



MEETING MINUTES

Purpose of Meeting

1. Welcome and actions from previous meeting including Community Initiative Funding Policy
2. Update from AaFD Cleaning Contractors
3. Domestic Abuse Policy
4. Any other business, updates from members.

Date 22nd August 2024 1-3 pm

Venue The Hut, Old Ashby Road, Loughborough

Attendance:

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| Members | June Bush Janice Wright Christopher Hipwell Betty Saunders Phil Hudson Stuart Wells Diane Lockwood John Mason Les Bailey Yvonne Diamond | Thorpe Acre Community Association Riversdale Court Birstall Selbourne Court Loughborough George Toon Court Syston Fielding Court Association Loughborough Fielding Court Association Loughborough Chapman Street Garden Association Arnold Smith House Association Walter Hull Court Beresford Court Shepshed |
| Guests | Andrew Everitt-Stewart Helen Kennedy Sally Ramalho Andrew Staton Louise Swift | Customer Engagement Officer Customer Engagement Officer Customer Engagement and Older Persons Services Principle Landlord Services Manager AaFD Cleaning Supervisor |
| Apologies | Craig Jordan Trish Edwards Tracey Riley Ireen Kennedy Wayne Bridges Carol Airey Trev Fairminer | Ashby Road Estate Community Centre Aingarth Loughborough Chapman Street Loughborough Park Court Loughborough Brook Street Shepshed Longcliffe Road Shepshed Longcliffe Road Shepshed |



1: Welcome and Actions from previous meeting

Actions for Customer Engagement:

- Email the bulky waste details document over to members – Emailed the copy to members on the 19th of July extra copies provided - **COMPLETE**
- Tenant expense form to provide an application form with the policy. – This has been completed and will be brought to the forum in September.
- To change the date of the tenant Expense policy - **COMPLETED**
- Email Mark Fleckney and Andrew Staton to inform them of the next CHRF in August and AaFD are in attendance for an hour, this has been completed however Mark Fleckney is unable to attend this meeting.
- To move forward the CHRF members being involved with spot inspections, as many are unhappy with the service the contractor supplies. - **Email sent 19th July 2024** and a spot inspection was carried out by HK at George Toon Court on the 5th August 2024, this is still being moved forward.
- To inform Andrew Staton of potential interest from a member of the CHRF for the HMAB - Recruitment will commence again next year when terms of office have expired, this will be advertised on our website.

Community Initiative Funding Policy

The policy has been reviewed and the final draft was brought to the Forum. There has been a previous debate about the wording for the funding as it suggests the funding is for tenants only however, we didn't want to stop visitors and friends joining too.

A further meeting was held with Les Bailey and John Mason to discuss the changes and to look at the wording for the funding to fit all purposes. The following amendments were made:

A section has been added in to help people set up committees and to strengthen this case:

The aim of the fund is to help tenants organise social events which help improve community cohesion and reduce social isolation. It is hoped that as groups of tenants organise events more regularly, they will, with the support of the Customer Engagement team, form social committees. This could lead to the opportunity to attract further external funding.



Under the criteria section we have inserted:

All tenants, within the area specified in the application, must be invited to attend the event. Residents (non-tenants) can be invited to the events, but if there are a lack of spaces and/or funding, priority must be given to tenants wanting to attend.

And also:

The agreed amount must be paid into a club or group committee account, or directly to a supplier, where there is not an established community group.

Each group can only receive funds to a maximum of 3 grants per financial year for a one off event or activity plus 1 grant for a long term event or activity times each financial year.

The application has been altered to take out the percentage of the amount of tenants attending so applicants now have to be clear on who will be invited to the event and also what steps will be taken to ensure that all tenants are invited.

Applications are encouraged as it is recognised how positive it can be for communities to enjoy an event and build social interaction. However, we must ensure that as many tenants as possible are invited without exclusion. For all applications, it was stipulated that the Customer Engagement Team will assist with all applications to make it fair for all.

All members of the forum agreed to the changes.

EEM Application received:

Durham Road in Loughborough requires their decking in the communal garden to be repaired, and also to be painted with an anti-skid paint as it can get very slippy which is a health and safety concern.

Travis Perkins, as part of their social value commitment, will donate items for such projects so we have sourced the paint and decking boards for this project from them.

We have received a quote for £1300 to carry out the repairs and to complete the paint work which we are hoping to be paid through this funding.

We receive £11000 funding from the EEM Project, £3000 has gone to help Active Charnwood for their sports awards so the Forum was asked if they agreed for £1300 to come out of this funding.

