



TACT (TENANTS AND COUNCIL TOGETHER) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The Walton Room, Guildhall, Winchester.
Thursday 26th May 2022, 10.30am – 12.30pm**

Minutes of meeting

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair, David Light, opened the meeting and introduced guests to the meeting. Apologies given and appended to these minutes.

2 Minutes of the last AGM – 26th May 2021

Minutes accepted as a true record.

Update from Butterflies service, who attended AGM in May 2021. Shortly after the AGM in 2021 there was a significant change in the services offered by Butterflies. Due to the enormous demand from people in crisis during the pandemic, the team could not continue to offer the high levels of support they had been providing. The charity returned to offering just bereavement support, which was its original function, and is continuing to do so.

3 Guest Speaker: Richard Botham – Strategic Director: Services Resident voice – do tenants really have a say in Winchester?

(A copy of the presentation will be attached to these minutes)

Richard began his presentation by giving a bit of history to the TACT AGM's he has attended. 2009 was the first, then 2011 and again in 2012 when all talk was around the move to housing becoming self-funding. And now 2022. There has been many years at Winchester where tenants and the council have worked together. The strength of the current tenant voice originates from the Compact document originally signed 22 years ago in 2000. This paved the way for the way in which tenants are able to hold cabinet to account and consultation on committee reports. We admit to not always getting the timing right on getting papers to consultation but we do try.

It was the tenant voice that made the decision to remain a local housing authority. 20 years ago it was tenants who picked up poor voids turnaround times and raised the issue with the council.

TACT were consulted with when discussions were taking place around the 2022 rent setting. In direct response to these consultations the council changed the plan to raise rent in line with the government formula and went with the lower increase.

Future regulation – national indicators will be coming into operation within the next couple of years. These will be familiar to some as similar to what would have been happening years ago.

The question still remains, could we do more in Winchester? Could we look at what other authorities are doing? Richard stated that he believes the tenant voice is strong in Winchester. Is this what the tenants believe? Lots of questions for the future, like, does TACT remain Tenants and Council Together, or should / would tenants like to work more independently? Has this worked in the past?

Following his presentation Richard introduced Cllr Paula Ferguson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing (having taken over from Cllr Learney on 18/05/2022).

Cllr Ferguson explained that she is getting to grips with her new role and is looking forward to working with members of TACT. One of the first things that has been discussed is returning to a Cabinet housing committee. This has been spoken about already and how well it has worked in the past. TACT will be updated when any decision has been made.

Questions for Richard Botham:

Q. With such a serious cost of living crisis in progress and forecast to get even worse, how are the council going to support those in fuel poverty and crisis in the coming months?

A. Cabinet agreed to set aside £0.5 million last year to specifically support initiatives. Additionally there may be government grants awarded to the council as time goes on. However, it is a tough time ahead, and inflation costs will be hitting the council from an operational perspective as well. Amber Russell continued that a Financial Inclusion Officer is now in post looking at helping those in financial difficulty. They are currently looking at data to help identify the most vulnerable tenants, and there is set criteria to allocate the Wellbeing Fund to those who need it most. The Tenancy Support Team now has a full complement of staff in post to support tenants, and the Housing Support Fund from the government has just been received. The team now need to prioritise how it will be allocated.

Q. A resident at Hyde Gate raised the issues from West View House; drug use, disturbance from property, violence and an ambulance was in attendance at the

property every day last week. Whether linked to the property or not, there has also been an increase in graffiti in the area. What are the council doing to resolve the situation?

A. Richard said he couldn't comment direct about the situation at West View, but relations between their management and WCC have always been good, and they have worked together to try to address problems. These concerns will be raised with them. Richard added that anti-social behaviour has generally increased in the city, and cannot all be attributed to West View service users.

Q. A further query was raised by the resident at Hyde Gate. She is also a member of Hyde Abbey Gardens and would like someone to make contact with regard to the vandalism. It is a voluntary association, the council have helped but the costs are huge.

An **action** was taken by Amber Russell for The Community Safety Team. They will be asked to contact the tenant directly to discuss issues.

Q. As involved tenants and TACT members we need to challenge the council and work with the council. Is it not possible to do both?

