

**Residents' Forum
Minutes**

Date: Monday 10 January 2011
Venue: The Grange, 1 Central Road, Morden
Start time: 7pm

Present:

Name	Initial	Address/Residents Association/Post
Kathy Adams	KA	Aberconway Road
Michael Adams	MA	Aberconway Road
Ken Barton	KB	Bordesley Road
Jim Carter	JCar	Sheldrick Close
Ruby Chapman	RC	Trafalgar Court
Vince Grech	VG	High Path RA
Ron Holt	RHo	Melsa Road
Bob Hughes	BH	Trafalgar Court
Ruth Hughes	RHu	Lillieshall Road
Marion Hyde	MH	Sadler Close RA
Patricia Jennings	PJ	Malmesbury Road
M Kelly	MK	Dunmore House, Raynes Park
Tina King	TK	Marham Gardens
Pat Lindup	PL	Blanchland Road
Geraldine Logan	GL	Hatfeild Mead
Jacky Mason	JM	Carters Estate RA
Brian Matthews	BM	Four Acres & Edinburgh Court RA
Alex Newman	AN	Ramsey House, High Path
Christine Pember	CP	Ramsey House High Path
Sheila Perkins	SP	Portland/Lewis Road RA
Tony Perkins	TP	Portland/Lewis Road RA
Moses Salisu	MS	Harlands Estate RA
Carol Shadwell	CS	Carters Estate RA
Nigel Skayman	NS	Chair of SIG – Community Service
Lesley Sorrell (Vice Chair)	LS	Morden Rd
Janet Watkins	JW	All Saints RA
In attendance:		
Pauline Ford	PF	Managing Director
Pratik Popat	PP	Principal Tenancy Officer - ASB
Doreen Jones	DJ	Consultation Officer (minutes)
Theo Scott	TS	Consultation & Communications Manager

Apologies:	

Item	Details	Action
1	Welcome & Introductions	
1.1	LS opened the meeting and introductions were made.	
2	Minutes and matters arising from 6 December 2010	
2.1	P4.6. VG – It would have been beneficial to have Jacqui Cayenne attend the meeting before the outcome of the bids were known, when more discussion could have taken place. PF – There will be a series of workshops taking places to coach residents on how to complete bids.	
2.2	<u>Post meeting note</u> P5.7 - Richard Evans from The Oaks has asked that the minutes reflect that The Oaks, Gresham and Yenston sheltered accommodation are being redeveloped.	
3.	Update - Service Improvement Group, Community Safety	
3.1	PP introduced himself, he is the Principle Tenancy Officer for Anti social behaviour (ASB) and attended with NS, Chair of the Service Improvement group for Community Safety - and is also Chair of MPH Leasehold Forum. The group has met 3 times, since 28 June and has 15 members. A requirement of the group was that the Chair and Vice Chair position are filled by residents. The Terms of Reference has been agreed. The aim of the group is to, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review all areas of the ASB service • influence and improve the ASB service standards • Influence the community safety strategy from residents perspective • review and monitor the action plan for the community safety strategy 	
3.2	The long term focus for the group is to take on a service scrutiny role to examine the different areas within ASB and continue to raise awareness of MPH community safety services. In the short term, the Community Safety strategy will be published, residents and officers will review this and continually examine the journey customers go on when they report ASB to us.	
3.3	In the period October to December 2010, there were 264 new cases reported some of these included, 42 of harassment, 21 verbal threats, and 102 noises nuisance.	
3.4	VG - On High Path there has been an increase in dog fouling, for the police to do anything they need picture evidence as proof, which is very difficult, could CCTV help? PP - Yes, the group is aware of the increase in dog fouling and is looking at ways to assist with this to develop better means of communications between agencies, this is included in the strategy. NS - A meeting is going to be held with the Borough Commander to look at Abbey Ward and find a solution for some of the issues raised in the area. Mark Lawrence, the Chief Inspector, will be attending the next SIG group to look at police resources in the area and the group will report back to the Forum at a later date.	
3.5	LS – Who should residents contact to report ASB? PP – they can call MPH, whilst we may not lead on the issue, we can work with residents and external agencies The Neighbourhood Wardens (NHW) can also be contacted as they can be used as professional witnesses to a crime. The role of the NHW will be promoted through our residents associations.	
3.6	MS – How will the findings from the group be reported back to residents? PP – the website will be updated and we will also update	

