

NOTES OF A SHELTERED HOUSING FORUM MEETING MONDAY 27 APRIL 2009 BUCKERELL LODGE HOTEL

Present: -

Steve Deakin	ECC	Bet Sluman	Carpenter Clse
Jackie Laskey	Rennes House	Lynn Radcliffe	Magdalen Gdns
Joan Smith	Rennes House	Sally Lancaster	Magdalen Gdns
Josie Browning	Flowerpot	Viv Phelps	Shilhay
Ann Day	Flowerpot	Eve Clarke	Globefield
Josie Welham	Aldens	Gladys Tyrrell	Globefield
Phil Cuttell	Southlands	Laura Callaway	ECl
Vanessa Marles	ECC	Lowena Faull	ECC
Jenny Berry	ECC	Richard Norman	ECC
Judy Mayne	Toronto House		
Philip Tait	Grandisson Ct.		

Apologies: -

Pat Brosnan, Sheila Mcleod, Margaret Winham, Stella Bath

Introduction

The meeting was opened with a general introduction from Steve Deakin who introduced Laura Callaway from Exeter Community Initiatives and apologised for omitting her from the agenda.

Exeter Community Initiatives Harvest Project – Laura Callaway

The Harvest Project is a food growing project aimed at getting people to grow their own vegetables.

There are several ways in which the project aims to achieve this.

They include: -

- Training people to become local experts - who would then pass on their knowledge to others,
- Garden sharing – there are currently over 200 people on the allotment waiting list who could possibly be matched up to someone who cannot manage their garden,
- Container gardening – to enable people without a garden to produce vegetables from containers.

Laura asked if the group would be willing to complete a questionnaire. The group agreed and Steve Deakin offered to include this with the minutes and forward the completed forms to Laura.

Exeter Home Choice and Devon Home Choice

Lowena Faull and Richard Norman explained how the Exeter Home Choice works and how it enables people to access properties within Exeter. There are currently 6,000 on the waiting list within Exeter, of which quite a high proportion want sheltered accommodation.

We will soon be changing over to the Devon Home Choice, which will open the scheme up to the whole of Devon. The reason for the change is that the nine local authorities thought it would help people to move around Devon by giving them access to all the social rented accommodation in Devon.

When the new Devon Home Choice comes into operation there will no longer be an Exeter Home Choice, all social rented properties within Devon will be advertised under the Devon Home Choice banner.

Devon Home Choice will only have one waiting list which will also mean that the way properties are advertised will change. It will no longer be financially viable to advertise local properties in the local press. When Devon Home Choice comes into being all properties will be advertised on the internet.

Anyone wanting to access the system can do so in the Customer First reception area. Two group members stated that they accessed their current properties through the internet and found the process quite straightforward. The cost of newspaper adverts for the current Exeter scheme is around £15,000 per year and would be a great deal more expensive for the whole of Devon. It is also proposed to introduce a dedicated digital television advertisement for Devon Home Choice after the television system switches over to a digital signal in May.

In response to questions raised the group were told that: -

- No matter when you bid during that particular week the property will be allocated to the highest in that band.
- Red is high, Amber is medium and Green is low level need, there is also Entry Level which has no housing need although applicants can still bid on sheltered properties.
- According to the advertisements Rennes House only has four floors when in reality it has ten – this will be looked into.
- Anyone can bid on general needs housing.
- Every fourth three bedroom property goes to someone already in one of our properties; otherwise we would never address the problem of overcrowding.

Feedback about the advertisements from meetings such as this is important to ensure that we are getting the right information out to people.

Supporting People Single Assessment Process

The Supporting People review began 12 months ago and is still ongoing. It is due to be completed and new contracts in place by 2011. There is a move towards floating support and away from the current property based system in place at the moment. We now need to carry out an assessment of all Sheltered Housing users to assess what level of support is required. The support people receive will be based on this assessment and no longer based on everyone in sheltered accommodation receiving three visits per week. This will mean that services are not supplied to people who do not need them.

Exeter City Council has volunteered to become a pilot area for the new scheme. Over the coming weeks selected sites within ECC's sheltered accommodation will be asked to complete a form with the help of their warden. The information gathered will influence the service we supply. We could have two separate classifications – Older Persons and Extra Support.

