



MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT YORKSHIRE HOUSE  
TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008

PRESENT: Jeff Mitchell (Chair), Stewart McCann (Secretary), Elia Stojanovic (Treasurer), June Mitchell, George Croft, Elsie Croft, Doreen Benson, Paul Morrow, Tina Burton, Colin Hustler, Margaret Hamilton, Mary Hartley, Keith Birchall, Brenda Hollinshead.

STAFF: Helen Cowton (Tenant Involvement Adviser), Tom Clinton (Tenant Involvement Adviser) Sally Kendrick (Policy & Delivery Manager)

INTRODUCTORY: The Chair introduced and welcomed two new members, Keith Birchall and Brenda Hollinshead, who were co-opted on to the focus group from Craven area.

APOLOGIES: Harold Burnip (Vice Chair), Brian Tedstone, Sue Austin,

ABSENT: None

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: Proposed as correct by Margaret Hamilton, seconded by Tina Burton.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THOSE MINUTES: Referring to the last paragraph on page 2 of the minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> April headed, Open Discussion, CH said he has made some progress in forming an umbrella group in Brunel.

SERVICE CHARGES (CRAVEN): KB claimed that the service charges in the sheltered area at Craven where he lives have been raised by as much as 73%. He said besides the lack of consultation beforehand the new charges also lack transparency and have created much confusion among customers. He put it to members that managers at Yorkshire Housing should work within a framework of rules and regulations to try and avoid any nasty surprises or massive increases. He proposed that the Chair of YHTFG should arrange for a meeting to take place between four or five members of the focus group and the management responsible for service charges. He added, that dialogue was needed not only to address the hike in charges but also for them to explain things like why some customers are charged for communal areas where they don't even live.

SK reminded members that there is an existing service charge policy, which was introduced last year, and that it already has a framework in place. She said there is also a 'Service Charge Working Group' that continues to look at service charges. She suggested that the head of this group could be invited to a focus group meeting to explain things and answer member's questions. She also said that maybe we should explore the possibility of a customer representative sitting on the 'Service Charge Working Group', adding that perhaps KB could perform that role.

FEEDBACK FROM YORK VISIT: DB reported that eight members of the focus group visited the recently refurbished sheltered complex at Garth Court, York, on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May. She said housing officer, Jo Daly, took them on a guided tour and showed them all the facilities that have brought the complex up to extra care standard. Jubilee Court, Haxby, and Poplar Tree Gardens were also visited on the day. DB said the improvements in the corridors at Jubilee Court have had a wonderful effect but that there were still some problems to resolve at Poplar Tree Gardens were pigeon lime, the lack of playing facilities for children and a front security door that doesn't work properly were still issues that had to be resolved. Since the visit the housing officer for Poplar Tree Gardens, Kelly Macmillan, has been in touch with DB and told her that the security door is about to be replaced with a cost to the customer of 7p per week. She also said that the issue between playing facilities and parking space had been somewhat reduced due to the movement of families, as there were now only six children under the ages of ten living there. She added, that most customers also prefer parking space rather than a play area in this instance.

While making clear she was not in any way diminishing the organising efforts put into the York visit, SK did, however, question it's purpose. She pointed out that it didn't fit in with agreed structures and procedures of visits that were discussed at previous focus group meetings. In line with the previous minutes and after lengthy debate it was agreed that members would propose schemes to carry out focus group visits (after consultation with Area teams if necessary) and that these would be developed in to a programme at the next meeting.

FEEDBACK FROM TENANT GROUPS: CH informed members that Brunel walkabouts would start in early July. He also spoke about a workshop introduced by HC, and announced that he was going to this years Tpas conference at Birmingham in August.

Mrs JM told everyone about the new disability group that has been set up at Pickering in the northern area of Ryedale. She said that she was pleased with the interest shown and hoped it would achieve every success. She added, that the new group were happy to be a part of the northern area.

GC spoke about the new computer club launched at Rillington Community Centre, and also a special thank you meal at a local restaurant, which was organised for people who had made some contribution to tenant involvement in his area at Norton & The Wolds.

PM gave an update about some of the things that were happening in his patch at Wrenthorpe in Wakefield. In particular he said that almost fifty residents now enjoy the use of their local community centre there.

SM talked about the forthcoming 'European Neighbours Day Event' at Malton & Norton Rugby Club on 30<sup>th</sup> May. He said the event was a joint enterprise funded mainly by the four tenant groups of Ryedale and that everything leading up to it was running smoothly.

Since the last meeting TC (TIA) has kindly furnished us with the schedule of Craven's walkabout programme. He has also supplied us with a list of the Officers and Members of the 'Craven Tenants Forum.'

The Officers of the Main Committee are:-

Keith Birchall	Chair	Tel: (m) 07732785740
Margaret Hodgson	Vice Chair	Tel: 01756 797237
Margaret Milburn	Secretary	Tel: 015242 42227
Margaret Hamilton	Treasurer	Tel: 01756 748172

ANY OTHER BUSINESS: HC said that with the ever increasing parking difficulties at Yorkshire House, York, perhaps it might be a good idea to use the park and ride facilities available. She also spoke about the 'Talkback Panel' describing it as a way of testing the water by asking customers what they think. She added, that it was also a way of exploring to find out exactly what people want.

HC also produced a report about 'Mystery Shopping.' She said the aim of the mystery shop is to provide management with information that will help to focus on improving the quality and consistency of our customer service across the group. The purpose of her report was to discuss the findings of the mystery shopping visits and telephone calls to Yorkshire Housing offices between 21<sup>st</sup> April and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2008.

While talking about customer feedback SK said that maybe we should be thinking about planning some things ahead and looking at the policies on 'The Use Of Community Rooms' and 'Service Charge Reviewing.'

DATE, TIME & VENUE OF NEXT MEETING:

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
at  
Yorkshire House  
Heslington, York  
11.00am