

# Minutes

**Minutes of Sheltered Housing and Telecare Users  
Forum held on  
22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009 @ 2 pm, The Boardroom  
Hounds Gate**

**Present:** Lynn Mitchell - Chair, Bill Garside - Vice Chair, K Bruce – Todd Ct, R Short - Todd Ct, M Wheelhouse - Townsend Ct, M Mutton – Masson Ct, P Wheatherall – Willowbrook Ct, G Burrows – Orchard Ct, D George – Bellevue Ct, A Parkinson – Kersall Ct, D Hayes – Kersall Ct, T Stubbings – Woodthorpe Ct, J Foster – Keverne Cl, C Broom – Kingston Ct, R Haywood – Duchess Gdns, N Croxford – Gabor Ct, F Griffiths – Garfield Ct, T Hill – Selhurst Ct, A Ambrose – Naburn Ct,

**NCH:** Lis Robinson – SHPM, Lisa Richardson – SHPM, Chris Thelen – Repairs, Sue O'Connor – Tenant Leaseholder Team, Carole Donnelly – Tenant and Leaseholder Team.

**Apologies:** Diane Burrup – Sheltered Housing, Barry Taylor – Kingston Court, Carl Cassidy – Streetscene , Ian Perry – Caretaker Services.

**1.0 Welcome Introductions and Apologies**

1.1 Chair welcomed forum members to meeting. Apologies received as detailed above and introductions of attendees made.

1.2 Board just wanted to mention that one of the forum members had sadly passed away, Dorothy Gray from Todd Court, funeral arrangements were given for members wishing to attend.

**2.0 Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising**

2.1 Page 1 - LM fed back that she was chasing the flyers and trying to get people involved. These are to go to other Sheltered Schemes and Tele-care Users to get involved in the creation of the Sheltered Newsletter.

2.2 Page 2 - Carl Cassidy, with regards to cutting their hedges, some people are not getting the back done as they are locking the back gates when out, to be discussed with Carl who will be attending next month's meeting.

**Action**

LM/TP

2.3 Page 3 – The Tenant Handbook has now been mass produced with the amendments made, and will soon be out in every scheme.

SO

2.4 Page 5 – SO Informed the board that the survey will soon be out it will only consist of around 5 questions, on the forum meetings frequency, location etc, There will be a tear off section at the bottom of the questionnaire, so each returned questionnaire will be entered into a Prize Draw and the prize will be a £25 gift voucher for Victoria Centre, which will need to be used by August, to be drawn at the next meeting.

### **3.0 Karen Merriman – Trading Standards.**

Karen introduced herself and explained that she works for trading standards, and as part of her job she has to go to various venues to talk to people in this case Karen can highlight the problems and issues linked with older people.

Karen explained how she deals with two aspects of Trading Standards such as descriptions and labelling, to product safety and retail. Underage sales of products such as cigarettes and fireworks, which often results in the retraction of a licenec or possibly training for the retailer informing them of the impact of the sale, knives etc, and how this has a knock on effect with things such as ASB, statistics have shown that this is proven to be working. Test purchasing is also undertaken to see if retailers will sell products to people underage.

One of the ways in which people can contact the Trading Standards is via the Advice Centre, which will be moving from Mansfield Rd to the Guildhall in the late summer. The Centre will give advice to people about consumer rights and if necessary refer them onto Trading Standards if a case requires more complex work for things such as contractual rights, goods and services and in cases where building works that have been carried out in people's properties and other various scams. They will offer support with filling in forms etc.

It is proven that Older Adults are targeted more with scams for a range of reasons. It is suspected that they are too polite when answering the door. Distraction burglary is also another way in which older people are targeted. This is where one assailant knocks on the front door, and uses various reasons to get the resident to the door and distract them whilst their accomplice will go round the back of the property and burgle the property.

Advice is always given to lock both the front and the back doors of your property. Do not open the door unless you are 100% sure of who it is. Protect yourself by using a door chain when answering the door but remember to take it off once the door is

locked. Karen advised If you get a caller that you are not expecting then always ask them to re-visit tomorrow or arrange an appointment and check with the company they say they are from by using the telephone number off a bill or from the telephone book.

