

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

TENANT & LEASEHOLDER COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 7PM MONDAY 27 OCTOBER

BUCKERELL LODGE HOTEL

Present:

Moira Barker	Alison Baxter
Liz Belchamber	Stephan Bouloux
Barbara Haizelden	George Hood
Jackie Laskey	Angela Martin (observer, East area)
Alison Moore	David Payce
Viv Phelps	Tony Powell
Rod Simons	Joan Smith
Marion Watkins	

Councillor Rob Hannaford

Tony Bodgin (ECC) Jenny Berry (ECC)

- 1. Apologies:** Terry Anderson, Lyn Kaczanow, Steve Warran (ECC), Lawrence Blake (ECC), Steve Deakin (ECC)
- 2. Accuracy of the minutes of the Special General Meeting held on 2nd October was agreed.** Correction of point 8 of the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 2nd October was requested: Viv Phelps reported that Terry, Alison and herself had attended a meeting to discuss TALC training. A total of £155 had been spent from the budget for Alison and herself to attend the training at Sandy Park. Forthcoming training in Torquay is expected to cost about £300 (£270 in fees plus travelling expenses).
- 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

It was reported that Marian Snow has decided not to joint the TALC Committee at present so another representative is still needed for the Central area. Ideas welcomed.

Alison Baxter confirmed that this was her last meeting as she is surrendering her ECC property and will be a Housing Association tenant. She expressed her thanks and said how much she had enjoyed her time with the Committee.
- 4. Feedback from National Housing Federation Forum held at Sandy Park**

Viv Phelps' report giving feedback on this forum was distributed (attached). Representatives who attended found the day very informative although there were issues with the venue and quality of catering. They heard talks on Short Notice Inspections, the new National Tenants' Voice, the Tenant Services Authority and a talk by the National Housing Federation regarding their work.

There was some scepticism and concerns were raised by TALC members regarding the proliferation of housing and tenant organisations and the difficulties in knowing who to speak to regarding different issues.

The Chair encouraged TALC members to take up similar opportunities for events and training as they arise so that they can learn more about housing issues affecting our tenants and leaseholders and then report back to others on the Committee whenever possible.

5. Report back from estate-based groups

No representatives of the Whipton, Widgey and Bennett group were present, however Tony Bodgin reported that the group is working with the Devon Wild Life Trust to develop a wild garden on the estate where residents can grow things in the community. It is hoped to involve the young people in this project.

The Countess Wear TALC representative spoke about problems with large groups of youngsters gathering outside the local One Stop shop and subsequent meetings with estate officers, police and councillors to try to resolve the issues. A survey with a cut off slip has been sent to residents to gauge support for security cameras to be installed and the group is hoping that there will be sufficient support from residents and officials to go ahead with this idea. Another meeting has taken place to consider how the shop area could be improved. Committee members have also attended meetings in connection with the proposals for a new village hall on the St George's Playing field part of Countess Wear over the by-pass from the estate. The Committee has been working with ECC and the school to refurbish a portakabin in the school for community use. So far a £2,000 grant has been obtained and news of another grant request for £4,900 is awaited. The Committee is hoping to use the portakabin for coffee mornings, a children's club for 5-11 year olds and hobby/activity evenings. The Committee and School PTA are hoping to hold a 'Village Fete' next summer. The Association wants to get support for a Multi Use Games Area and for youth shelters and to continue to run a Christmas float, and possibly music or fun days in the summer. The TALC offered to give practical support to the Countess Wear group if needed and the representatives welcomed any ideas or offers of help available from the TALC.

The TALC Chair advised that regular feedback from the estate based groups would be welcome.

6. Report back from the first infill site consultation in Beacon Heath

Alison Moore's notes of the meeting were distributed (attached). The TFQ Architect, Councillors, ECC officers, officers from Magna Housing Association, the TALC Chair and one of the TALC local representatives attended but unfortunately there were only four local residents at the meeting. The proposal is to build one three bedroom house, one one bedroom flat and four two bedroom flats on the land at the top of Lancelot Road beyond the existing flats. The plans are available for anyone to see (contact Gary Stenning) and any queries can be directed via Lawrence Blake to Magna Housing Association. The Architect outlined the timetable of progress which includes three weeks for consultation, and consideration of objections. It is hoped to finalise plans by Christmas and for the buildings to be complete after about nine months. TALC queried the sizes of property being proposed, but were advised that these are decided on the basis of the current housing need, linked with what is appropriate for the size and shape of land available.

7. Asset Management Review

Steve Warran was unwell and not able to present this item, so any detailed consideration was deferred. However, members of the TALC Committee who are on the Asset Management Working Group advised that the Group has met and were agreed on the top priorities for spending, although not entirely agreed on the lower priorities. One of the leaseholders had raised concerns about the level of priority for spending on the external maintenance of flats because this is such a significant factor in the property value. Some of the group members recognised the

need for further training on asset management, so TB will try to arrange a training day.

8. Status Survey

Consultants BMG are carrying out the survey on behalf of ECC and have sent out surveys to all leaseholders and sheltered housing tenants. One in four general needs tenants are being surveyed with certain information targets in mind rather than random selection. A data sheet showing the current level of returns was distributed and explained. The results will be presented to a Housing Management meeting on 22nd December then to the TALC and will be used, with TALC input, to help with setting of priorities for the next two years (although these could change following the Local Government Review). In this way the wider tenant and leaseholder body are involved in the priorities for spending. *(Note – the headline results may be available for the TALC meeting of 24 November. TB)*

9. TALC Elections 2009

Elections are due next year to elect all TALC Committee members prior to the AGM in June so advertisements will be placed in the next 'Insight' and 'Chatterbox' inviting applications. In order to keep continuity of the Committee staggering of elections was considered but this would require a change in the Constitution. After discussion the Committee decided to make no change.

10. Exeter CVS Training Programme by Emma Hall

Agreed: TB to arrange 1 x 6 hour training session (possibly November) and alternative date and time for those who are unable to attend.

11. Any other relevant business

One Year TP Certificate

TB will be meeting with University of West of England staff in the second week of November to discuss the possibility of holding a 1 year course in Tenant Participation in Exeter for any social housing tenant representatives.

Rifford Road Flats – problems with substance abuse and ASB

Concern was raised that ECC is doing nothing about these problems, although the estate officer is aware of the situation. It was pointed out that keeping and submission of diary sheets is effective and that it is important for people to follow this route in order for action to be taken. Arranging of a multi-agency meeting with Police, ECC, tenants and Environmental Health representatives was also suggested. Councillor Hannaford requested that Phil Mills and Rob Norley (ECC) should carry out an investigation on the situation and it possibility of action being taken now that the Housing Solicitor is in post.

Leaseholder Service Charges

A committee member had received a query about changes in leaseholders' service charges. TB advised that a Leaseholders' Forum is planned for the 2nd week of December (*9 December. TB*) and this could be queried then.

Alison Baxter Farewell

The Chair presented Alison with flowers and a gift from the TALC and said how much she will be missed by everyone.

Signed

Next Meeting: 1pm on Monday 24th November, 2008 in the Bad Homburg meeting room, Civic Centre. (Buffet lunch from 12.30pm)