A. Richard Botham agreed that it could be both.

The TACT Chair responded that this is a valid point and that he will be asking TACT members for their views over the next couple of months, to establish what is working and what is not.

Q. The Communications Officer recently spoke to 3 different councillors about TACT who all said they didn't know about the meetings. Who is failing who here, and who is responsible for inviting them?

A. Tenant Involvement responded that the councillors were all invited to this meeting, via the councillors' newsletter, sent out via Democratic Services. TACT meeting dates are submitted for this publication by Tenant Involvement to ensure councillors are aware of it.

Q. A tenant from Micheldever raised an issue regarding the state of her property both internal and external.

A. An officer present spoke to the tenant direct following the meeting to get specific details.

Q. A TACT member stated that they felt TACT is losing its independence. Now it feels like TACT members are working for the council instead.

A. Richard Botham commented that the Chair's review and discussions with TACT members will hopefully result in achieving the best outcomes. It shouldn't be like an employment.

Q. A resident of Hyde Gate raised the issue of cyclists coming through the archway. He wondered whether safety signs could be erected.

A. Richard commented that as a council we are promoting cycling around the city, but he would take the comments back and raise them in the discussions taking place about the Hyde Gate area.

Break

4. Questions for Contractors

CCS

Q. The tenant stated she had been given a 12pm – 5pm appointment slot. When she returned home before 12pm she had a note stating the contractor had been at 11am. When she made contact she was told it was on an all-day appointment.

A. Specific details will be taken from the tenant for the case to be looked into further. Customers should be receiving calls when the operative is on route to the appointment as well.

Q. A tenant raised a case of having a boiler updated in January and had to wait a further 4 months for radiators to be updated. Also, when radiators were removed they were left with holes in the walls.

A. Danny Gladwin responded saying unfortunately there is a supply chain issue with radiators at the moment. It has been agreed with the council to put a pause on updating radiators because of these issues. If holes were left, these should be put right, but any decoration is responsibility of tenant.

As an organisation CCS are aware the supply chain issues are causing problems for tenants. They are hopeful by next winter to be back to offering a service without issues.

YBC

Q. The cleaning now seems to be worse than before in Simonds Court. Contractors are using dirty mops, the floors are left soaking wet and dirty with no safety signs. Paper towels have been used by tenants to dry the floors. It is inconsistent and seems to depend on which team comes as this morning was very different.

A. New YBC person recently reviewed all the contracts, and more supervisors are being installed to do checks. A full retraining of cleaners is also in progress, so they know exactly how and what to clean. With these new processes in place on the operational side, YBC are hoping that this is moving in the right direction. Some staff have been asked to leave and YBC are aware of the extent of complaints received.

Q. Some cleaners do not speak any English at all which makes it difficult to ask them questions or communicate with them. Also filthy mops are being used to clean, and tenants are actually doing a full clean afterwards, which is appallingly bad. Items are not being moved to clean properly and wet surfaces are not being dried. Is there a list of cleaning tasks they are meant to cover so tenants can see this?

A. There are time set tasks, for example, a deep clean is scheduled on a quarterly basis. Other tasks are fortnightly, or weekly etc. If there are any issues then tenants are encouraged to complain immediately and a replacement team will be sent out. A comment was made that this is not the right approach, YBC need to be proactive, not reactive.

Fiona Churcher added that there should be a list of cleaning tasks and a schedule on the communal notice boards, but the tenant from Simonds Court confirmed there is not one there. An **action** was taken by Fiona to have this placed in situ.

Osborne

Q. A question was asked about void properties, and whether they are being insulated in line with the carbon neutral policy, and if so are they going to plan?

A. Internal wall insulation is not being carried out at present. All works currently mirror the minimum voids standard as set by the council. This includes loft insulation top ups.

A further question was asked about void properties – if things are seen when contractors are present but they were not on the allocated jobs will they be completed? The answer was, yes, they should be.

Q. A TACT member asked if Osborne operatives should wear a badge to identify themselves when they visit a customer. The tenant added that this hasn't happened when they have visited their home, on several occasions. They continued that as a pensioner, they find it disconcerting when someone does not show their identification, and this is especially important for the older generation. They also added that the Osborne ops are good at what they do, but sometimes too relaxed and over friendly, forgetting that they are visiting a customer.

