

MEETING MINUTES

Purpose of Meeting

1. Welcome and actions from previous meeting.
2. Review of policies.
3. Any other business, updates from members.

Date 27th June 2024

Venue The Hut, Old Ashby Road, Loughborough

Attendance:

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

1: Actions from previous meeting

Actions for Customer Engagement:

- Chase up front door issue at Beresford Court. This is ongoing.
- Supply posters and letters for the Mayors Tea Party at Chapman Street. Letters were posted to all residents and posters supplied to the association.

Actions for the Charnwood Borough Council Chief Executive:

- To investigate the communal cleaning standards, feedback in writing to the next forum meeting and return to a future meeting in person. *It was explained to the Forum that we have received feedback from the last meeting where the Chief Executive Rob Mitchell was in attendance and the Communal Cleaning contract was discussed. On the 3rd of July, Charnwood Officers are meeting with the Contractors AAFD Services to discuss the issues and complaints we are receiving and hopefully a plan can be put in place to address the concerns. We are hoping that we can involve the Forum members to assist in post clean inspections of blocks with the Customer Engagement Team going forward. When updates are provided, we will keep the Forum updated going forward.*

2. Presentation of policies for review

Community Initiative Fund policy and application.

- The idea of the fund was explained and how it works.
- It was explained that change is needed so that the criteria is more inclusive for groups who don't have committees or associations and so bank accounts, and it is being amended to accommodate this.
- There will now be a pack for applicants to include an introductory letter, application form, attendance sheet and feedback sheet. This was presented to forum members and changes were highlighted in red.
- A key element of the amended policy will be making sure that tenants are the priority and that as many attend as possible.

Questions asked:

- Is it acceptable for friends, family and visitors to attend Community Initiative Funded events? *Yes, as long as every resident is given the chance to attend, and that the majority of attendees are residents. Priority must be given to residents. If all funded places are taken up by residents, then non-residents may have to pay to attend. The fund is provided from tenants' rent money so should be spent on tenants.*
- *This is why it is useful to have a social committee to discuss who the funds will be distributed.*
- What happens if residents will not attend because they dislike other people that are attending? *This is up to the individuals involved to choose but every tenant needs to be invited*
- Members asked if they could review and offer amendments to the form. *It was decided that this would be helpful.*
- Are residents aware that this fund comes from the rent income? *Yes, it is stated on the forms and publicised.*
- It was agreed that forum members could discuss this with other residents and a meeting could be arranged to discuss amendments before the policy is represented at the next CHRF meeting. ACTION.
- It was agreed that the application form needs to request more information, and this will be addressed when considering forum members input and amendments.
- It was explained that the number of attendees and where possible a list of names will now be needed for the event as details on tenant participation needs to be recorded.
- Members were happy with the attendee form and voted unanimously to accept it.
- The feedback form for events was presented along with an explanation of why the extra information is required. Any amendments that members have will be considered before the next meeting when it will be represented.

- It was explained that the idea is to promote the fund more so all feedback is important so that information gathered can be used to help tenants understand the aim of the fund and to demonstrate that Charnwood Borough Council does care about its tenants and leaseholders.
- Customer Engagement do not want any of the forms to be a barrier to tenants applying so will help in any way needed with applications, this needs to be as inclusive as possible.

Questions asked:

- Should all services and goods be listed individually? *A general summary is fine as long as it accounts for everything spent.*
- If the amount applied for does not cover the whole cost, who would be in charge of funds to cover the overspend, as if there is no bank account for the organisation this could leave the person in charge exposed to criticism? *We would always recommend that associations or committees are formed so that a bank account can be put in place to negate this.*

Tenant Bid policy review

- An explanation of the policy and fund was given.
- The amount of money that the general tenancy can receive has been increased as compared with sheltered housing to represent the percentage of overall tenants. However, if needed, this can be voted on to change the distribution of money.
- All amendments were discussed and explained.
- Members were happy with this form and voted unanimously to accept it.

Questions asked:

- Will there be a possibility of the overall fund being increased given that the whole budget has been spent this year? *If the fund is continually used, there would be grounds to ask for it to be increased.*
- Is money lost if not spent? *Any underspend is returned to the housing revenue account.*
- Can the CHRF see feedback, and before and after photographs of tenant bid works? *Yes, this will be fed back at a future meeting and promoted to the general tenancy through all normal channels.*
- On some works previously the standard was poor, what steps are in place to avoid this in future? *As the scheme has developed work is monitored a lot more closely. Bid specifications are agreed with all parties before work is started and tenants sign off the work if they are happy once it is finished. If work is not to standard, contractors will be recalled to correct it.*

EEM Policy review.

