

Tenants' & Residents' Forum



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

Ty Canol House 1st August 2014 Minutes

Attending:

Brian Christopher – Chair

Brian Walkinshaw

Andrew McDonald

Sue Garrett

Vic Brown (tenant board member)

Christine Field (after lunch)

Apologies:

Philip & Kim Taylor

Debbie Crewe

Mike Williams

Heather Jones

Bryan Owen

Annie Burton

Board Member:

David Evans (observer only)

Staff and Guests

Nia Boyd – Community Participation Officer

Aidan Ackerman – Director of Customer Services

Charles Brotherton – Director of Finance

Maureen Woosnam – Performance Officer

Jean O'Neill – Community Housing Team Leader

1. Tenants' Time

1.1 WHQS – Copy of standards not received by Vic Brown.

Action: Bryan Owen to supply

1.2. Refurbished Kitchens – Some kitchens at Pont Robert have not been completed to customers' satisfaction. Contractor has not returned to complete snagging.

Action: Nia to speak with Contracts Team

1.3. Facebook – TaRF page has not been set up, members to do this action. Guidance is required to carry out this action.

Action: Nia to set up another training afternoon with Dean

1.4. Computer Training – Would it be possible to set up a new course of computer training as more people would like to participate to enhance their skills.

Update by Nia: Confirmed that a new 8 week course will be starting on 22nd September 9:15am – 11:15am. To be advertised on the website and in LOOK newsletter.

1.5 Dog Problems – A dog residing in one of the properties in Plas Maldwyn is causing problems in the area, noisy and fouling. This needs to be taken up with Community Housing Officer.

Action: Nia to speak with CH Team

2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were gone through for accuracy and accepted.

3. Matters Arising

Removed: Online Repairs Acknowledgement

The Repair Order Acknowledgement document with the feedback form on the back is acknowledgement that the reported issue has been processed. It is felt that this is sufficient for repairs.

In regards to other queries raised over the phone or online, Nia explained that she had spoken to Phil and Hannah and it was decided that a reference number/automated response to every query was too much of an administrative burden to the Association. Nia explained that auto-responses open up the internal systems to a greater number of spam and that an automated response would not be satisfactory as it doesn't provide details of whom is dealing with the request.

It is felt that under the restructure, queries submitted over the phone or online should be dealt with effectively and not lost internally. Nia highlighted that all calls should go to the customer services desk; if they are unable to deal with the query it will be passed to the relevant Officer – you should be given the name of the person it's being passed onto.

Nia explained that under the restructure problems experienced in the past should not be an issue any longer. It was agreed that this should now be removed from matters arising and reinstated if the problem is experienced again.

Removed: Tree Felling Charges

Jonathan Davies and Jo Hughes were unable to attend the meeting however in response to the query raised in the last meeting:

'If a tree in somebody's garden is taken down, but the tree was there before the tenant moves in, who's responsible for the charge?'

To which Jonathan provided a statement:

'In terms of tree surgery, our responsibility is for trees in the communal areas of estates owned by the Association. The cost of any tree surgery undertaken in communal areas of estates are borne by all residents of that estate through the service charge (for reasonableness the cost may be spread over two years).'

Anything on the tenants land is their responsibility to maintain. This is the same for garden maintenance or for tree maintenance. We can offer to assist in arranging the work and even undertaking the work, but the responsibility is on the tenants to pay for it. If necessary we can arrange a payment plan to cover the work should the costs be unreasonable'.

It was agreed that the answer was satisfactory and it's the tenants' responsibility to maintain the garden when they sign the tenancy. It was agreed that this could be removed from matters arising.

Removed: Outdated information on MWA website

Nia explained that the minutes from the TaRF meetings were now being uploaded in English and Welsh. Nia explained that she was working with Phil to ensure all events and important dates were being advertised.

It was also noted that the entire website was being revamped in 2014-15 and that the tenants page would be improved in the redesigning of the website.

Removed: Rent Policy Options.

Copy of presentation sent to TaRF members.

Removed: Maintenance Feedback Forms.

Recommendations made by the Service Auditors have now been included in the feedback forms for reactive repair jobs. Nia explained that the recommendation of scoring services 1 – 10 had not been adopted as it was difficult to analyse, especially if comparing against other services in the Association which follow the format of Poor/Satisfactory/Good/Excellent.

4. Estate Walkabout Schedule – Jean O'Neill

Jean proposed that the Estate Walkabout is replaced with 'Love Where You Live'. The Community Housing team have analysed the past 12 months of estate walkabouts and concluded:

- Since the Community Housing Team took over responsibility for the Estate Walkabouts we've been unclear about the outcomes that we are looking to achieve.
- The estates we've visited recently have been small and well kept
- The Association is moving towards doing annual visits to all our tenants.
- See little value in large numbers of staff and board members going to a small number of properties.
- A litter pick is of no use for some estates as they are clear of litter.
- It shouldn't be just about getting out and about and meeting tenants as the Community Housing Team do that every day of the week.

