry Income at NCC and ST is working with JH on this project.</p> <p>The question was asked about setting up payment arrangements for Insurance invoices, ST advised that leaseholders are given 31 days to get a payment arrangement in place and that they can pay in instalments.</p> <p>Graydon Peacock from NCH Asset Management was unable to attend the meeting but ST advised that the leaseholders in Clifton will be receiving their digital aerial invoices this week.</p> <p>In May leaseholders in Bestwood, Bulwell and Victoria Centre would receive their digital aerial invoices and affected leaseholders will be informed of the costs before the invoices are issued so they can raise any queries in advance.</p>	
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Value for Money – Simon Temporal</b>	
	<p>To cut costs where possible LRRT will email Minutes to leaseholders.</p>	

	<p>SS said she would still like to receive hers in the post.</p> <p>AF advised that the Tenant &amp; Leaseholder Resource Centre is available for leaseholders to come in and view the Minutes and print them off if they wish to, there are computers with Internet access and printing facilities available for their use, provided they are using them for Leaseholder Forum use then there will be no fee either.</p> <p>After the meeting JS asked the Tenant &amp; Leaseholder Involvement Team whether there would be any technical support provided to Leaseholders who came to Hounds Gate to use the facilities. If Leaseholders needed any assistance then they can contact Hounds Gate reception who will contact the Tenant &amp; Leaseholder Involvement Team and a member of the team will be able to provide assistance.</p> <p>NP asked about the Leaseholder Survey which was referred to in the latest edition of NCH News, she advised that she had completed this and wanted to know what the response rate had been. ST advised that it had been extremely low which had been disappointing.</p>	
<p><b>9.0</b></p>	<p><b>Any other Business</b></p>	
	<p>AF advised that the Tenant &amp; Leaseholder Involvement Team were undertaking a review of the service and were carrying out self assessments with the other NCH resident forums.</p> <p>AF said that attendance at Leaseholder Forums was not brilliant when you compare the fact there are over 1000 leaseholders but attendance was better than most of the other Forums.</p> <p>On a positive note there was a lot of enthusiasm amongst those who did attend who wanted to make sure matters of importance to them were discussed.</p> <p>AF reiterated that holding meetings on a quarterly basis was better.</p> <p>DD asked if meetings could be held at different times or have surgeries at different times to the meeting as a lot of leaseholders work so would probably be unable to attend meetings at 5pm or get to 14 Hounds Gate in time for the meeting.</p> <p>ST advised that LRRT had organised 5 meetings at different venues around the City on several occasions in the evenings and had only had 1 person turn up in total on all 5 events which was not Value For Money but this is something we would be willing to consider again if there is enough interest.</p>	

	BP advised that he had received an incorrectly addressed letter from Tenant & Leaseholder Involvement Team, this was explained by the mail merge system not working correctly.	
	<b>Date of next Meeting</b>	
	<b>Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011</b> <b>Surgery: 4:30pm</b> <b>Leaseholder Forum: 5:00pm</b> <b>Venue: 14 Hounds Gate</b>	