



## MEETING MINUTES

- Purpose of Meeting**
1. Welcome and actions from previous meeting.
  2. Tenancy and Estate Management Officer presentation
  3. Customer Engagement Strategy Action Plan presentation
  4. Other business and update from members

**Date** 23rd August 2023

**Venue** Committee Room 2, Southfields Building, Southfields Road  
Loughborough

### Attendance:

Chair	June Bush	Thorpe Acre Community Association
Members	Janice Wright	Riversdale Court Birstall
	Phil Hudson	Fielding Court Association
	Stuart Wells	Fielding Court Association
	Diane Lockwood	Chapman Street Garden Association
	Ireen Kennedy	Park Court
	Wayne Bridges	Brook Street Shepshed
	Paul & Christine Maine	Chapman Street Garden Association
	Trish Edwards	Staveley Court
	Diane Brown	Knighthorpe Road
Guests	Gill Hodgkinson	Estate Management Officer
	Andrew Everitt-Stewart	Customer Engagement Officer
	Helen Kennedy	Customer Engagement Officer
	Sally Ramalho	Principal Officer - Customer Engagement
Apologies	Christopher Hipwell	Selbourne Court
	Tracey Riley	Chapman Street
	Jackie Thomas	Staveley Court
	Mark Biggs	Thorpe Acre Community Association
	Helen Kennedy	Customer Engagement Officer
	John Mason	Arnold Smith House Association
	Craig Jordan	Ashby Road Estate Community Centre
	Yvonne Diamond	Beresford Court Shepshed



## 1: Actions from previous meeting

- Customer Engagement to look at helping promote the Chapman Street Garden Association BBQ. *This was carried out on 31.07.23.*
- Customer Engagement to email thanks to the repairs team for their work at Staveley Court. *Email sent 28.07.23.*
- Customer Engagement to seek clarification on the monitoring of the Communal Cleaning Inspection Scheme. *The monitoring is ongoing however the contract is due to be reallocated this year.*

## 2: Update from Members

**Riversdale Birstall:** Residents are waiting for back door keys to be distributed and will need reminding to keep it locked.

**Fielding Court Loughborough:** There is a problem with a leak under the floor in Block A, and it will be closed for 8-12 months and residents will be moved out. It is hopeful that other remedial work will be carried out during this time. There will be an update from the Estate Management Officer at the next coffee morning. Unfortunately, the use of any void properties as a temporary communal lounge is not possible, however residents may be able to meet in communal lounges at other courts nearby, the Council will assist with this where possible to help social interaction between dispersed residents.

**Thorpe Acre:** The communal trip to Mablethorpe was a success. Coffee mornings remain every Friday and there are now lunch options afterwards. A Thorpe Acre Association meeting is to be held shortly.

**Park Court Loughborough:** Ongoing problems with bin areas not being used properly. Customer Engagement have received an update via email so will update members as soon as possible. **ACTION.**

**Staveley Court Loughborough:** It was asked if Charnwood Borough Council could provide information on help with scams and surveys. It was explained that all Charnwood Borough Council surveys have the option to call back to verify that it is a real survey.

**Brook Street Shepshed:** Anti-Social Behaviour issues are still ongoing and creating serious problems for residents. As a result of this an email has been sent to the Council by a resident. Ball games are constantly being played in the car park so it was asked if 'No ball games' signs could be put up. Customer Engagement to investigate this.

**Chapman Street:** Chapman Street BBQ was very successful. The Chapman Street Garden Association has now held a meeting and are moving forwards.

**Arnold Smith House:** A BBQ has been held on the new patio which was a success. A Christmas Party is being planned.

**Question:** Fire crews were called to a fire at a first floor flat on Peel Drive, they ran their hoses through the estate for access. The scaffold company however that is now working on the property has driven in through the estate over communal areas when easy access was



available from Peel Street, why was this? Customer Engagement will investigate this and report back to members.

