



MEETING MINUTES

- Purpose of Meeting**
1. Welcome and actions from previous meeting.
 2. Customer Engagement Tenant Bid presentation
 3. Open Spaces Contract Manager presentation
 4. Other business and update from members

Date 26th September 2023

Venue The Hut, Old Ashby 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
	Ireen Kennedy	Park Court
	Paul Maine	Chapman Street Garden Association
	Christine Maine	Chapman Street Garden Association
	Trish Edwards	Staveley Court
	John Mason	Arnold Smith House Association
Craig Jordan	Ashby Road Estate Community Centre	

Guests	Beth Walker	Open Spaces Contract Officer
	Sarah Cross	Contracts Manager for Management of
Open Spaces and Environmental Services	Andrew Everitt-Stewart	Customer Engagement Office
	Helen Kennedy	Customer Engagement Officer

Apologies	Christopher Hipwell	Selbourne Court
	Tracey Riley	Chapman Street
	Mark Biggs	Thorpe Acre Community Association
	Yvonne Diamond	Beresford Court Shepshed
	Diane Brown	Knighthorpe Road
	Betty Saunders	George Toon Court, Syston
	Wayne Bridges	Brook Street Shepshed



1. Apologies.

2. Actions from previous meeting

Actions:

- Customer Engagement have received an update via email about the bins at Park Court so will update members as soon as possible. *This work has now been scheduled to be carried out. COMPLETE.*
- Customer Engagement to investigate if 'No ball games' signs could be put up in the car park at Brook Street, Shepshed. *The Council would not be agreeable to put up "non-enforceable signage", particularly no ball games signs. Signs of this type create a very unrealistic expectation which we cannot enforce.*
- 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. *Will be monitored and any new problems investigated.*
- Customer Engagement to send a link to their calendar on the Charnwood Borough Council website to all members by email. *Link sent via email 25.09.23.*
- Customer Engagement to arrange for Peter Oliver to attend a future meeting and discuss contract allocations and the process. *Peter Oliver will be attending the November CHRF meeting. **Note, previous tenant involvement has been kept and used in the procurement of new contracts as a guideline.***
- Customer Engagement to send out the report on their progress and plan with these minutes. *COMPLETE.*

Actions for Estate Management Officer:

- To investigate the possibility of maps or signs being erected at Stavely Court to make finding individual properties easier. *Customer Engagement are investigating this, and are looking into funding options.*
- 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. *Advice was sought on this, but no action could be taken. COMPLETE.*

Questions:

- Are future agendas going to be attached to the customer Engagement calendar on the Charnwood Borough Council website? *This may be possible, future speakers will be added to the calendar.*
- Will the venue for the CHRF meetings continue to alternate between The Hut and Southfields? *This will be up to the forum members to decide, but we do need interactive facilities so that absent members can join and participate online. Customer Engagement to ask if any funding can be provided to help The Hut become a hybrid facility and they will meet with The Hut staff to discuss this.*
- Stavely Court are looking into the possibility of information maps for the complex, as discussed and minuted at the last CHRF meeting. Emergency Services may be able to help with recommendations on this. *Customer Engagement to help with the process, it was suggested that a contractor be contacted to give an idea of the price involved for this project.*



3. Tenant Bid presentation from Customer Engagement:

A Tenant Bid was presented to the Forum for Bowler Court in Loughborough, they are having problems with security, and people jumping over a back wall and using the Court as a thoroughfare. It has been proposed that pyracantha be planted as they are a thorny bush to help deter this.

Questions: Small plants are being planted, these will take a while to mature, will this help security initially and would hawthorn be better? *It was explained that pyracantha is the recommended plant for this problem, and even at a small size, they will be a deterrent.*

The bid was carried unanimously.

4. Presentation by the Contracts Manager for Cleansing and Open Spaces:

The role was described:

- To administer the Environmental Services Contract that deals with waste disposal.
- To administer the Open Spaces Contract.
- The contract was awarded to Idverde in 2014, this is an output based contract so we have powers to hold the contractor to account if standards and specifications are not being met. However, a good working relationship with Idverde has been achieved.
- To maintain and monitor the Environmental Services and Open Spaces Contracts.

