

SHELTERED HOUSING CONSULTATION GROUP MEETING

Monday 6 December 2004

MINUTES

Present: -

Steve Deakin	ECC	Mrs J Smith	Rennes House
Tony Bodgin	ECC	Mrs T Burrow	Toronto House
Hazel Ball	C&E Director	Mrs JE Welham	Aldens Road
Cllr Peter Edwards	Portfolio Holder for Housing	Mrs V Phelps	Teazle Court
Phil Mills	Area Housing Manager	Mrs Chisholm	Southlands
Sharon Millman	Housing Officer	Mrs S Banwell	Southlands
Vanessa Marles	Housing Officer	Mrs V Parr	Southlands
Bob Dunford	Community Patrol	Mrs G Tyrrell	Globefield
Louise Barnden	TACT@DOME	Mrs S Bath	Nelson Close
Margaret Matters	Senior Warden	Mr J Capper	Teazle Court
Mr F Griffiths	Abbeville Close	Mrs B Clench	Faraday House
		Mrs Winham	York House
		Mrs S McCleod	York House

Apologies: -

Mr W Bell, Mr J Sutton, Mrs B Staddon, Mrs P Stoneman, Mr K Murray, Mr P Tait.

Introduction

The meeting opened with a general introduction from Tony Bodgin who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

A presentation of flowers and a card was then made to Margaret Matters, the Senior Warden, who will be retiring on the 23 December after 13 years with Exeter City Council.

Margaret was thanked for all her help in setting up and running the Sheltered Housing Consultation Group virtually from its conception and her continued work in identifying and recruiting new members.

The group responded with warm applause and a toast to Margaret and wished her a long and happy retirement.

Margaret thanked everyone for their generosity, she said that she had enjoyed working with the group and wished them every success in the future.

Margaret went on to say a little about the new Senior Warden.

The new Senior Warden is called Yvonne Trude and she will be joining the Council on Monday 13 December. Yvonne will shadow Margaret until the end of December and will officially take over the position on 4 January 2005.

The Older Persons Housing Strategy/Supporting People Implications

The standards set out in the Supporting People Standards are not mandatory (enforceable by law) but they are what we will be working towards achieving for our Sheltered Schemes.

To this end the Council have set aside £1m next year to help achieve this.

Neil Shire has started a programme of inspecting all the sheltered blocks to assess the standard of our accommodation and to determine whether the standard is achievable in our current stock.

It may be the case that some of our sheltered accommodation is not of a design which will lend itself to the new standards. This may result in that sheltered scheme being reassigned as general needs housing.

Options Appraisal

Louis Barnden, the Independent Tenants Advisor (ITA), was introduced to the group to give an update on the Options Appraisal process.

Steve Partridge, the Councils Independent Financial Consultant will be attending an Insight group meeting on Monday 6 December to discuss the financial details of the options appraisal.

Louis stressed the importance of getting the message out to tenants

Events, which have already been held, include three evening meetings at locations around Exeter and an 'Open Day' on Saturday 20 November, held at the Thistle hotel.

An information pack was sent to all tenants along with a message from the tenant board members inviting people to attend the Open Day and evening meetings and also to provide information to those who did not wish to attend.

Unfortunately the weather was very poor for the Open Day, which could be the reason for the poor turnout on the day.

The Insight group will meet this evening hopefully to make their decision about the future of the housing stock. Their recommendations, plus the tenants feedback from the poll will be put to the council. The council will then make a decision for the future of the housing stock based on the results of the tenant consultation with objectives that reflect tenants priorities. If the final decision is to 'Stay as we are' then no further action will need to be taken. If however the decision is to opt for 'Stock Transfer' then a further consultation will need to take place early next year. When the Options Appraisal process is over the Insight group will not be disbanded. It is hoped that there is a future role for the group.

The ITA will send out one further newsletter when the process is over to inform tenants of the decision reached and what the implications are likely to be.

Councillor Peter Edwards

Councillor Peter Edwards the Portfolio Holder for housing made a brief statement to the group.

He thanked the group for all their hard work and commitment over the past year and congratulated them on working with the council in order to deal with some complex issues on behalf of all Exeter City Councils sheltered tenants.

Several issues were raised by individual members of the group, at the end of the meeting.

Television Aerials on sheltered blocks. – some tenants are unable to have digi-boxes fitted to their televisions because the communal aerials are inadequate.

Phil Mills to investigate and put an article in the first publication of CHATTERBOX early next year.

Pictures of Sheltered Schemes

The group expressed a desire to have pictures of all the sheltered schemes included in the Sheltered Tenants Handbook. Steve Deakin to arrange.

Smoke Alarms

The group all agreed that the hard wired smoke alarms fitted to sheltered accommodation were far too sensitive. Many tenants felt that the alarms did not allow for normal cooking activity – such as making toast – without setting the alarms off.

One sheltered tenant said that she has to climb on a chair and put cling film over the sensor before she can even switch the cooker on. Steve Deakin asked her not to do this because of the safety implications and that he would bring the matter to the attention of Glen Newsom and Steve Shorter to find out if anything can be done about it.

Next Meeting

Monday 14 March venue to be arranged) 2.00 pm start.

Anyone requiring a taxi should, as usual, phone ZCARS on Exeter 422888.

On the agenda next time: -

- Options Appraisal – the Independent Tenants report to the council
- The Older Persons Strategy
- If anyone has any issues they want raised at the next meeting please contact Steve Deakin on 265698, but make sure you allow enough time to organise a response.