All the forum members were in favour of the work being carried out through the EEM project.

We need to look at a similar situation at Riversdale Court as their decking needs painting with anti-slip paint – Customer Engagement will contact Travis Perkins to see if we can obtain the paint from them - **ACTION**



2. Update from AafD Cleaning Contractors

An introduction was provided by Louise Swift who explained her role as Team Supervisor for the AafD Cleaning Contractors. It was explained that Louise handles all complaints, follows these up and inspects work following the process.

Issues raised by forum members:

- Walter Hull Court, there are cobwebs that are regularly not being cleaned. The windows are also not being cleaned properly and operatives are spending a lot of time sitting in their van and not cleaning. A forum member has offered the cleaning team hot water, but this was refused. – *it was explained that all vehicles carry a heated water tank so this should not be an issue.*
- Chapman Street, stairs are regularly left wet and so are a slip hazard, they are also left unwashed at times. Cleaners are only taking 5 minutes to clean each block. The sides of the stairs are not washed or swept. The bin stores are regularly left uncleaned, and there are cobwebs. Leaves are piling up and never swept up in drying areas. Walls are not cleaned in communal blocks. Staff stand around when they should be working.
- George Toon Court, all banisters are left 'sticky', all plants have been removed from communal areas for ease in cleaning. The top floor is hardly ever cleaned properly. One bucket and mop are used for the whole block and so are dirty by the time they finish -*it was explained that if anything is left in communal areas which shouldn't be, these will not be removed to clean.*
- It was pointed out that if supervisors are inspecting, then maybe the standard of cleaning will be better than when they are not being observed.
- Teams should be replaced or moved if they are found not to be fulfilling the cleaning specification.
- It was asked if each team carried the cleaning specification with them and it was explained that they do.
- It was asked if teams could be moved around, but there is only 1 Charnwood team.
- Do teams get behind on their expected schedule? -*yes but the company always informs Charnwood Borough Council when this happens.*
- It was asked if residents had to have the cleaning contract and it was explained that they did.
- It was asked if inspections could be carried out by someone that the cleaning teams do not know.
- It was explained that there is a process to register complaints, and this must be followed otherwise the company does not know about the problems, but that when complaints are received, they are immediately investigated and inspected.
- Forum members expressed that there is an apathy towards complaining as residents feel that in the past complaints were not addressed.

Question submitted by email:

Has all the equipment that was promised to be purchased been bought and used on the cleaning. Are the staff being monitored and doing a good job. Is hot water being used and proper rinses done with the mops to clean the floors and walls. -*Yes all new equipment has now been purchased.*



The chair thanked Louise Swift for attending and answering questions. The complaint process and its importance was reinforced, and it was explained that the maximum response time to complaints is 48 hours.

3. Domestic Abuse Policy Review.

Andrew Staton introduced himself to the Forum and advised he is responsible for day-to-day operations with Landlord Services but not involved with investment related operations or repairs. His day-to-day operations include income functions, dealing with anti-social behaviour, general tenancy management, enforcement of tenancy conditions and tenancy support, along with sheltered housing schemes and warden services, including the customer engagement team.

All members were provided with a draft copy of the domestic abuse policy.

It was explained that policies are necessary as they provide a framework to provide our services. There is a wide variety of different policies at Charnwood Borough Council however all policies affect our tenants.

This is a new policy and not a review.

It was discussed with the Forum and explained that the Audit Commission would do a report on organisations, however this disbanded in 2015 so there has been little regulation since. Often, if law changes it becomes a legislation and the domestic abuse policy is a regulation and therefore an expressed requirement for landlords to have a policy on how they handle domestic abuse.

It was recognised from the Grenfell Tower incident that more regulation was required, and something needed to be done. This changed into a white paper regulation and now in another era of greater regulation, social housing landlords will be inspected.

The anti-social behaviour team deals with initial reports of domestic abuse. The existing process works well and there is no proposal to change the existing procedure; but there is no policy behind it.



This policy doesn't mean there has been an increase in cases however there is a lot more media around this topic and the police attitude is very different to what it was towards domestic abuse, and there is a lot more exposure on the subject.

It was noted that when writing policies these are not done in isolation: officers constantly look and research what other organisations are doing. There is some good material available, so we look at this and see what is appropriate and fit for us.

The policy follows a format in line with all our landlord services follow

Introduction – setting the scene, domestic abuse has a profound effect on people's lives and is significant cause for people coming to us with homeless enquiries.