- What value is there to knocking on doors to update contact details when this work is already being done anyway?

Proposal – To replace Estate Walkabouts with Community Events called “Love where you live”.

What will “Love where you live” events to achieve?

- To give estates that are going downhill a pull by “the boots”. Try to stop the rot.
- Visit our worst estates in terms of the ones that we are having antisocial behavior issues. Would like to especially visit estates once we have got an “undesirable” tenant moved.
- To have an “intensive” event on the estate when we bring along partners as appropriate ie; Police, Keep Britain Tidy, Welfare Benefits advice, Worcester (how to use your boilers in the most economical way) etc
- Have a skip available for an amnesty of rubbish (in properties and in communal areas)
- Maybe Dulux or a contractor to give advice about painting and decorating
- Consider introducing an Estate Agreement at the event which residents sign up to.
- Tailor the community event to each particular location and depending upon the asb that has been going on there.

- Not to have a 12 month schedule of monthly visits but aim to do 6 events in a year. Unable to say where the locations will be at the beginning of the year as we are unsure where issues are going to crop up.

TaRF members agreed that Love Where You Live scheme should replace the Estate Walkabouts.

5. Work Program 2014/2015 – Aidan Ackerman

TaRF members were sent a list of policies prior to the meeting. Aidan requested feedback as to which policies TaRF would like to review, recommending concentrating on the ones that affect tenants the most.

It was agreed that this would need more time than what is available at TaRF therefore it was decided that 'workshops' would be set up before the next TaRF meeting to allow tenants to get together and analyse the policy documents with staff on hand to answer any questions that they may have.

If people were unable to attend the Policy Review Workshop there is an opportunity to review at home and comment electronically via track changes. This was seen as a more inclusive method as tenants that lived far from Newtown or were working during the day could still be involved.

It was agreed that the following policies would be reviewed by the group:

- PID 3 Annual Visits to Tenants
- PID 5 Improve Maintenance Services
- PID 6 Review Asset Management Strategy
- PID 7 Improve ASB
- PID 8 Offer Choice with Service Charges
- PID 10 Respond to Welfare Benefit Reform
- PID 11 Review Rent Setting Policy (with assistance from Charles)
- Local Tenant Participation and Tenant Reward Scheme Policies
- Service Charge Collection and Arrears Policy
- Agency Managed Schemes Strategy (Supported Housing)
- Re-let Standard
- Service Charge Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Electronic Communications and IT Security Policy

Action Nia: Find out who from TaRF is interested in reviewing the policies.

Action Aidan: to provide the relevant policy papers in electronic format for the Policy Review Group. Arrange a convenient date for the workshop to be held before the next TaRF meeting.

6. Rent Policy Options – Charles Brotherton

TaRF felt that the subject was quite complex and more time / explanation was needed before they could pass comment.

It was agreed that Charles would hold a separate meeting with interested TaRF members to concentrate on the subject.

Vic Brown mentioned that he would be interested.

Action Nia: Find out who from TaRF is interested in reviewing the policies.

Action Charles: arrange a workshop for the Rent Review Group.

7. Performance Reporting – Mo Woosnam

Mo went through the list of current information reported to Tenants and Residents on a quarterly basis, printed in the LOOK Tenant Magazine. TaRF were asked if the list of performance indicators was relevant/useful information for tenants and should MWA be including any others from the list provided.

It was agreed that the performance information would now include:

PI14PR001 Responsive Maintenance

PI14PR002 Anti-Social Behaviour

PI14PR008 Repairs Completed First Time

PI14PR009 Repairs Completed By Appointment

PI14PR010 Repairs Appointments Kept

PI14PR011 Emergency Repairs Completed In 24 Hours

PI14PR015 Gross Rent Arrears

PI14PR022 Service Requests From MWA Tenants

PI14PR033 Compliments Received

PI14PR034 Complaints Received

Agreed to include information on future development programs within the newsletter as tenants are interested in knowing more about new housing developments.

Mo asked TaRF if the current format for performance indicators was clear or confusing by showing *performance below or above target* with a smiley face and *performance compared to the last report* with a green or red arrow. Members found this format unclear and it was agreed that faces would be used only to show if performance was above or below the last

8. LTPS – Nia Boyd

Nia asked for feedback on the content and layout of the LTPS questionnaire. It was suggested that the word landlord is removed and replace with MWA.

Action Nia: Update LTPS questionnaire in line with recommendation.

9. AOB

Nia asked on behalf of a resident in Aberystwyth if the meeting could start at 10:30 rather than 9:45am. Members felt that this would be ok however it was important to highlight to the tenant wishing to come that they needed to be committed to attending as many meetings as possible.

One member (BW) noted that he would not be able to attend if the time was changed but he is willing to participate in the meeting remotely through a speaker pod.

Action: Nia to speak to IT about a speaker pod so tenants can dial into the meeting if unable to attend in person.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be 3rd October 2014