- The idea of the fund was explained and how it works.
- Funding is normally available in September of each year.
- The funding must be spent by the end of the financial year.
- The funding proposals will be brought to the CHRF for voting on.
- This funding is available to Charnwood as a whole, not just tenants.

Questions asked:

- Will this be explained at the Housing Management Advisory Board? Yes.
- At Walter Hull Court there is often vandalism, would this be an appropriate fund to apply for extra lighting from? *It was advised to talk to the Customer Engagement Team to look at what funding would be best for this scheme. Ongoing maintenance costs would need to be considered.*
- Are tenants and leaseholders aware of these funds? *All funding work is promoted through all available media.*

Members were asked to ratify this policy and voted unanimously to accept it.

4. Future CHRF topics and agendas:

- An update was given on tenant bids, and it was explained that due to anti social behaviour issues at Brook Street, Shepshed, a previously passed bid had to be funded from this year's budget as it was not possible during the last financial year.
- An audit on all tenant bids will be presented at a future meeting.
- Customer Engagement meet with the chair and vice chair of the CHRF regularly to discuss future meetings.

Questions asked:

- Will a scrutiny panel be set up? *It was explained that this is on the Customer Engagement Strategy and they are hopeful that this project will commence next year, however it is a large project to undertake and are hopefully working with consultants to help start the project. Customer Engagement welcome members being involved and progress updates will be provided once known. ONGOING.*
- Could someone from IDVerdi attend a future meeting? *It was asked if an Officer from Idverde (our grounds maintenance contractor) could come along to a future Forum. An email has been sent to the Contracts Manager at Charnwood asking for an Officer to attend. ACTION.*
- Ideas for incentives to encourage involvement are being investigated.
- If members have ideas for future meetings they were asked to email them to Customer Engagement.
- Tenant expense claims – it was advised the Forum being held on the 26th September will involve members looking at the new tenant expenses policy so tenants who are involved with us can claim certain expenses back from the Council once approved. Details and invitations will follow nearer the date.

3: Update from members:

Thorpe Acre Community Association: The planned bus trip is now full. The coffee morning continues to be a success with more people attending. Thanks was expressed to Customer Engagement for the Community Initiative Fund towards the trip.

Arnold Smith House: There has been no progress on the ramp for the bins. Customer Engagement to chase up ACTION.

The Hut Old Ashby Road Loughborough: The garden work has had to be halted due to the wet weather. A soak away will need to be fitted to help drainage and some funding for this has been secured. The trip to Cleethorpes is now fully subscribed. A new youth group called 'Tricky Treehouse' is very successful. The problem with Hermitage Green is ongoing as are the scaffolding issues reported last meeting. Complaints are still being received about these issues.

Riversdale Court Birstall: A recently held communal event using the Community Initiative Fund was very successful, more residents attended than normal. One person has expressed that they will no longer be attending events funded by the fund as they do not want to fill out the new proposed forms.

Fielding Court Loughborough: No issues.

Chapman Street Garden Association: The Annual Mayors Tea Party has been held and was very successful and well attended.

Selbourne Court Loughborough: A member asked if a sign could be placed on the archway to the entrance at Selbourne Court advising of the height and width. Residents are concerned with the number of vehicles entering the court that if the vehicle is too high or wide it could cause structural damage to the buildings if an accident occurs. This has been passed over to the Tenancy and Estate Management Officer, reference 101003527425 on the 28th June 2024 as they are responsible to deal with such requests. UPDATE on this enquiry is that there have been no accidents or near misses in the past so we cannot justify placing a sign in the area, it would also mean officers would have to work at height and the cost cannot be justified. However, we have approached our Health and Safety team to seek further advise but unlikely a sign will be fitted - COMPLETE

Aingarth: Residents are working hard to get fellow residents to socialise and mix. Ideas are being considered for a communal Christmas event.

Walter Hull Court: A member asked about the complaint that was raised with regards to items being removed at the court. This is being investigated by the Tenancy and Estate Management Team Leader and hopefully a resolution will be sought.

It was asked by residents at the court why properties are standing empty for a long period. An email has been sent to the resident explaining possible reasons and included minutes from the Resident Liaison Officer from a previous meeting held in 2023 which explained the new procurement of contractors for Charnwood are who are carrying out repairs and maintenance to our properties.

A potential tenant bid could be applied for, for a communal noticeboard, the online application has been forwarded to the member for completion. COMPLETE

Actions for Customer Engagement:

- Organise a review meeting for the community initiative policy before the next CHRF meeting.
- Investigate tenants being involved in the consultancy process to set up the scrutiny panel and mystery shopper.
- Organize IDVerdi to attend a future CHRF meeting.

- Chase up progress on the ramp for bins at Arnold Smith House.

Meeting closed at 3:00 PM. The next meeting will be held on 18.07.24 at The Hut Old Ashby Road Loughborough.