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	Residents Associations. NS – the lines of communication will be varied, it is hoped that by talking to residents from other estates that some common thinking and resolutions will occur.	
3.7	<p>KA – The notice board on Aberconway Road should have been replaced this has not happened?</p> <p><u>Post meeting note</u> We are waiting for the board to be installed; this should be completed before the end of January.</p>	DJ
3.8	PJ – Had previously mentioned the dog bin at Malmesbury Road that has not been emptied. DJ - This is not on one of our estates, it is Highways.	
4.	Census 2011	
4.1	<p>The census day is Sunday 27 March 2011. Government grants are allocated on the census count by population, to maximise this we need to encourage our residents and their friends and family to complete the census information The last census was carried out in 2001, since then the population in Merton has increased by 8%. LS - What is the current population?</p> <p><u>Post meeting note</u> The population count in 2001 was 187,908 the mid year estimate mid 2009 was £206,400</p>	
4.2	LS – What is the normal return of forms? PF – The national average is 94%, Merton received 88% in 2001. TP – If you target all residents of MPH this would help to spread the word about the importance of completing the form. MH – I thought it was compulsory to complete the census form. PF – It is, but it is not enforceable if residents choose not to participate.	
4.3	The reason that we are encouraging resident to complete the forms is due to the loss of revenue for not doing so, in these difficult financial times we want to maximise the income to the borough for vital services which impacts on residents.	
4.4	RC – If there was someone who could help with completing forms, and make sure that this help is communicated to residents, it could be that MPH organise a group of trusted individuals.	
4.5	MS – Resident Associations can help, by collecting the forms (if there were no confidentiality issues), or perhaps put an incentive towards completing the forms, this does not have to be monetary. PF – It would be beneficial if RAs and MTRF could spread the word to residents about the importance of completing the forms.	
4.6	LS – Why might this be the last census? PF - it cost a lot of money to administer.	
5.	Selection Process for Resident Board Member	
5.1	A vacancy has arisen for a resident board member and we are about to recruit for this position. The board is made up of 15 members, 4 tenants, 2 leaseholders, 4 council nominees and 5 independent members.	
5.2	The process for selection was agreed in consultation with the Residents Consultative Group (as this Forum was previously known) in Dec 2009/Jan 2010. The hybrid selection was chosen. Any tenant of MPH can apply; they must not be in breach of any of their tenancy conditions. Tenants express their interest by completing an application	

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	form, they are short listed against a set of key competencies and if these are met invited to interview. An advert is going in the next edition of Home Matters, posters will be placed in notice boards on estates and an application pack can be downloaded from the website or collected from reception. As part of the application pack there will be 2 case studies by existing board members.	
5.3	It was agreed that 2 members of the Residents Forum would join the interview panel to select board members. Tina King and Pat Lindup volunteered. We have previously run the Skills for Recruitment & Selection Training, a further session will be held on 19 January, at Mole Valley.	
5.4	There will be an informal session held on Saturday 12 February. The closing date for applications is Monday 21 February and interviews are scheduled to be held by 12 March. A copy of the information leaflet is enclosed with the minutes.	
5.5	The term of appointment is 3 years with a maximum 9 year term. Six Board meeting (evenings) are held each year and 2 away days, usually on Saturdays. New members will have 1 to 1 training with PF and will attend regular training. Members are expected to work with other members and staff on project groups.	
5.6	<p>Key skills required are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment – interest in outcomes for residents • Customer focus/driving customer loyalty • Contribute to and share the impact of decisions • Adhere to the code of conduct • Able to work as part of a team (board members and staff) and influence others • Present a positive image of MPH/Circle Anglia 	
5.7	VG – why is it a conflict of interest for a Chair of a RA to be a Board member? PF – The reason for this view is that a resident should not be in a position where they may be in conflict with a decision made by the Board. As a Board member you may decide in a voting situation that you do not agree with that decision, however once the decision is made you must agree with the decision and that is the viewpoint that is shared. You are expected to stay out of decisions that may conflict with decisions of the Board.	
5.8	MS – Can residents not declare a conflict of interest and not vote on that particular issue. PF – No, that is why to be a Chair of a RA and a resident board member is not an option, that is not to say that you can not be a committee member of an RA. We value the skills that residents gain by being part of an RA, they just cannot do both.	
6.	Rent Increase 2011/12	
6.1	As part of the MPH transfer promises we will continue to use the government's policy and guidelines set for social housing. There is no rent freeze in place. There are very few properties across MPH that has reached the 'target level', (less than 100 tenancies). In the last two years rents have been low, in 2009/10 Margaret Beckett reduced the increase for council tenants and in 2010/11 the Retail Price Index (RPI) was negative at 1.4 % resulting in an unusually small increase.	
6.2	We will be discussing the rent increase at all Forums During January the rent increase will be discussed at meetings with residents. The rent increase letter will be sent out to all tenants between 14 th – 16 th February. We will be holding drop-in surgeries on estates on Moffat	