We can use the information gathered to ensure that we target money and resources at areas where they are most needed. There are a lot of older people who are not living in sheltered accommodation but who need to access support and this is one way of getting that support to them.

Whipton Barton Development

The development of the area around Rennes House at Whipton Barton has had to be shelved for the time being due to the developer pulling out of the project.

This does not mean that the scheme has been scrapped, but it will be delayed until such time as a suitable alternative partner can be found.

Digital Switchover

The group were reminded that Exeter will be the first digital city when on the 6 May 2009 the transmitter at Stockland Hill, together with all its relays, will be switched over to digital TV signal.

BBC2 will be the first channel to switch to the digital signal and if anyone loses their BBC2 picture at that time it is an indication that you have not converted your TV and should do so before May 20th 2009, when the remaining channels are switched from analogue to digital signals.

When the signal is switched to digital it will be necessary to re-tune your digibox as you did when you first bought it. If you already have a digital ready television you will not need a set top box or digibox for that TV set, you will however still need to retune it to receive the digital signal.

Tenant Services Authority National Conversation

The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) is the new regulatory organisation for social housing. Initially they will be regulating Housing Associations and co-op's but from 2010 this is also likely to include local authority housing and Arm's Length Management Organisations (ALMO).

The TSA asked landlords to consult with tenants to find out what level and standard of service they want from their landlord.

We arranged for a series of TSA National Conversation events to take place at the Buckerell Lodge Hotel on Topsham Road.

The day and times of the events were staggered to make them accessible to as many people as possible and were held on: -

- Monday 9 March 7.00pm - 9.00pm
- Tuesday 10 March 2.00pm - 4.00pm
- Thursday 12 March 5.30pm – 7.30pm
- Friday 13 March 11.00am – 1.00pm.

The meetings were facilitated by an independent consultant to ensure impartiality.

Invites were sent out to 215 people of which 76 responded, a 35.5% return rate. All were supplied with a stamped addressed envelope.

A total of 29 people attended the four sessions.

The Big Lunch

Steve Deakin informed the group that Sunday 19 July has been set as the date for an initiative which is to be known as the 'Big Lunch'.

The 'Big Lunch' aims to encourage people in the UK to get together to share food, home produced if possible, and organise street parties in residential areas, in church halls, community areas etc. It is hoped that this will at the very least bring local communities together.

It is hoped to make this an annual event.

I have included a copy of the letter from the Rt Hon John Healey MP Minister for Local Government, introducing the 'Big Lunch' which was circulated to all Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives.

Anyone wishing to participate in the Big Lunch in their local area is encouraged to find out more on-line at <http://www.thebiglunch.com> and organise their own local street lunch.

Sheltered Housing Forum Nominations for the TALC

The group were invited to put names forward for two people to represent the Sheltered Housing Forum on the TALC. Three people put their names forward: - Phil Cuttall, Joan Smith and Jackie Laskey. The three nominees then left the room and a vote was held, each member being able to cast two votes.

The voting was as follows: -

Phil Cuttall – 5

Joan Smith – 7

Jackie Laskey – 9

Joan Smith and Jackie Laskey (the current representatives) were duly elected to represent the SHF and will take up their positions from the 22 June at the TALC. However, Joan Smith and Jackie Laskey have put their names forward to represent their areas on the TALC in their own right. If elected, this will trigger another election for SHF representatives.

AOB

Estate Officer Area Changes

There has been a change of Estate Officer for some of the Sheltered sites, as follows: -

Liz Fisher covers - Nelson Close, Globefield, Grandisson, Southlands, and Magdalen Gardens

Vanessa Marles covers - Amersham, Malvern Gardens, York House, King William Street, Faraday House, and Abbeville Close

Motion to Yvonne

Sally Lancaster tabled a motion to the meeting expressing her disappointment that the Senior Warden – Yvonne Trude had again not attended the meeting.

This was seconded by Jackie Laskey and Joan Smith.

Next Meeting: Monday 27 July 2009 - Buckerell Lodge Hotel - 2.00 pm

Anyone requiring a taxi should phone ZCARS on Exeter 422888

Agenda items to Steve Deakin on 265698