Scope of this policy - this is saying who this applies too, which is tenants of Charnwood Borough Council and not leaseholders.

Explains who the tenants are that could be affected by this policy.

Objectives of this policy - this is stating what we are trying to achieve from this document.

What is domestic abuse

This defines what domestic abuse is, this section we must quote the legislation on what it is.

4.11 Personally connected – this again is defined by legislation.

Children can be victims of domestic abuse and the policy clearly states that children are significantly affected.

Policy statement

This sets out our approach on dealing with domestic abuse, we are bound by legislation and other external organisations, for example MARAC, this is a nationwide – this is centrally focused on domestic abuse.

Information sharing and confidentiality

This is of great importance for the need to respect confidentiality, if this was breached this could be fatal for the person.

Equality and diversity

Section 11 Other policies

This is an attempt to set out other references that affect the policy. This shows how a wide range this subject matter is.

Consultation process:



We carry out significant consultation with any new policy.

This is going to the Housing Management Advisory Board on 18th September and if recommended, it will go to cabinet, and if agreed, it will become a live policy.

All landlord services colleagues have been consulted, also other services including the community protection team, environmental protection and strategic housing, including homeless and allocations.

We have also consulted an external agency that specialise in domestic abuse. It gave us a significant stamp of approval.

Comments made by the Forum:

How will tenants know this policy exists?

Once the policy has been approved by cabinet, it will be placed on our website, there will be an article in the Your Homes Matters magazine and will be published in a variety of ways.

It was asked if there was a definition between mental and physical abuse – this is quoted and defined in Section 4 – 4.9.2.

It was mentioned that a lot of males can be made homeless due to being victims of abuse however it was reassured that Charnwood Borough Council would deal with the tenancy management exactly the same for any cases, and would treat any survivor of abuse exactly the same.

The policy acknowledges it deals with all victims

It was acknowledged that Section 12 – Responsibilities, the wording needs amending.

The Charnwood Housing Resident Forum members all voted to approve this further to the HMAB so this policy will be taken to the Housing Management Advisory Board in September 2024.

Any further comments have been asked to be with the Customer Engagement team by Monday 25th August,



3: Update from members:

Thorpe Acre Community Association: Coffee mornings are going well; the bus trip went extremely well. This was supported by the community initiative fund and was greatly received.

Fielding Court – Still feeling isolated and the atmosphere isn't improving, moving the laundry facilities from ground to first floor, there are issues with meters at the court and residents feel neglected by the Council.

The Hut Old Ashby Road Loughborough: The trip to Cleethorpes was a great success and some residents from our sheltered courts attended and hope to attend more events that The Hut arranges.

Riversdale Court Birstall – Raised flower bed the soil has been delivered so the bed is now ready for tenants to plant in.

Arnold Smith House – They have a reasonably healthy bank balance so coffee mornings are continuing and are planning a boat trip out of their own funds but will also use the Community Initiative funding in future.

Beresford Court – No Comments

Chapman Street Garden Association: The mayors tea party went really well, and their annual BBQ is being held on the 30th August and the mayor is returning. The Police and Crime Commissioner may come also. Mark is continuing to do a fantastic job in the area and planters and tubs are being painted which has transformed the area yet again, all very good at the association and running well.

George Toon Court: - No Comments

Selbourne Court Loughborough: - Would like a new door with a peep hole in due to recent activities which involved police, they have suggested that this be fitted – Customer Engagement to investigate, however it was mentioned about a purchasing a ring doorbell.

ACTION

Walter Hull court – A decision has been reached between the tenants that the woodwork for the pergolas is beyond repair. 2 flats that have been vacant for a while and are now starting to be refurbished for occupation, so hopefully new residents will move in soon. It was discussed a communal outside water tap is not feasible due to ongoing costs as no communal water supply. To look at obtaining a water butt, Fielding Court have advised they could have theirs.

Aingarth – Apologies Sent



Actions for Customer Engagement:

- Ask Travis Perkins for Anti-Slip Paint for the decking at Riversdale Court as part of their social value project.
- Investigate a peep hole for the resident at Selbourne Court due to a police incident. Email sent to Asset Management 23.08.24 asking for advise.
- Ask AaFD to attend a future meeting in 6 months for updates on their service – this has been arranged for the 27th March 2025.

Meeting closed at 3:00 PM. The next meeting will be held on 26.09.24 at The Hut Old Ashby Road Loughborough, 1:00pm until 3:00pm.