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	<p>Court, 10th February, All Saints 16th February and Carters Estate 24th February. The rent statements will be sent at the end of March and information about the rent increase will be included in Home Matters in April. The increase is an average of 5.1% - 7.1%. The current average weekly rent is £88 p.w, the equivalent market rate is about £292 p.w</p> <p>Q - What is the percentage in weekly rent?</p>	PF
6.3	<p>TP – The measures that are planned to inform and provide advice to residents is very good. When the council increased the rent there was just a letter in the post, at least MPH are trying to take measures for residents who may face difficulties to have someone to talk to.</p>	
7.	Annual Residents Conference Report	
7.1	<p>TS presented the conference report, which detailed the objectives of the day and feedback received from residents on the workshops and their experience at the conference. Overall, the conference was a success and the feedback from the workshops has been very useful to understand what our customers want and expect from us.</p> <p>TS confirmed a full review of the event, its objectives and outcomes will be completed to establish long term impact, value for money and to inform future events and he will report back to the forum in 6 months.</p> <p>KB – Will we use the Epsom Race Course again? TS – Part of the evaluation is whether we do this type of event again and if we do what format it will take.</p> <p>MH – Did not have the opportunity to complete the feedback form as the return coaches were waiting. This might be something to consider doing differently if there is another conference.</p>	
8.	Any Other Business	
8.1	<p>MS – The internal/external cleaning on the estate has significantly deteriorated, there has been lots of complaints about this, believes the caretaker has changed. Dog fouling is also a big problem it is not being cleaned up.</p> <p><u>Post meeting note</u> Glen Burnell, Estate Services Manager has spoken to the resident about the issues raised and the following actions has been taken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bins stores have been cleared by the Council and have been washed out and sanitised. • A letter will be sent to all residents by the Tenancy Management team reminding them of their obligations to clear up after their dogs and the penalty if caught. • ‘Bag it, Bin it’ leaflets will be put up around the estate to remind dog owners of their responsibility • The pathway was cleared on 11 January, regular sweeping and leaf disposal will take place • Internal areas have been mopped. During December and early January many of the cleaning functions had been suspended to concentrate on clearing snow and gritting – mopping was completely suspended in all areas during that period. 	
8.2	<p>LS - At Watermeads Estate the leaves are not being swept up,</p>	

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	<p>generally the appearance of the estate is not satisfactory.</p> <p><u>Post meeting note</u> Glen Burnell Estate Services Manager has said that an estate inspection was carried out on 19 January; the feedback from the councillors in attendance was the appearance of the estate was satisfactory. He has arranged for an inspection of the estate within 4 weeks to ensure this is maintained. During December and early January many cleaning functions had been suspended to concentrating on clearing snow and gritting. He has said that it may have been during this period that the residents noted their concerns.</p>	
	<p align="center">Date of next meeting: Monday 7 February 2011 Time: 6.30pm for 7pm start Venue: The Grange, 1 Central Road, Morden</p>	