

# Sheltered Housing Group Meeting

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2006 at 2.00pm at the Buckerell Lodge

## Attendees:

Joan Smith (Rennes House)	Tony Bodgin (ECC)
Gladys Tyrell (Globefield)	Phil Mills (ECC)
Joan Martins (Nelson Close)	George Phippen (ECC)
Ann Day (Flowerpot Lane)	Bryony Stevens (ECC)
Philip Tait (Grandisson Court)	Vanessa Marles (ECC)
Sally Lancaster (Magdalen Gardens)	Frances Squires (ECC)
Margaret Winham (York House)	Jenny Berry (ECC)
Stella Bath (Nelson Close)	
Josie Welham (Aldens Road)	
Enza Amoroso (Toronto House)	

## Introduction

Tony Bodgin opened the meeting and handed over to Phil Mills who said that the Head Warden, Yvonne who has been off work for nearly a month has had a successful heart operation, but is expected to be off for about another month.

## Sheltered Housing Tenants Self Assessment Survey (Phil Mills)

This survey has been carried out to find out how Sheltered Housing residents feel about the service provided and to look for ways of improving this. The questionnaire ratings ranged from 5 (very satisfied) to 1 (strongly dissatisfied). Of 580 surveys distributed, 324 (56% of surveys) have been returned. In general sheltered tenants were satisfied with the service provided, and most of the additional comments were positive. Negative comments will be forwarded to the Wardens for their help in resolving. The areas gaining the lowest satisfaction ratings were 'Skills and hobbies' and 'Social networks and involvement'. Phil suggested these items should be considered at a future meeting so that ECC can try to raise the satisfaction level in the coming year. Wardens will also be considering ways of improvement in these areas.

**A summary of the results is attached.**

## What Can You Expect From Our Warden Service (Phil Mills)

Phil circulated the first draft of this leaflet that is intended to help existing residents and those on the waiting list or about to move into sheltered housing. Attendees were asked to look through the document and give ideas and feedback in the next meeting in January. Members welcomed the leaflet and thought it could save Exeter City Council's time when people view sheltered housing without realising what is included in the service.

## **Housing Strategy Review and Strategy Review Questionnaire (Bryony Stevens)**

Bryony explained that the Housing Strategy, which covers the Council's plans for all types of housing in the City, is being reviewed. She circulated the questionnaire and leaflet giving information about the Review and asking for people's views on the Council's housing priorities and policies. The leaflet is being sent to samples of private landlords, Council and other social housing tenants, general residents and agencies, particularly those working with homeless, young people, people with mental health problems and those with disabilities. A housing market assessment is being prepared which will provide new information about housing need and housing preferences and the Council and other housing providers in the City can plan strategically to try to meet those needs. All the information will feed into the revised Strategy. Bryony hopes to produce a more 'user friendly' Housing Strategy document.

It was suggested that in future a housing strategy for the elderly should be included with mention of down sizing and other issues. At present only improvements to Sheltered Housing are included in the Strategy Action Plan.

Members of the group were invited to complete the questionnaire and give any further comments, returning the form using the Freepost facility. The Strategy Review will be completed in time for June Scrutiny committee and Bryony would like to return to present the results to the Group next year.

## **Tenant & Leaseholder Committee (TALC)**

Arrangements are going ahead towards setting up the Tenant & Leaseholder Committee, in line with the Constitution agreed in July, with meetings to start from April 2007. Eventually it is hoped tenant representatives will be able to sit on the Housing Scrutiny Committee. Two members of the Sheltered Housing Group can sit on the Tenant & Leaseholder Committee and two deputies will be available in the event of either representative not being able to attend. Elections for these four representatives will take place at the next meeting on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Anyone who wishes to represent their area of the city can apply as detailed in the forthcoming edition of Tenants News, by obtaining a nomination pack and submitting a nomination form.

The Sheltered Housing Group will continue to meet on a quarterly basis, with issues feeding into the Tenant & Leaseholder Committee, and the Group receiving feedback from the Committee.

## **Resident Auditor Team**

This group is continuing with training and its future work will include looking at programmed repairs. Debbie Hay will be meeting with Exeter City Council managers on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December to give feedback and recommendations for service improvements from the RAT team's investigations so far.

## **Tenants Website**

The site is now being up-dated by Steve Deakin with information about the Sheltered Housing Group, Chatterbox Issues 1-10, the Tenant Handbook and minutes up to September 2006. Four tenants have already received training in up-dating the website, but have not so far made use of this. Training (half a day at Ottery St Mary) is available for anyone else who is interested. Names please to Tony Bodgin.

## **Chatterbox and Tenants News**

Distribution will continue to be through Wardens, who will collect from the Civic Centre and distribute to sheltered housing tenants. The format is now in a larger font (Comic Sans) and is more colourful, in line with feedback from the Group.

Tony Bodgin is hoping that Tenants News will mirror Chatterbox in being more appealing to tenants. An Editorial Panel has been set up and will meet next year to consider this.

## **Improvements Programme (Frances Squires & Jenny Berry)**

Frances and Jenny are tenant liaison officers working with the Housing improvements programme towards delivering 'Decent Homes'. Both officers are available before work begins, during the work and following completion, to offer any advice and practical help that is needed. This includes help in knowing what to expect during the work, packing up and moving of items to make space for work to begin and replacing items after work is completed. Fran and Jenny will also liaise with other organisations such as Social Services and Age Concern if more support is needed.

In the case of installation of gas central heating, most of the work is normally completed in one day. Help is readily available with setting the heating controls to individual time and comfort needs.

Frances liaises with contractors on behalf of tenants in the event of any small problems arising during kitchen modernisation and is producing a useful booklet that makes the fitting process clear and gives advice on cleaning materials.

**Ask for Help** if you need it or think there is anything we can do to help.

**Next Meeting – Monday 15 January 2007**