

# Great Yarmouth Tenants Forum

## Minutes

Wednesday, 03 September 2014 at 17:30

### PRESENT:

Mr P Kirkpatrick (in the Chair); Mrs C McDonald, Mrs K Watt, Mr P Burrage, Mr R Taylor, Mr J Jones, Mr N Gallant, Mr P Nichols, Mrs A Arger, Mrs D Gillett, Mr J McGarrity, Mrs B Dawkins and Mrs S Taylor.

Mr J Watt and Mr A Spinola (Guests)

Cllrs Linden & T Wainwright

Mr P Bunn, Mrs L Murphy, Ms H Notcutt and Mrs C Webb (GYBC Officers)

### **1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest given at the meeting.

### **2 CODE OF CONDUCT**

Forum members noted the Code of Conduct which must be adhered to during the meeting.

### **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that no apologies for absence had been received.

### **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 August 2014 were confirmed.

### **5 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## **6 PRESENTATION BY THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING OFFICER**

The Maintenance & Improvement Manager reported that Neil Barks had now left the employment of Community Housing.

The Maintenance & Improvement Manager gave an update on the Neighbourhood Plans. The Pilot Project at Bells Marsh Road was progressing well and would be completed by mid October.

Da'volls Court and Conway Road were in the process of being surveyed which would be completed by mid to end of September. Newtown 1 would go out to tender on the 15 September 2014.

The Maintenance & Improvement Manager reported that tenant involvement might be required in the evaluation of the tender.

Councillor Linden requested that an update on the Neighbourhood Plans be included in the next edition of the Tenant's Magazine.

RESOLVED:

That the Forum note the report.

## **7 FORUM RESPONSE TO THE HOUSING ASSETS SERVICE PROPOSAL**

Forum members considered the written response from the Chairman on behalf of the Forum to the Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods regarding the Housing Assets Service proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the Forum endorse the response.

## **8 SOLAR PANELS**

The Forum considered the update on the Installation of Solar Panels on to Community Housing properties by independent installers to help tenants who were in a position to pay for this improvement to reduce their fuel bills and carbon footprint.

RESOLVED:

That Peter Burrage & Peter Nichols to submit a written report to be considered by the Forum at the December meeting.

## **9 TRANSPORT ISSUES**

The Chairman reported the transport issues which had occurred once again this evening to the Forum.

The Community Development Manager agreed to look into this matter to see if the taxi firm were at fault in sending a too smaller vehicle.

The Chairman reported that he would be meeting with the Chief Executive to discuss

this issue in the near future.

## **10 COST SAVINGS**

Forum members considered the proposed cost savings which were tabled at the meeting by the Chairman with his apologies.

The Chairman reported that the Forum must be proactive and help the Council to reduce its expenditure where possible and needed to look at the frequency and venue of the Forum meetings.

The Leader of the Council reported that the views of the Forum were important to the Council but savings needed to be made across the board. He was pleased that the Forum was considering changing to bi-monthly meetings. He urged the Forum to remain operating within the Council's Member Services support, to ensure that the Forum continued to flourish.

Following a widespread debate; it was

RESOLVED:

That the Forum hold bi-monthly formal meetings at the Town Hall to be serviced by Member Services and monthly informal meetings at different venues across the Borough.

## **11 TENANT PARTICIPATION BUDGET**

The Community Development Manager reported the latest budget spend of £9,814.00 to the Forum.

## **12 OPEN DISCUSSIONS**

The Chairman opened the Open Discussions and reminded Forum members that this was time limited to three minutes per person.

(a) Charter Close

A Forum member reported that she was still waiting for the tree at the front of her property to be removed/cut back. The Chairman reported that he would action this matter.

She further reported a parking issue in the parking bays adjacent to her sheltered housing properties. The Member Services Officer reported that she would refer this issue to the relevant officer for investigation.

(b) A Forum member asked for an update with regard to the Tenant Handbook, Tenant Inspector Training and Scrutiny Panel. The Community Development Manager reported that the recent document produced for tenants on kitchen/bathroom improvements would be used to update the Tenant Handbook. The Voids Manager had only been in post for four weeks but was committed to tenant involvement and would organise the Tenant Inspector training as soon as possible. The Scrutiny Panel could begin to scrutinise Mutual exchanges but not the Repairs Service due to the workload of the JVC.

The Community Development Manager reported that the Housing Assets Manager had organised an update meeting for the Forum on the JVC on 11 September 2014 at 11 am in the Supper Room.

(c) ARCH

The Vice-Chairman reported that the benefits of being part of ARCH for tenants was negligible, a 25% reduction in conference fees, and proposed that membership be curtailed to make a saving of £2,500. The Community Development Manager reported that the Forum must find out what benefits Community Housing, as a whole, received as members of ARCH.

Following a vote, it was RESOLVED:

That the Forum propose to the Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods that membership to ARCH be curtailed.

### 13 TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATES

The Forum received reports on the following Task & Finish Groups:

- **Communications** - The latest edition of the magazine had been delivered to all tenants which contained the annual report which was much more user friendly. More submissions from tenants were required. A Forum member reported that white print on pastel paper was difficult for the visually impaired to read.
- **Foster's Liaison** - Nothing further to report
- **Scrutiny** - Nothing further to report, awaiting the next meeting.
- **Forum Action Plan** - A meeting to take place tomorrow to formulate a template to record the activities of the Forum.

### 14 JOINT MEETING BETWEEN TENANT FORUM & HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

The Vice-Chairman gave an update with regard to a joint meeting between the Tenant Forum and tenants from local Housing Associations and other Councils.

The Vice-Chairman had networked with other tenants at various events and kept in regular contact with them and they had all expressed a desire for a joint event to learn from the Tenant Forum's success.

The Chairman requested that any interested Forum members contact the Vice-Chairman with a view to arranging an event in the Town Hall in the next few months.

### 15 HOUSE CONTENTS INSURANCE

The Community Development Manager reported details of the House Contents Insurance scheme which was available for tenants of the Borough, which to date, had had very little take up. The details would be published in the next edition of the Tenant Magazine.

## **16 CO-OPTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

### **Co-Option Form**

There were no proposals for co-option to the Tenants Forum.

## **17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman considered the following items of any other business of being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the meeting:

- (a) Out There Festival - A Forum member reported that further volunteers were required.
- (b) Community Resilience - The Vice-Chairman reported that meetings would be held on 9 September 2014 at 10 am at Christchurch to rehearse the setting up of a Rest Centre and on 27 September 2014 at 10 am at Lynn Grove High School to rehearse a full evacuation scenario.

## **18 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 1 October at 5.30 pm in the Town Hall, Great Yarmouth.

The meeting ended at: 19:30