### 3: Presentation by the Estate Management Officer

The role was described:

- Patches have recently changed for Estate Management Officers.
- Deal with mutual exchanges.
- Deal with Housing transfers.
- Carry out new tenancy visits, for secure, introductory or on licence tenants.
- Deal with successions.
- Deal with notices to quit and seeking possession.
- Have a call queue for when officers are unavailable, so calls go into this queue, and they will be returned as soon as possible. The range on enquiries is huge.
- Officers will always do their best to answer customers queries.

#### Questions:

- Why does transferring from one flat to another in the same complex take as long as a new tenancy? *This is not dealt with by the estate management team however transparency is important in the process, so everyone is allowed an equal opportunity to bid on any suitable property in the interest of fairness to all customers. All applications must go through choice-based lettings and each individual application will be considered as a stand-alone case. The process needs to be fair to all, and if any customers need help with filling in applications, then they can contact the call centre and they can help fill in the form.*
- Can exchanges be explained. *Again, these are dealt with by lettings, but customers are allowed to apply for a mutual exchange with another customer. This can be within the council or with other housing associations. Applications need to be completed and will be assessed on an individual basis, the process is very fair, but applicants can be refused.*
- At the Bell Foundry Estate residents are being moved into accommodation who are recovering from various issues, and who have been homeless. Most integrate with the community, but some do cause problems. *Estate Management are not responsible for these decisions, however the Council does have a duty to provide housing for all customers regarding of their circumstances.*
- Is there a right to appeal housing decisions? *No, a suitability assessments form will be completed, and recommendations can be made on where customers are housed.*
- What is the procedure on evictions and closure orders? *Only 2 people can make decisions to end tenancies, the tenant, and a court judge. The Council has no power to evict tenants without the permission of a judge. The current laws restrict the Council's powers in these decisions. A judge must agree and award powers of possession to the Council in order to evict any tenants.*
- Can victim statement be used in evidence for eviction decisions? *Yes, it is possible to add these statements to the evidence.*
- Is anti-social behaviour enough to apply for a possession order? *Yes, but the process is long as evidence needs to be collated and provided to help with the decision.*
- Is CCTV footage submissible? *This is a matter that the Police will decide on.*
- When is behaviour serious and disruptive enough to be acted upon in these cases? *All issues are considered, but anti-social behaviour must be reported online to be logged in each case.*
- At Stavely Court the numbering of properties is confusing and visitors, including emergency services find it difficult to locate properties, signs or maps would be helpful, would this be a housing issue? *The advice is to talk to the Estate Management Officer for the court initially but also Customer Engagement may be able to look at this as part of a Tenant Bid. The Estate Management Officer will investigate this.*



- At Fielding Court a resident has his daughter living with him. She has previously been evicted from a property at Chapman Street but still has access to it. The property was closed because of anti-social behaviour. What can be done about this. *The Estate Management Officer will talk to the relevant officer for Chapman Street and inform them of the problem.*

## **4: Customer Engagement Strategy Action Plan presentation by Principal Officer - Customer Engagement Older Persons Services**

- The report presented to the Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB) will be sent out with these minutes for reference.
- The Customer Engagement role was explained.
- The strategy was written in 2022.
- The purpose is to make sure that customers are engaging with the Council and that this process is easy.
- Different and new ways of engaging are being investigated.
- More events are being planned to engage and gain feedback and these are being made less informal to try and get customers to engage more.
- The report will be updated as progress is made and represented to the HMAB.
- The report is also reviewed and updated each month.

