



## MEETING MINUTES

- Purpose of Meeting**
1. Welcome and Introduction
  2. Repairs Handbook Sign of
  3. Environmental Services and Open Spaces Contract Officer presentation
  4. Update from Members
  5. Actions from previous meeting
  6. Any other business

**Date** 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023

**Venue** The Hut, Old Ashby Road, Loughborough

### Attendance:

Members	June Bush (Chair) Janice Wright Phil Hudson Craig Jordan Christopher Hipwell Stuart Wells Ireen Kennedy Paul Maine Christine Maine	Thorpe Acre Community Association Senior Citizens Forum (SCF) Fielding Court Association Ashby Road Estate Community Centre Selbourne Court Fielding Court Association Park Court Chapman Street Garden Association Chapman Street Garden Association
Guests	Helen Kennedy Julie Ann-Byrne	Customer Engagement Officer Environmental Services Contract Officer
Apologies	William Clark Tracey Riley Jackie Thomas Mark Biggs Simon Waldran Gerry Ryan Trish Edwards Wayne Bridges Dianne Lockwood Andrew Everitt-Stewart	Unicorn Street Chapman Street Staveley Court Thorpe Acre Community Association Brooke Street Shepshed Oxford Court Syston Staveley Court Brooke Street Shepshed Chapman Street Customer Engagement Officer



## 1: Introduction

It was nice to see both the Chair of the Forum return and a member who has re-joined. No new members were present.

## 2: Repairs Handbook Sign Off

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2023 the Editorial Panel were invited to look at the new Repairs Handbook and put forward any comments and improvements. All members who attended the meeting are all involved with the Charnwood Housing Resident Forum therefore, all members were supplied the new version of the handbook for approval at today's meeting.

### **Points that were made:**

Members thought that the pages were going to be coloured referenced to match the contents page.

### **Grammar errors:**

Page 8: 'We expect these to do these yourself' on the section Repairs you are responsible for, needs correcting.

Page 19: Your responsibilities, point 3 states 'including the wates' which needs amending.

### **Further comments on the handbook:**

It was mentioned that the handbook refers to Charnwood Borough Council re-charging the tenant if they are not in at the time of the appointment, but members felt that if Charnwood Borough Council didn't turn up as scheduled, do the tenants have the right to claim for any expenses incurred if they had to take the time of work etc.

Page 12: This states that it is the tenant's responsibility to repair or replace handles to doors and locks and members asked, what if matching handles cannot be found. It was suggested to perhaps state in the guide 'when matching ones cannot be found to do your best to match like to like'.

Page 20: It was discussed that some tenants may not know where their stop tap is, however, the guide states if tenants are unaware that they will need to contact Charnwood Borough Council. Some properties have a push button stop tap so it was asked if a reference could be made with regards to these types of stops taps in the handbook.

Page 8: Asks tenants to check smoke detectors however tenants living in sheltered accommodation are unable to do this as it is wired to a system of which Charnwood Borough Council are responsible for, and it was asked if this could also be added.



The handbook refers to charging the tenant and members felt that the handbook should advise on the minimum call out charge, however this can alter so the handbook states to refer to these charges by visiting our website [www.charnwood.gov.uk](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk). However, this isn't easy to find on our website, so the exact web address needs to be stated.

The size of the new handbook was questioned as most members felt it would be beneficial to be the same size as the tenancy agreement.

It was asked if the handbook would be available in a speaking book format and in different languages.

The Customer Engagement Officer confirmed that all of the further comments made have been noted and will be addressed accordingly.

### **3: Environmental Services and Open Spaces Contract Officer presentation**

Julie Ann-Byrne attended the meeting and explained her role and responsibilities of a Contract Officer for Environmental Services and Open Spaces. There are four Contract Officers, and each officer covers a different area within Charnwood based on the number of properties, this includes Loughborough North and South, the Wolds and the Syston area. They work with our waste contractor Serco and our grounds maintenance and open spaces contractor Idverde.

It was explained that the Officers handle various enquiries and questions from residents, dealing with street cleansing (including the A6 and A46), public bins and anything that doesn't fall under Leicestershire County Council.