Karen informed the forum that a lot of scams use the Water Board as the company they are calling on behalf of. The Water Board does not exist anymore as Severn Trent now serve the Nottingham area. You can also now ring companies such as Severn Trent and ask to have a password set up, for when a representative visits your property.

Karen advised if anyone is unsure they can contact their local Police Station if they know the number, or 999 if they suspect that there is an issue and especially if the perpetrator is still around in the area. Where possible try and get a description of the person.

Karen then went on to talk about rogue traders even though they are less likely to be visiting Sheltered properties they target hundreds of Owner Occupiers. Trading Standards still receive hundreds of complaints per year of unsatisfactory or incomplete and in some cases no works at all carried out at properties with asking prices of around £10,000 - £30,000 and in one case in excess of £200,000.

Karen said that building works should always be carried out by reputable builders. Karen talked about a leaflet that has been devised for the public to call, to get a list of at least 200 different trades who can be recommended. This also included the Disability Living Centre will help people with purchasing the correct mobility scooter, Karen suggested that they be invited to a future meeting.

Another scam that is happening is with Prize Draws. A member of the public receives a letter telling them that have been successful and need to send money in order to release their prize fund usually from Foreign Lotterey mostly Spanish and Canadian. There are also get rich quick schemes, investment scams, Miracle cures, clairvoyant scams where people are being threatened that they will be struck down with illnesses if they do not send money.

One of the problems is that people cannot recognise what is genuine from fake. Karen advised to never acknowledge or reply to anything. just throw them straight in the bin. There is a free service called "Junk It" which someone can register with it is a free service (leaflets handed out to forum members).

Q) MW - Five weeks ago a telephone call was received informing that there was a debt, when this was argued the person put the telephone down. MW explained that she then went to the Natwest Bank and asked about the debt and was asked to take the persons name and telephone number if happens again?

A) KM - This is something that unfortunately cannot be dealt with unless we have details of the person calling. However Karen advised to report it as the information can be useful. Also if Nottingham On Call are notified then this can be a message that can be sent out to all the Sheltered Schemes and the Scheme Managers who can inform their own tenants to be vigilant to help prevent this happen to anyone else.

Q) SQ - What should be done when waiting for a repair to be done i.e. front door and when the repairs people turned up they were not in the correct coloured uniforms and they are now asking for payment?

A) KM - Go straight to Trading Standards, as there is not contract then they cannot ask for payment.

Q) PW - How are companies able to buy member of the publics personal details?

A) KM - Trading standards cannot do much about his situation. When you complete most forms there is always a little box in the small print that says "do you want your information passed to another party etc" You must always remember to put a tick in this box or vice versa depending on the way the statement reads, as this is giving that company permssion to pass your information on.

Q) BG - How is it possible for telesales people to contact you via your home telephone number if you are ex-directory?

A) KM - the same applies as with the tick in the box. if you have included you telephone number on any form, with out ticking the box your again giving your permission.

BG stated that any issues such as this can be reported to Nottingham On Call to pass the message onto other schemes so they can be vigilant. People should also be aware that they can also press the button or pull their cord and speak to Nottingham On Call if you have a caller you are concerned about they can then leave the line open whilst you are answering the door if you are worried so that they can listen into any conversation held.

#### **4.0 Chris Thelen – Maintenance Manager**

4.1 Chris introduced himslef as the Maintenance Manager, and that he was happy to discuss communal repairs however

he would speak to people regarding individual repairs in the break or after the meeting.

Q) AA - Concerned that her front door opens outwards and is at the top of a flight of stairs, she is worried about the Health and Safety implications,

A) CT - all doors are on a rolling programme and are due to be changed for UPVC they will be done by Nationwide or Yorkshire windows so when they come out to the property ask if the door can be changed to inward opening.

Q) TS – has good news to report with regards to the repairs that were carried out at 32 Woodthorpe Court, however was still unhappy with the drains system at the highrise as the lower floors keep getting blocked due to the system that is currently in place.

A) CT - It would not make economic sense to replace the system in the whole block, a survey has been done, and it would not be value for money to replace the whole system in for a repair that is carried out every now and again.

