

# Editorial Panel



## MEETING MINUTES

**Purpose of Meeting**

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Integrity Connect Rent Statement Presentation
3. Any other business

**Date** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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

### Attendance:

Members	Phil Hudson Dianne Lockwood Craig Jordan June Bush Janice Wright Christopher Hipwell Trish Edwards	Fielding Court Association Chapman Street Ashby Road Estate Community Centre Thorpe Acre Community Association Riversdale Court Selbourne Court Staveley Court
Guests	Richard Smith Helen Kennedy Daley Francis	Integrity Connect Client Services Director Customer Engagement Officer Communications Officer
Apologies	John Mason Wayne Bridges Tracey Riley Paul Maine Christine Maine Ireen Kennedy Stuart Wells Andrew Everitt-Stewart	Arnold Smith House Brooke Street Shepshed Chapman Street Chapman Street Garden Association Chapman Street Garden Association Park Court Fielding Court Association Customer Engagement Officer

# Editorial Panel



## 1: Welcome and Apologies

Everyone was welcomed and introduced themselves and apologies provided.

## 2: Integrity Connect Rent Statements

Richard Smith is the Client Services Director for Integrity Connect and manages the contract for delivering print and mail solutions.

Integrity Connect have been with Charnwood Borough Council since September 2023 and they are working with us to reform and rebrand our rent statements.

The Editorial Panel has been brought together to discuss and generate ideas to improve our statements. It has been decided by Officers that our current statements need to be more engaging with our tenants and leaseholders and to improve the information we provide to them. Integrity Connect are duty bound as our contractor to work with us to make our statements better.

Customer feedback found that many customers find it difficult to understand the financial detail, so messaging is important.

The panel was asked on their thoughts for the current statements they receive, and all agreed that they are good to understand however they are very plain and 'official'.

It was advised to the panel that we are sending out 1 piece of paper with big chunks of white space, so we can put more information within this space to be more engaging at no extra cost.

The panel were shown examples of other authorities rent statements and some Housing Associations.

It was explained that some Housing Associations send out a covering letter with their statements which are unique to that individual household, which states whether they are in credit or arrears, including ways to help and other relevant information.

Other organisations put in different specific messages to target areas, for example drive different messages through postcode area, state of account and some use the traffic light system, where it shows arrears in red and credit in green, it has been found that by using colour it draws more attention.

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## *Suggestions from the Panel:*

It was suggested that it would be good to understand what was being paid to what they are paying now, showing the increase.

Charnwood Borough Council do not show the different ways to pay, however it was advised that space is limited on our statements however we could dissect the data for customers who are not paying by Direct Debit to promote this on their statements and perhaps put a message like 'why don't you pay by DD'. Integrity Connect have proven that there is a significant uptake on Direct Debit payments when they administer this, and it is at no extra cost.

There was concern that by using colour, tenants and leaseholders may think that the cost in printing will be significantly more to the Council however, it was reassured that there isn't a huge cost associated with it being in colour and it could possibly gain financially as more customers may pay their rent as the colour will draw their attention.

There needs to be more help and guidance within the document so it was suggested that we can point to webpages by inserting a QR code within the statements. For example, guidance if unable to pay the rent, support for the rising cost of living, claiming benefits, tax credits, how to contact us etc. By doing this, this will help to minimise the number of enquiries that the Contact Centre/Income Officer receive. Also, when payments are made a thank you after each transaction.

All suggestions will be considered, and it was advised that the statements can change and are not fixed.

Integrity Connect explained that Origin Housing based in London provide statements in a form of a booklet which has replaced their resident newsletter, however the conclusion to this is that Charnwood already have a quarterly magazine and the cost would be too significant to change rent statements into booklets.

# Editorial Panel

Illustrations were then shown to the panel of different examples of potential statements for Charnwood as follows:

The current statement is as shown:

**Charnwood** Rent Statement

Property: [REDACTED]  
 Tenancy No: [REDACTED]  
 Contact: [REDACTED]  
 Direct Line: [REDACTED]

This statement is for your current tenancy. It shows charges and payments that we recorded on our systems between 5 October 2023 and 7 January 2024.

Garage VAT charge: £2.17 weekly  
 Garage Non-Tenants: £10.84 weekly  
 Total Charges: £13.01

Opening Balance at 5 October 2023: £483.74 In Credit

Date	Week	Description	Charges	Payments	Balance	In Credit
09 Oct 2023	28 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£496.75	In Credit
16 Oct 2023	29 2023	Rent Due	£13.01	£32.04	£473.74	In Credit
23 Oct 2023	30 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£460.73	In Credit
30 Oct 2023	31 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£447.72	In Credit
06 Nov 2023	02 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£434.71	In Credit
13 Nov 2023	03 2023	Rent Due	£13.01	£32.04	£411.70	In Credit
20 Nov 2023	04 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£398.69	In Credit
27 Nov 2023	05 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£385.68	In Credit
04 Dec 2023	06 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£372.67	In Credit
11 Dec 2023	07 2023	Rent Due	£13.01	£32.04	£349.66	In Credit
18 Dec 2023	08 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£336.65	In Credit
01 Jan 2024	00 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		£323.64	In Credit

Closing Balance: £36.75 In Credit

Different examples were shown:

**Charnwood** Your Tenancy Reference: 00000000

Property: 0000000000  
 Tenancy No: 0000000000  
 Contact: Ms L Knight  
 Direct Line: 01209 604666

Your account is in credit by £429.12 - thank you

**Your rent statement**

Dear [REDACTED],

This statement is for your current tenancy. It shows charges and payments that we recorded on our systems between 5 October 2023 and 7 January 2024.