Serco are Charnwood Borough Councils biggest contractor as they deal with every resident in the Borough and have been with us for 10 years, Idverde also have been with us for the same length of time.

Officers can deal with various enquiries from waste capacity for properties, contamination issues, ensuring properties have the correct bins, student area clean ups and much more. It was explained that the bin size for general waste has a capacity of 180litre. Most properties had a bin that held 240litre capacity so if this ever-needed replacing (due to age etc) it will be replaced with the 180litre. Residents who feel they do not have enough capacity can request a 'waste audit' which involves the officer visiting the property to check they are using their bins correctly and that they are recycling all they can. Properties with 6 or more residents often get granted an extra waste bin after being assessed.



The organisation, Case Pak receive all our recycling however they do not have the full facility to recycle everything for us. Some supermarkets are increasing their packaging to be more recyclable friendly, so this is helping. We want to introduce food waste recycling and some authorities are already piloting this on a 3-weekly collection, recycling, general and 3<sup>rd</sup> week is food. Charnwood Borough Council compared to other authorities, are collecting more than most, and we are working to make it better, however we must consider other costs, for example vehicles, waste sites. It was commented that food to be collected every 3 weeks was concerning however this hasn't been confirmed.

Open Spaces are responsible for maintaining any Charnwood Borough Council owned land and small pockets of green spaces within certain areas. The team deal with most trees except if it falls on housing land, if it is, Landlord Services are responsible. It was explained that silver tags are on every tree as all trees are surveyed annually so we are aware of its condition.

Any tree that is found dead, damaged, or dangerous and comes under Open Spaces, look at the budget available and plan out the work on a priority basis. It was asked about trees that block out light and it was explained if it isn't dead, damaged, or dangerous, nothing will be done. It was also explained that any planting of trees requires permission from Charnwood Borough Council.

An issue arose from a sheltered court where branches and leaves were falling into the communal grounds and residents are finding this dangerous. It was explained that Idverde do come out and maintain sheltered courts so they will be asked when the last time they visited – **ACTION**

Grass cutting happens every 21 days throughout mid-March until mid-November, depending on weather and ground conditions, however some residents felt that this doesn't happen, so this will be checked for sheltered courts – **ACTION**. It was asked if Idverde are unable to cut the grass due to parked cars what action is taken, and it was explained that the officers will write to residents advising that they should not be parking on the green space.

A member raised an issue with a Housing Association when conducting their grounds maintenance work, the leaves get blown around Cradock Street, Fielding Court area and feel it is dangerous. This will be investigated - **ACTION**

The winter maintenance schedule runs from mid-November to mid-March and includes hedge pruning. It was also noted that Idverde are the first response for flooding emergencies and are responsible for issuing sandbags and clearing waterways so sometimes, scheduled work can be delayed.

The officers deal with reports of graffiti and will arrange for this to be removed. If the graffiti is offensive this is removed within 2 hours.



Environmental Services and Open Spaces do not deal with Fly tips; however, it was explained that if there is frequent fly tipping in a particular area then residents need to report each time, the more complaints that are received this can potentially help CCTV cameras being installed for future.

The Officers are very pro active and visit areas frequently. They work closely with Loughborough University and its students. They do a student clean every summer and additional bin collections in student areas, also they ensure large student residential properties have the correct bin capacity for their waste.

## **Questions asked to the Officer:**

### ***Would it better not to charge for bulk waste so there won't be many fly tips?***

The Senior Officers hold a monthly meeting with Serco to discuss cases such as fly tips. Bulky waste did use to be free to residents and was funded by Council Tax contributions, however monthly reports have proven that by charging for this service there have been no increase in the number of fly tips. Since the charges were introduced, as a Council, we always ask if the items to be collected are re-usable or if can be given away to charity etc.

### ***Regarding bulky waste collections, is it collected on a set day, what's its turnaround from pay to removal?***

Bulky collections, either if this is booked in by calling the contact centre or doing it online, it will check what items can be collected, if the items are not on the list we won't and can't collect. The online booking form closes every Friday afternoon for a Saturday collection, however if the demand is high, we can close this earlier as we only have 3 vehicles out to collect items. Once the booking has been paid, confirmation of when collection will be is received by the customer. Upon collection and items are not presented, then customers will lose the £25.00 as Serco will take photographs for evidence and record the time of visit.