Introduction and job role description for a Contract Officer for the department:

- To ensure that work is being carried out to agreed standards and specifications.
- We have a difficult workload to manage.
- To attend estate walks and to investigate queries and complaints from tenants, ensuring that we monitor standards, help from tenants in this is very helpful and important.
- To manage the Open Spaces Contract efficiently.

Further information:

- Contractors are set key performance indicators and we monitor that these are adhered to.
- Grass cutting this year has been particularly difficult due to the weather.
- Idverde have had some mechanical problems, and this has affected their performance.
- We hold monthly meetings with Idverde.
- Grass cutting is their main responsibility during the summer.
- Shrubs, hedge cutting, weeding and general maintenance are winter responsibilities.

Questions submitted by Forum Members via email:

- Who does the costing, planning/designing schedules for the seasonal flower / lights/Christmas trees displays around town. *This does not all fall under our service area. Open Spaces do cover seasonable planting, hanging baskets, and barrier boxes, which are sponsored by Serco who contribute £5000 per year towards these as part of Loughborough in Bloom. The Christmas lights, and all bunting are the responsibility of Markets and Fairs. These departments work together to combine efforts.*
- Why are dangerous brambles not checked and are not kept trimmed or weed killer put on them, in courts and other places. Overgrown bushes make places look very messy or derelict. Is there a program that could be sorted out to keep areas looking decent. *Idverde will cut*



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hedges once a year. They will also spray weedkiller in all housing and sheltered accommodation areas. This is monitored but if tenants have concerns or the work is not being completed, please let the department know.

Questions:

- How often are Idverde supposed to weed? *This is done when needed but it was stated that Fielding Court was not happy with this service, which was echoed by other Forum members in general, so the department will investigate this.*
- Why are the grass cuttings not removed from around the sheltered accommodation courts, instead of leaving them in an unsightly mess. I have been reliably informed that this should happen and that Idverde should not be using large sit on mowers which not only don't cut the grass properly but churn the ground up leaving deep ruts. *There is a separate team that manages open spaces maintenance for sheltered courts. The weather has created problems for grass cutting this summer and it has been difficult to maintain. If the grass is too long when cut, cuttings should be being collected.*
- At Arnold Smith House they have asked contractors to blow the grass cuttings under the hedge and there seems to be no tree maintenance being carried out. *idverde are not on a free maintenance contract, so only scheduled work is carried out, however the Contracts Officer will arrange to meet residents at Arnold Smith House to discuss any issues. Trees however are managed by the housing department and work can only be recommended. If the hedges are a problem, this will be investigated.*
- Could a meeting be arranged at Fielding Court, Loughborough? *This is a tree problem so the Contract Officer will inform Keith Henson to discuss. Contract Officer will also arrange to meet onsite to discuss ongoing problems.*
- Why do idverde not use box mowers? *They have never used these, but they must remove and disperse unsightly grass clumps.*
- Staveley Court looks untidy, it needs a clean-up. Also, some of the old fencing may be a risk to health and safety. It was also stated that the maintenance team normally do a very good job at Staveley Court. *The Contract Officer will arrange to meet at the court and discuss.*
- Riversdale Court, Birstall has problems with overgrown brambles and shrubs and the laurel hedge needs thinning. *This will be passed to the Contract Officer that covers the area and an onsite visit will be arranged to discuss.*
- At Park Court there are 2 hedges to the rear one belongs to the court, the other is privately owned, in between there are lots of self-seeded trees that need attention. Who do we need to talk to? *Keith Henson or the tenancy and Estate Manager would be best, Contract Officer will investigate.*
- How long has the contract with idverde got left to run? *This is being looked at currently.*
- Is the department responsible for the proposed living wall in the centre of Loughborough? *The Town Bid and Love Loughborough are responsible for this project, and surveys are currently being carried out on the proposed area. This is to encourage town centre interest and involvement.*
- Will there be some relocation of fair rides due to the restoration being carried out after the marketplace fire earlier in the year? *Yes, this will be the case.*
- Are regular sheltered court visits still being carried out and could officers inform residents when they intend to visit? *This isn't always possible due to time constraints, but officers will try to inform residents in the future and leave 'calling cards' when they visit.*
- If officers are visiting warden-controlled areas, could they inform wardens? *Some visits need to be unannounced, but these can be reported once the visit has been carried out. Other visits can be preannounced if possible. Visits can change however due to time constraints and workload, but it is good to create valuable working relationships with sheltered courts and residents. However, as wardens are mobile it may be difficult to always inform residents.*

