

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TENANTS' & LEASEHOLDERS' FORUM

6TH APRIL 2017

FERNEHAM HALL

In attendance: Barbara LeSueur (Chair); Jane Andrews; Eileen Bailey; Terry Blackburn; Margaret Chandler; Roy Chandler; Mrs Corbin; Sally Eeles; Brian Lee; Myra Lee; Cliff Murray; Sylvia Murray; Mollie Pearman; Mrs Perry; Bill Prescott; Sonya Prescott; Tracey Thomas; Ken Tomlinson; David Town; John Waldron; Paula Weaver; Linda Wylie; Cllr Maryam Brady; Cllr Kay Mandry;

Apologies for absence: Liz Bartlett; Mr & Mrs Buxey; Joan Chapman; Mr & Mrs Davies; Debbie Gibbs; Roy Gibbs; Yvonne Goddard; Sheia Hewes; Dave Hurden; Mrs Hurst; Liz Leach; Phil Leach; Maureen McIntosh; Ruth Payne; Jeanette Rigden-Murphy; Mrs Weir; Derek Whitear;

Welcome & introduction:

Barbara welcomed everyone to the meeting and the officers present introduced themselves. Officers included Ian Cousins; Alan Dindar; Jane Cresdee and Jennie Larkin. Barbara also welcomed Jo Kinley and Paul Dobinson from TSG.

Announcements & Election of Vice Chair

Tracy Thomas from Fairfield Avenue put her name forward for this position having previously been actively involved as a resident at Gosport Borough Council. At Gosport, Tracy regularly attended the Customer Opinion Panel and represented tenants at meetings with contractors. Tracy visited void properties and interviewed Gosport tenants about the services that they received.

In addition to the above, Tracy worked on a project with the Mayor of Gosport. This involved litter picking; raising awareness of the importance of picking up after dogs and getting new play equipment and bins in a local park.

Tracy is keen to transfer her skills to Fareham and has already attended South Coast Training.

Tracy was proposed a Vice Chair by Barbara and seconded by Mollie Pearman.

Barbara welcomed Tracy to her new role.

Presentation by TSG our gas contractors:

Jo Kinley, Contract Manager for TSG and Paul Dobinson (Supervisor) gave a presentation to the Forum about the services provided by TSG (the presentation is available on request).

Jo and Paul meet with Ian Cousins and Alan Dindar on a monthly basis. Every 3 months Paula Weaver attends the meetings to represent tenants.

Contact details for TSG are advertised on the service stickers which should be left on boilers. They are also advertised on the website and in the Tenants' Newsletter.

Jo talked about the importance of gas safety checks and the annual safety check of all boilers. Properties are targeted three months before the gas safety certificate expires when a letter giving an appointment is set out. If there is no response, a further two letters can be sent out before the matter is referred back to the Council for action which can result in eviction.

What can tenants do to help improve the service?

Make sure that the area around boilers and radiators is clear so that the engineer can work easily.

If you cannot make the appointment for any reason, please let TSG know.

Before you call out an engineer, check your thermostat and make sure that everything is turned on. Note any error codes that are showing on the boiler and give these to TSG.

What will TSG do?

Aim for a first time fix. In March, 185 jobs were carried out and 89% of these were completed first time. Sometimes though, parts have to be ordered as it is not possible to carry all components in a van because of the risk of damage or theft. Usually parts arrive very quickly. Asbestos checks can also usually be carried out quite quickly.

When the engineer arrives, he/she should show ID and should be polite and explain why he/she is there. The engineer should also be in uniform which is a grey shirt with a TSG logo. Dust sheets should be laid and shoe protectors worn. Engineers cannot take off their shoes for safety reasons.

Questions and answers:

Sally Eeles said that over Christmas she had been left without heating or hot water. This was down to the fact that it was a holiday period and there was a shut down.

Tracy Thomas asked if properties could be logged as asbestos free in order to save time. Such records are kept, but, are not available to TSG. Also, the survey has to be applicable to the work that is carried out.

Paula Weaver said that she had recently had a visit from a gas sub-contractor who she found rude. He also did not ring her as requested.

Mollie Pearman said that she had had problems with boiler pressure. Paul said that he would look into this.

Carla Banks asked if engineers check all radiators during a service. The engineer should ask about radiators and check them. They should also check all thermostatic valves. Not all radiators are changed when a boiler is changed.

Why do some services take such a short time? This depends on the age of the boiler. Old boilers take longer to service. During a service, the engineer should check the boiler controls; radiators; the hot water; thermostat; boiler efficiency and they should take a flue gas analysis. They will only do more if readings from a check show a problem.

With the engineer set the heating and hot water controls? Yes, if requested.

Mrs Prescott said that her programmer is in the wrong place in her hall and that she has to use a torch to find it. TSG will send someone out to take a look.

Barbara thanked TSG for their presentation.

Review of the present structure of tenant involvement:

Tenants' & Leaseholders' Forum:

How often should the Forum meet?

All were in agreement that the Forum should continue to meet quarterly.

Where should the Forum meet?

All agreed that Ferneham Hall was the best venue, so, meetings will continue to be held here.

There were mixed views about this with about half of those present favouring day time only meetings and others preferring to stay with what we have which is day time meetings in the Autumn/Winter and evening meetings in Spring/Summer. We will therefore continue with the mix as some people can only attend in the evenings, so, having at least two meetings in the evening enables them to attend.

What topics would you like speakers to cover at Forum meetings?

- Car parking issues? We could ask the Council's enforcement team to attend.
- Maintenance
- Welfare benefits/reform
- Future of sheltered housing
- Leisure facilities for the over 60's
- Recycling
- Grounds maintenance
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Food waste
- Two Saints and their work with the homeless
- Debt advice – Citizens Advice; Locks Heath etc

The tenants' newsletter:

- Tenants would like to see details of who to contact about problems with various services and who is who at the Council.
- Information about sheltered housing schemes and any new developments.
- Garage rents.

- Estate improvements and an update on how the money is spent.
- Gardens around the Borough
- Void properties – what is looked at plus photos
- Dog nuisance and other pests
- Nuisance calls
- Dates of meetings
- Including the Annual Report in the newsletter once a year was felt to be a good idea.
- How government policies affect tenants and leaseholders (current affairs)
- It was felt that the newsletter was interesting and contained useful information.
- Tenants and leaseholders attending the meeting were asked if they would prefer the newsletter to only be available on line. They overwhelmingly voted to receive it in paper form.

South Coast Training:

What workshops would you like to see at South Coast Training?

- Money/debt advice
- 'Prepared to get back to work?' What can older people do if interested in future employment? How can we still contribute to society and be productive? What salary do we hope to expect?'
- Anti-social behaviour
- Social media & IT skills
- Welfare reform
- Mental Health
- Housing Law

Date of next meeting:

The next meeting of the Tenants' & Leaseholders' Forum will be held on Thursday 27th July at 6:30pm.