

NOTES OF A SHELTERED HOUSING FORUM MEETING MONDAY 27 OCTOBER 2008

Present: -

Tony Bodgin	ECC	Josie Browning	Flowerpot
Steve Deakin	ECC	Phil Cuttell	Southlands
J Laskey	Rennes House	Philip Tait	Grandisson Ct.
Joan Smith	Rennes House	Margaret Winham	York House
Gladys Tyrrell	Globefield	Sheila Mcleod	York House
Eve Clarke	Globefield	Lynn Rockcliff	Magdalen
Ann White	Rennes House	Brian Smith	Magdalen
KG Mayne	Toronto House	Sally Lancaster	Magdalen
Teresa Burrow	Toronto House	Josie Welham	Aldens
Viv Phelps	Shilhay		

Apologies: -

Ann Day, Stella Bath, Pat Brosnan, Mrs P Knight, Mrs Staddon

Introduction

The meeting was opened with a general introduction from Tony Bodgin. As there were some new faces people introduced themselves saying who they were and where they came from.

2008 Tenants Conference

Tony led a discussion about the 2008 Tenants Conference and a slide show was shown of the pictures from the event. The conference was held at the Belmont Chapel on Friday 19 September.

Because so many people could not make it to the Conference this year, due to work commitments, next year we are going to hold the event on Saturday 19 September. In February 2009 we will know the result of the Boundary Committees decision and the implications for our tenants. We are looking into bringing in a guest speaker, such as Professor Carl Chinn, to look at the history of housing in the morning and follow this up with what will happen to Exeter following the Local Government Review.

In all probability Exeter City Council will cease to exist in 2010 being replaced by either one Super Unitary Council for the whole of Devon or a Greater Unitary Exeter Council covering a much expanded Exeter and surrounding area. 'Staying as we are' is not one of the published options so there is every possibility that there could be a change of landlord after the changes.

Energy Efficiency/Loft Insulation

The common room at Nelson Close has been fitted with an Air Source Heat Pump for evaluation purposes. The Air Source Heat Pump draws heat from the atmosphere, giving it a boost when needed, to feed low temperature radiators within the common room. The system should pay for itself within 7 years and will supply constant hot water and heating. There is to be an article in Insight (Tenants News) regarding the scheme.

During 1964 many council properties were built with flat roofs. We are looking at ways of addressing the problem of getting insulation into these roofs in order to improve the energy efficiency of these properties and reduce tenants' fuel costs.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Up to now, we have had 56% of the sheltered housing survey forms returned. The survey is a key tool in driving forward service improvement which is why it is so important that they are completed and returned. The number of forms returned by general needs tenants is only 35% so 'Well Done Sheltered Tenants!'

Tenancy Agreement Review

The group also discussed the proposed Tenancy Agreement review which has been circulated to tenants to comment on. One of the key changes within the new Tenancy Agreement is to separate the rent element of the charge from services such as communal grass cutting etc. This will not affect the amount of rent paid merely show the component parts of the total rent charged.

Wild Exeter

An experimental garden project aimed at encouraging local communities to identify plots of land with which to create communal gardens or communal allotments is piloted in the Widgery Road/Bennett Square area. There appeared to be quite a lot of interest generated by this project from group members who were identifying suitable plots in their areas.

If successful we will work with other resident groups to see if we can expand this initiative.

Honeywill Court

Situated off Butts Road Heavitree, Honeywill Court is currently managed by Kindle Homes who have approached Exeter City Council with a view to handing over management of the properties. 15 of the 16 tenants are former Exeter City Council tenants who moved there under the downsizing scheme. Even if ECC take over the management of the scheme, the residents will not become ECC tenants although it may be possible to take them under the warden scheme.

Sheltered Review

The group felt quite strongly that they now need to be told which properties are going to remain sheltered and which are to be re-designated as 'general needs' housing.

Ideas for Christmas meeting

Various ideas were put forward by the group such as a raffle, quiz and some form of entertainment. The quiz which we had last year was very popular and we can repeat it this year – we will of course be using different questions. Having the housing management team perform the 'Full Monty' was rejected due to the cost of having St. John's Ambulance staff on standby.

Any other business

- Residents from Rennes House stated that people going out onto their personal balconies are confronted with a big step to climb over. As a means

of reducing the impact of the step the council has, in the past, put decking on the floor of the balcony to reduce the size of the step. However the council is allegedly now refusing to do this. For example the new tenant at number 13 has been told she can have the work done but she will have to pay! Referred to the maintenance team.

- Residents of Magdalen Gardens raised the issue of the flimsy infill panels in the lounge and complained about heat loss. Apparently one has been rebuilt in brick with insulation fitted and then finished off with marine ply. Residents have asked if this can be extended to all the bungalows. Referred to the maintenance team.
- They have also enquired about providing individual plots of gardens. Referred to the Tenancy Services team.
- Phil Cuttell from Southlands asked if the council had ever considered the bulk purchase of gas and electric to sell on to tenants at a cheaper rate. Referred to the maintenance team.
- One resident enquired about the council's smoking policy in communal areas as he is asthmatic and lives between two heavy smokers and he gets the fumes. Referred to the Tenancy Services team.

Next Meeting: Monday 15 December 2008 - Buckerell Lodge Hotel - 2.00 pm
start.

Anyone requiring a taxi should phone ZCARS on Exeter 422888
Agenda items to Steve Deakin on 265698