### **Achievements in the last year:**

- The team is working very hard on engagement and a lot of targets have been reached.
- New forum members echo the success.
- Meetings in sheltered courts twice yearly.
- The Senior Citizens Forum meets 4 times a year and monitors performance and votes on tenant bids for sheltered courts. A 'Handyman' scheme is also being investigated for these courts.
- Successful relationship with Charnwood Borough Councils Comms team, promoting events through social media, email, and Your Homes Matter magazine.
- The Customer Engagement calendar is available on the website, a link to this will be sent out to members by email.
- Work with the Editorial Panel which helps to review new literature that the Council is supplying.
- The Tenant Garden Competition which has again been very successful.
- Customer Engagement helps to facilitate 4 estate walks per year at which all forum members are welcome and are intending to run roadshows around the borough.
- The Tenant Networking Event was very successful and was the first since before the pandemic and was very well attended by both Council Officers and tenants.
- Customer Engagement now have a gazebo and feather banners for events around the borough which fits in with the new identity of the team.
- Money has been allocated from money donated by EEM, a not-for-profit organisation.
- 23 Community Initiative Fund grants have been awarded to tenants for a wide range of events to help encourage community involvement.
- Several tenant bids have been successfully completed.
- Customer Engagement have new leaflets and business cards to help promote the service and provide the team with a distinctive identity.
- The cleaning Inspection scheme is still ongoing.

### **Aims for the Customer Engagement Team:**

- Working towards more digital inclusion.
- To complete training and set up a mystery shopping panel.



# Charnwood Housing Residents Forum (CHRF)

- To complete training and set up a scrutiny panel.
- To provide any training asked for by tenants.

Customer Engagement are confident that all goals will be met. Any new ideas to help engagement would be welcome. The team fully recognises the importance of engaging with tenants.

## Questions:

- All problems reported to the Council take too long to be investigated. *Customer Engagement understand this, but all matters must be investigated properly, and the correct processes must be followed.*
- Some works are done without pre warning to tenants. *This should not happen, all tenants should be forewarned.*
- What has not yet been completed on the Customer Engagement strategy? *3 items remain to be completed, digital inclusion, mystery shopping and scrutiny panel. All of these will be completed by the 2025 target.*
- Will the new mystery shopper scheme run on a similar basis to previous schemes? Council operatives were told that the scheme was running so were aware of it being active, will this one work in the same way? *Operatives will be told that a scheme is running but due to the volume of incoming calls it would be difficult for them to pick the mystery shopper calls out. All results and the process will be assessed, and it is to make sure that all processes work and are successful in answering customers enquiries.*
- There has been a marked improvement in the service that the call centre is now providing in the last 12 months. *Staff have been recruited which has shared the workload and helped improve performance.*

## 4: Any other business:

After the issues with J Tomlinson it was requested that Charnwood Borough Council senior management attend the CHRF to explain why they were appointed and what process was followed to procure them when they were clearly financially unstable. Customer Engagement will contact Peter Oliver and ask him to attend a future meeting to explain and answer any questions. The Asset Management team leader and Customer Liaison Officer will be attending the November CHRF meeting as well and can help with any queries.

## Actions:

- Customer Engagement have received an update via email about the bins at Park Court so will update members as soon as possible.
- Customer Engagement to investigate if 'No ball games' signs could be put up in the car park at Brook Street, Shepshed.
- Customer Engagement will investigate why scaffold vans are driving through green areas at Peel drive to work on a fire damaged property and report back to members.
- Customer Engagement to send a link to their calendar on the Charnwood Borough Council website to all members by email.
- Customer Engagement to arrange for Peter Oliver to attend a future meeting and discuss contract allocations and the process.
- Customer Engagement to send out the report on their progress and pan with these minutes.



## **Actions for Estate Management Officer:**

- To investigate the possibility of maps or signs being erected at Stavely Court to make finding individual properties easier.
- At Fielding Court a resident has his daughter living with him. She has previously been evicted from a property at Chapman Street but still has access to it. The property was closed because of anti-social behaviour. Talk to the housing officer for this area and report back to forum members.

***Meeting Closed At; 3:00pm***

***Next Meeting; The Hut, Old Ashby Road, Loughborough @ 1:00pm on the 26th September 2023***