It was stated that the climate has changed since the contract commenced, the cutting has historically been carried out between November and March, this may need to be reviewed and will be discussed at the next contract meeting.



The complaints procedure was explained, residents can call the contact centre, or there are a range of forms on the Charnwood Borough council website, tenants are now encouraged to report issues online, but the department can help with training on this procedure if needed.

Question: Is there an equivalent to the estate walks for sheltered courts? *The court meetings organised by Customer Engagement are the equivalent to estate walks.*

Forum members thanked the officers for coming to the meeting, their presentation and answering all questions.

5. Any other business:

None.

6. Updates from residents:

Riversdale Birstall: None.

Fielding Court Loughborough: The number of new buildings in the immediate vicinity has caused parking issues as there are not enough parking spaces on these new complexes, so residents from those are using the Fielding Court car park. The gates have been locked to combat this, but this has resulted in non-residents being locked in the carpark and has led to various anti-social behaviour problems in which the Police have had to called, including one non resident forcing his way into the building, behaving in an aggressive and abusive manor, and refusing to leave. The Police dealt with this issue. The residents feel that the Council need to protect residents and help with car parking problems. Carers need to get in and out of the carpark, and a key is available upstairs withing Fielding Court, but they don't have time to use this facility. A key safe has been requested on the gate to help with this but no progress has been made. Customer Engagement to seek advice.

Thorpe Acre: A successful boat trip and trip to Ingoldmells have been held. The next committee meeting should be held in October.

Park Court Loughborough: The bin store locks have not yet been fitted. Rubbish is gathering behind the bin stores and in drying areas and is not being cleared. This means that drying areas are not being used. It has been reported but so far, no action has been taken. Customer Engagement to investigate and report.

Staveley Court Loughborough: Signage is really needed at the court as previously mentioned, residents will explore funding options.

Chapman Street: None.

Arnold Smith House: The Annual General Meeting will be held on November 17th. The Christmas Party is on December 13th and the Christmas meal is on the 3rd of January 2024, both are being part funded by the Community Initiative Fund.

The Hut: Currently the committee is struggling with numbers, and it is difficult to hold a meeting and meet the quorum. The constitution may be looked at to combat this. The recent estate walk was very successful.



7. Actions:

Actions for Customer Engagement:

- Customer engagement to ask if any funding can be provided to help The Hut become a hybrid facility and they will meet with The Hut staff to discuss this.
- Customer Engagement to help with the process of investigating funding for a map and directional signs at Staveley Court, Loughborough, it was suggested that a contractor be contacted to give an idea of the price involved for this project.
- Seek advice on fitting a key safe to the car park gate at Fielding Court, Loughborough.
- Investigate fly tipping to the rear and in drying areas at Park Court, Loughborough.

Actions for Open Spaces Officers:

- Investigate the standard of work in the open spaces at Fielding Court, Loughborough.
- Arrange a visit to Arnold Smith House, Shepshed to discuss open spaces maintenance.
- Inform Keith Henson about tree issues at Fielding Court and arrange a visit to resolve.
- Arrange a visit to Staveley Court, Loughborough to discuss open spaces maintenance.
- Arrange a visit to Riversdale Court, Birstall to discuss open spaces maintenance.
- Contact Keith Henson re self-seeded trees to the rear of Park Court, Loughborough.
- Try to inform sheltered court residents of planned visits where possible and leave calling cards if appropriate.
- Review the grass cutting time frame in consideration of climate change since the contract was instigated.

Meeting Closed At; 3:00pm

Next Meeting; Committee Room 2, Southfields @ 1:00pm on the 25th October 2023