

Tenants' & Residents' Forum



TAI CANOLBARTH CYMRU
MID-WALES HOUSING
Yn barod amdani Equal to the challenge

TaRF Meeting on Wednesday 7th June 2019

Present – Becky Watson, Bryan Owen Debby Crewe

Staff – Alisa Cakebread – CPO, Janet Jones – Customer Services Team Leader, Charles Brotherton – Director of Finance (for part of the meeting), Jean O’Neill – Interim Director of Customer services, Mark Woodhouse – Welfare Benefits Advisor (for part of the meeting)

Apologies – Pam Barwell, Brian Christopher

Minutes of the last meeting – read and accepted as correct – signed by Rebecca Watson

1) **Matters Arising**

SAP Ratings – AC handed out the SAP rating information on each member of TaRF’s address as requested. After reading the SAP rating for his property Bryan said that he thought the rating on his was different. **Action** – JJ to check and confirm with BO whether it is correct.

Signing in procedure – The response from Andrea Williams – HR Manager regarding the signing in procedure was as follows and was read out to the members of TaRF –

- There is not a written procedure for the signing in book; its purpose is to maintain a record of occasional visitors to the office and to ensure that they are accounted for in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building.
- The receptionist or fire marshal located on the ground floor is responsible for retrieving the signing in book in the event of an evacuation and taking the roll call for visitors.
- It would not be efficient practice to have two books.
- The signing in book was changed last year to meet the requirements of GDPR.
- The issue of visitor badges is standard practice for all buildings with occasional visitors.

As we discussed, identification badges can be provided to Tenant Representatives to recognise their involvement and work for the Association but they would still be required to sign in the visitor book when they come to Ty Canol House. – TaRF confirmed that they would still like to go ahead with having the ID badges. – **Action** AC to take photos of the members present.

Janet Jones also confirmed that the signing in book was working well and that there were no issues with the carbon paper.

Tenants at the heart - BO said that he had responded to the Welsh Governments questionnaire and followed it up with two further emails but had heard nothing back from them, which was very disappointing.

Tenant board members & minutes on the website - the response from John Thornton – Governance Officer as below –

Ms Morag Bailey is a tenant of MWA. Ms Olivia Morris is a former tenant of MWA.

I think open minutes go up on the MWA when they have been approved* – that is, after the next meeting has agreed that they are a ‘true and accurate record’. There has only been one meeting since December.

The meeting in March approved the minutes for December, and they are on the website. The next Board meeting in July will approve the minutes of the March meeting.

Any Confidential minutes are not published. Minutes of any ‘special’ meeting will still have to be approved at the next Board meeting.

The Board only plans to meet about 5 times each year.

* After the Board approves minutes, it might take me a couple of days to get them online, depending on other workloads.

2) Customer Service standards – Janet Jones

Janet shared a document with the members of TaRF and explained that any changes that have been made to the Customer Service standards are additions to it.

TaRF were happy with the additions to the standards and the following questions that were raised –

Page 2 1.6-point V. – Should the enquiry be made in Welsh, where possible, we shall respond in Welsh.

What happens if the caller speaks Polish? JJ – Hopefully we can use Google translate/babble when the new facility of Web chat which is going to be set up soon. We are going to invite some of our existing Polish residents to try this out before we start using it to make sure it will be sufficient.

Page 3 2.1 – When a residents calls to report a repair can they be given the response time that is relevant to their repair at the time that they report it? – **Action** - Jan Jones to add this to the Customer Service Standards.

Page 3 2.2 iv. – If possible TaRF would like more detail to be given to residents on the levels of decoration that will be carried out following any planned maintenance work. **Action** – Ac to feedback to planned maintenance.

3) Data Sharing Policy & affordability review – Charles Brotherton

Data Sharing Policy

Charles explained that this was a new data sharing policy and had already been shared with the Organisational Development Committee on 6/6/2019 and they had made no recommendations.

After reading the document, TaRF also had no recommendations for amendments.

One point was raised following discussion, and that was whether we should now be contacting everyone annually that we do share data with to confirm whether they have had any data breaches concerning MWA residents/staff and whether they have been informed accordingly. –**Action** – Charles Brotherton to instigate.

Affordability Review

The two main things that we have taken from the review are:- The provision of new homes and affordability of the rent.

- Rents – Should there be a framework or should housing associations have free reign to set their own?
- MWA have been in the minority to not maximise the rent increase.
- Housing supply – each Local Authority needs to be doing more to identify housing need, as current systems are not up to date.
- Are there enough one bed properties being built? Residents are being penalised by the bedroom tax in a 2-bedroom property.
In the past 2 years, how many one bed properties has MWA built? 22 in Aberystwyth and 7 in Glan-y-dwr
In the next 2 years how many will MWA be building? **Action** – CB to find out.
TaRF believe that the CHR is not working well enough currently. It was decided to invite Christine East and Jean O’Neill to come along to the next meeting to give an update on the CHR and allocations – **Action** - AC to send invitation.

CB asked if anyone had any questions today or he would be happy to come back at a later date. There were no further questions.

4) Update on Universal Credit – Mark Woodhouse – Welfare benefits Officer

- Went live in Powys August 2018 and Ceredigion December 2018
- From Aug 18 – March 19 MWA had 54 UC cases
- From April 19 up to today’s date 16 UC cases
- MWA have 450 residents who are not currently on UC
- Out of 138 current cases – 15 are managed payments (paid direct to the landlord), 7 are alternative payments (with serious rent arrears) this means that a proportion of the housing element is taken to cover the rent arrears.

5) Joint Tenant panel – CEO Designate Interviews (JO’N left the room during this discussion)

While Brian Christopher is unwell, it was agreed that Bryan Owen would be the interim Chair on the Joint tenant panel and TaRF. BW proposed Bryan Owen and DC seconded. It was agreed that Bryan Owen and Becky Watson would attend the CEO designate interviews on 11th July 2019.

- 6) **Armchair Group** – AC shared information about the new “Armchair Group” that has been set up and advertised. It is a way for residents to get involved without having to come along to meetings. The Armchair group will be advertised via the newsletter, on social media and at other resident meetings. TaRF thought it was a good idea and suggested that some of the previous members of TaRF might be interested in getting involved.

7) **TPAS Training**

AC read the email that had been sent out to staff, residents and Board members inviting them to come to the tenant engagement training session. This gave a brief outline of what will be covered and the timings of the 2 sessions.

Bryan, Becky and Debby all confirmed that they would be coming along to the Tenant Engagement Training with TPAS at Ty Canol House on 11th July.

8) Telephone System

TaRF have been asked for suggestions to be considered when MWAH look at purchasing a new phone system. This is possibly going to be happening in 2020. TaRF suggested the following –

- Are visually impaired/hearing impaired considered?
- Can a reference number be given each time a communication occurs between a resident and a staff member of MWAH?
- Would it be possible to have a direct number to each department in the future?

9) AOB

Tenancy turnover – TaRF asked if it would be possible to have further information on the following –

- Reasons for terminating the tenancy
- Location
- What is the turnover?
- Has it increased/decreased or remained consistent?
- Is there a trend?
- Do we still subscribe to Homeswapper?

The members of TaRF also wanted to mention how informative they had found Mark Woodhouse's presentation on Universal Credit.

Date of next meeting Friday 2nd August 2019