Q) GB - two months ago it was mentioned to the Housing Patch Manager that the communal lights in the car park at Orchard Court were unsafe, but repair hasn't been done yet.

A) CT - will chase it up to see if it has been ordered.

Q) MW - Townsend Court have some lighting in the centre of the garden area, that hasn't worked for years can these be repaired as the garden area is very dark.

A) CT - will look into it but it is possible that the lighting is obsolete and has been superseded by something else.

Chris informed the forum that he will be attending every other meeting so will be in attendance again in August 2009.

## **5.0 Performance**

5.1 Lis Robinson went through the performance figures. For Sheltered Housing and Nottingham On Call.

5.2 There has been a slight improvement with Service User Reviews for the month of May which is mainly down to the rolling programmes being implemented in the schemes.

5.3 Needs and Risk Assessments have gone down slightly, Alarm testing is 100%, Scheme Inspections have also risen.

5.4 Nottingham On Call – Alarm activations numbers have improved answered within 30 seconds and again within 60 seconds.

5.5 100% achieved with time taken to fit the alarms.

5.6 Improvement in the percentage of time taken to respond for call outs within 30 Minutes.

## **6.0 Good News Stories**

None to Report.

## **7.0 Any Other Business.**

Q) MW – What is happening with the recruitment of Scheme Managers for the schemes as the current Scheme Managers have been covering other courts and not spending time at their own complex.

A) LR – We have recently interviewed and taken on a couple of Scheme Managers on a fixed term contract for one year, the reason for the one year fixed term contract is because we are awaiting the outcome of the sheltered Housing Review which may determine how we work in the future.

Q) DH – Kersall Court has been without a Scheme Manager for 19 months, we have had 3 temporary staff as well as covering scheme managers and they have then all been taken away from the scheme shortly after starting. Why do they have to attend meetings every Wednesday.

A) CD – The purpose of the Wednesday meetings is to ensure that staff members are kept up to date with any changes within the company procedures or otherwise. It is also an opportunity for information to be fed down through each service area. This isn't something that is specific to Sheltered Housing it happens all across the company. All housing offices are shut Wednesday morning and do not open until 10.30am

LR - We have our meetings at 11.00am to fit in with the Scheme Managers daily routine. It gives them a chance to do the rounds in the mornings etc before coming away from the scheme for a few hours. The meetings will be every second and fourth Wednesday mornings from now on.

Q) TS - Is it acceptable for Scheme Managers to be shouting through letterboxes asking tenants if they are ok, as a way of carrying out a call in the morning as this is what is being done at Woodthorpe Court. Why can the Scheme Manager not contact her through the door entry system?

A) LR - explained that, no this was not an acceptable way of carrying out the call but will speak to those concerned as this should not be happening. Neither is it practical to do the call through the door entry system as this was located outside the building and any information given can be heard by people

sitting in the main entry.

GB - Trees required cutting back outside number 23 – 26 Orchard Court. LR will pass information onto Renate Atkinson to action.

SO - Get involved week will be happening 27<sup>th</sup> July until 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Events will be taking place at some sheltered schemes across the city. Contact the Tenant Involvement Team if anyone wants to get involved or for further information for events happening that week and also with regards to the main event at the market square.

AA – Reported that there were rats at Naburn Court, and the Scheme Manager is aware of them, she has informed Environmental Health. LR will advise Renate Atkinson who will investigate the matter further.

LR – said that where she has had problems with rats at other schemes Environmental Health will keep returning and laying traps until they are satisfied that the problem has been resolved.

LR – reported back that there had been an issue with a dog in a common room which had not been very well, and reminded the board that dogs are not allowed in the common rooms. Only assistance dogs are allowed in.

RM - suggested notices to be put up in common room stating no dogs allowed. A poster will be designed and brought to the next forum meeting for approval.

LR – asked if members were happy with the current name of Sheltered Housing for advertising purposes and whether they felt changing the name would be more effective in attracting new tenants and filling vacancies.

Suggestions that have been made by individuals within the company are: Independent Housing for Over 60's, Independent Retirement Living.

**10.0 Date of next meeting**

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at 2pm, Hounds Gate (Boardroom)