It was mentioned that some high street stores accept small electrical items, lightbulbs, and batteries, and that B&Q take strip lightbulbs. Stores who sell such items have a legal obligation to dispose of them so should accommodate a point of recycling within the store.

Manufacturers should also honour the collection of old appliances however this doesn't seem to be the case when discussed.



***Is there a concession fee for people on a low income/benefit?***

Yes, there is a discretionary fee however customers must apply, and this can be done online. A financial assessment is required, and we ask for 3 months bank statements as evidence. Once an application has been authorised, they are not allowed another one for 6 months.

***Regarding people's bins, often there are many that are left out 24/7 and not taken in at the end of collection day, this causes paths to become an assault course for many. Are the council going to start issuing warning letters and if there is no improvement, we will start to issue fines?***

Once a report of bins being left on the street, Contract officers will visit the property a couple of days after the collection, take photos and send warning letters where necessary. It is often found on the visit that the bins have been returned however if it is a reoccurring issue, it will be passed over to our Street Management team who will write to the resident and potentially issue a fine. Due to the large student population in the Borough, Officers do work closely with the University and will visit student properties and send literature on how the waste is managed as often bins left out are students who are unaware.

***What is the schedule for emptying street bins and what can we do if we find one full?***

It was explained that a full bin can be reported online to be emptied, and if we receive a lot of reports for one bin, we will look at increasing the schedule of that bin to be emptied. Dog waste can be placed in normal public street bins and stickers can be placed on bins to advise dog waste can be placed in this bin. We do sometimes get requests for new additional bins, this is based on a scoring system; we will look at the location of the request and how popular the area is to see if it can be included. Chapman Street has asked for these stickers to be placed on the bins in this area - **ACTION**

***When someone moves out of a rented property that is Charnwood Borough Council and a lot of waste is left, does the tenant get charged for its removal?***

It was explained that the voids team will visit the property and any waste not removed by the resident then Landlord Services can re-charge the tenant for the removal of the waste. If there are exceptional circumstances this would be dealt with by Landlord Services and not the Contract Officer.



## **ACTIONS For the Contract Officer:**

- To ask if the tree survey is carried out annually on housing land.
- Fielding Court – to check when Idverde last visited and to look at the fallen branches and leaves in the communal area.
- To check if the grass is cut at sheltered courts every 21 days.
- To address the Housing Association near Cradock Street and Fielding Court area when conducting grounds maintenance to ensure surrounding area is clear of leaves.
- Chapman Street public litter bins to have stickers placed on them advising dog waste can be placed in the bin.

## **4: Update from Members**

**Due to the over running of the presentation by the Environmental Services and Contract Officer no updates were presented.**

## **5: Actions from previous meeting**

- The budget for promotional work has been confirmed that the Communication team do most of the Customer Engagement promotions however within reason, any promotion will be done as there is no specific budget.
- The Digital Inclusion project now has a new officer who is dealing with this project so an update should hopefully be received soon,
- The repairs handbook has been looked at and awaiting approval.
- Recent issues with fly tipping on Fielding Court and Chapman Street however it has been advised all issues need reporting online.
- The noticeboard on Chapman Street either needs replacing or removing – a visit is still required by the Customer Engagement Team – **ACTION**





## 6: Any other business

**Riversdale Court** – Issue with items not being removed within the grounds and the Warden is aware. Will ask the warden on progress to get the items removed – **ACTION**

**Park Court** – Complaint raised on the state of the bin storage area and this has now been completed and cleaned.

**Fielding Court** – The recently fitted metal shed in the communal garden is unsafe and needs addressing – Customer Engagement to arrange a visit – **ACTION**

Details of the next meeting were supplied (23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023).

### **Actions:**

- Further comments on the handbook to be addressed.
- The noticeboard on Chapman Street either needs replacing or removing – a visit is still required by the Customer Engagement Team
- Riversdale Court – Issue with items not being removed within the grounds and the Warden is aware. Will ask the warden on progress to get the items removed.
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**Meeting Closed At; 3:00pm**

**Next Meeting; At The Hut, Old Ashby Road, Loughborough 1:00pm on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**