Garage VAT charge / weekly: £2.17  
 Garage Non-Tenants / weekly: £10.84  
 Total Charges: £13.01

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Closing Balance: £36.75 In Credit

**How to pay**  
 By the easiest and most convenient means of payment is by Direct Debit. Paying your charges by Direct Debit offers a hassle free solution for those who worry about paying their bills on time. There is no form filling, it is quick and easy and we can do it on the phone. You will need to have a current bank or building society account and you can set up the facility. To do so call us on 01209 604666.

# Editorial Panel





Southfield Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 2TX  
Telephone: 01509 634666

**Your Tenancy Reference**  
00000000

Property: 0000000000  
Tenancy No: 800095956  
Contact: Ms L. Knights  
Direct Line: 01509 634666

**Your account is in credit  
by £429.12 - thank you**

**Your rent statement**

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxx

This statement is for your current tenancy at:  
= Property Address =

It shows charges and payments that we recorded on our systems between 5 October 2023 and 7 January 2024.

<b>Garage VAT charge / weekly</b>	<b>£2.17</b>	
<b>Garage Non-Tenants / weekly</b>	<b>£18.84</b>	
<b>Total Charges</b>	<b>£21.01</b>	

	Date	Description	Amount	Payments			
<b>Opening Balance at 5 October 2023</b>							
					-£43.74		In Credit
09 Oct 2023	28 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£16.73	In Credit
09 Oct 2023	28 2023	Rent Direct Debits		£52.04		£82.77	In Credit
16 Oct 2023	29 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£89.76	In Credit
23 Oct 2023	30 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£96.76	In Credit
30 Oct 2023	31 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£103.74	In Credit
06 Nov 2023	32 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£110.73	In Credit
06 Nov 2023	32 2023	Rent Direct Debits		£52.04		£82.77	In Credit
13 Nov 2023	33 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£117.76	In Credit
20 Nov 2023	34 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£124.76	In Credit
27 Nov 2023	35 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£131.74	In Credit
04 Dec 2023	36 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£138.73	In Credit
04 Dec 2023	36 2023	Rent Direct Debits		£52.04		£82.77	In Credit
11 Dec 2023	37 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£145.76	In Credit
18 Jan 2024	40 2023	Rent Due	£13.01			-£152.75	In Credit
<b>Closing Balance</b>						<b>-£56.75</b>	<b>In Credit</b>

If a payment has been made in the last 7 working days this may not show in this statement.

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Both a company and an individual can be a tenant. We are not responsible for any errors or omissions in this statement. If you have any queries please contact us on 01509 634666. [www.charnwood.gov.uk/tenants](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/tenants)



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<b>Garage Non-Tenants / weekly</b>	<b>£18.84</b>	
<b>Total Charges</b>	<b>£21.01</b>	

	Date	Description	Amount	Payments			
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# Editorial Panel





Southfield Road, Longbrough, Leicestershire, LE11 2TH  
Telephone: 01509 636666

«Name»  
«Address1»  
«Address2»  
«Address3»  
«Address4»  
«Address5»  
«Postcode»

**Your Tenancy Reference**  
0000000

Property: 0000000000  
Tenancy No: 00000000  
Contact: Mr L. Knights  
Direct Line: 01509 636666

**Your account is in credit by £429.12 - thank you**

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27 Nov 2023	35 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		-£4.74	In Credit
04 Dec 2023	30 2023	Rent Due	£13.01		-£3.73	In Credit
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Southfield Road, Longbrough, Leicestershire, LE11 2TH  
Telephone: 01509 636666

«Name»  
«Address1»  
«Address2»  
«Address3»  
«Address4»  
«Address5»  
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Property: 0000000000  
Tenancy No: 00000000  
Contact: Mr L. Knights  
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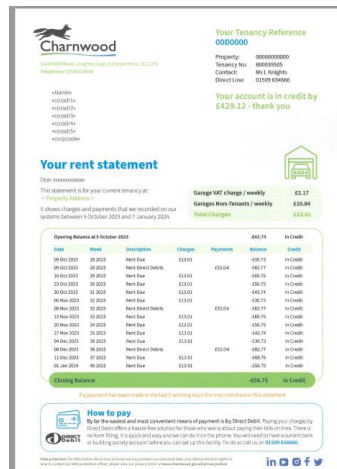
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# Editorial Panel



Everyone agreed that colour was more attractive, and they liked the transactions to be shown in the orange colour. Some of the examples were quite 'busy' so it was suggested that the payments to be in colour and the rest of the statement to be quite plain but introducing colour. Charnwood do use a broad colour range so introducing the right colour would be simple.

Everyone agreed if the account was in arrears for this to be shown in red, and in credit, to be shown in green.

To introduce a QR code for content insurance as we find many tenants and leaseholders are not insured, and this is a good way to promote services like this.

The current paperwork states a simple contact number however it was agreed a more personal touch should be added by showing their own Income Officer's name.

It was asked if customers needed their statements in a different language how would this work and it was explained that we can flag different individuals who need it in a different language and have this translated.

It was also explained that we can add an Allpay bar code which would be unique for their account so customers can go to the Post Office and pay their rent by taking their statement if they haven't got their Allpay card on them, which will make it easier to pay.

We can also promote different services within the Council, for example, the promotion of the tenant network event in June on statements so this is something that will be considered in the future.

All points made at the meeting will be considered by the Income Team and the contractor and samples will be drawn up which will include suggestions made today.

We are hopeful that this will then go live ready for the July Statements.

# Editorial Panel



**Meeting closed at 12:30pm**

**Next Your Homes Matters Meeting is on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at The Hut Old Ashby Road Loughborough at 10:00am until 11:30am.**