A. Darren Whitfield confirmed that all operatives should be wearing identification and clearly show this when visiting any customer, regardless of age. This is a standard requirement as part of the Osborne Customer Satisfaction Charter. Where this doesn't happen, Darren encouraged tenants to let him know directly so it can be followed up with the operative.

Q. The time it is taking to replace roof tiles was raised. With an example given of 10 months for one tile. It was also questioned why scaffolding was required on council properties, when paying a private contractors they will use ladders and achieve more in less time.

A. Darren Whitfield said he would take the address and look into it. In respect of the scaffolding required on council properties, he would question the health and safety of different companies.

The supply chain issues affecting CCS are the same for Osborne. They are currently awaiting a lot of materials. They currently have 850 live cases. They would ideally like to have only 650 so know there is work to be done.

Questions / Comments raised for Idverde (not present at meeting)

Q. Lisle Court grass cutting and hedge cutting were really good until they changed. They now don't tidy or sweep after themselves and are not as neat.

Q. Grounds maintenance at Godson House is terrible. The operative strimmed around the weeds.

Q. Simmonds Court – you cannot sit on the benches due to weeds growing through.

Q. At the beginning of the contract they seemed very good. Have gone downhill massively.

Q. Should the loose grass be collected? It is left on roads and plugs drains.

A. Richard Botham answered the last question stating that on the Weeke estate Idverde are not paid to clear the grass after they cut. However, he will take the comment back for it to be looked into if it causes an issue with drains.

General Questions

Q. Do appointments come from the contractor or the council?

A. CCS gas servicing appointments come direct from CCS. All other appointments should come through the council.

Q. Are the funds from the property on Tower Street going back into the HRA?

A. Yes, they will be.

Cllr Horrill stated that she would be happy to pick up any issues as ward Councillor. For example, if problems are not sorted on the first appointment. We need to work on sharpening up the process.

5. TACT Chair's Report and update on SDGs

Both the TACT Chairs report and SDG reports had been distributed to all TACT members before the meeting.

The Chair introduced his report and explained that in collaboration with all TACT members he will be completing a review of TACT in the summer.

Lin Mellish introduced the SDG report.

There were no questions raised for either report.

6. Janette Palmer - Housing Policy and Project Manager

Questions in relation to the Tenant Involvement Annual Report.

The Tenant Involvement Annual Report was distributed to all TACT members before the meeting.

Janette explained that it has been a challenging year, moving from a completely virtual AGM in 2021, to introducing a hybrid way of working to include both virtual and face to face. Tenant involvement continue to offer a range of ways of being involved and encouraging tenants to have a say about their housing service. We are aware there continues to be a gap of underrepresentation of the under 55s age group.

As the group are aware Monica Gill is stepping down as Communications Officer on the TACT committee after this meeting. There have been no nominations received for the post. Therefore, the Chair and Vice Chair have agreed to act as a two person committee.

Q. A question was raised about the promotion of TACT. There is nothing on public noticeboards promoting the group or meetings.

A. Janette Palmer explained that tenant involvement undertook a project in 2019 to promote TACT in the community, going out to public noticeboards around the district, but this didn't translate into more tenants attending. However, this will be taken back and may feed into the TACT Chair's review in the summer.

- Lin Mellish raised her hand and asked if she could nominate herself for the position of TACT Communications Officer in light of Monica Gill stepping down. An anonymous vote of confidence was held, all votes received were in favour of Lin taking the post.

7. Cllr Kelsie Learney – Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management

Cllr Learney expressed her sadness at saying goodbye to the housing portfolio and has enjoyed working with TACT. She looks forward to crossing paths in the future under her new role of Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency.

Cllr Learney gave a presentation to Monica Gill, thanking her for her years of dedication to TACT in various different committee member positions and hopes she enjoys her 'retirement' from the committee.

This was followed by Amber Russell thanking the Committee for all their work over the last year.

8. Dates for Future TACT Meetings and AGM

Future TACT dates to be confirmed by the new committee.

Attendance

NAME	AREA
David Chafe	Stanmore
Monica Gill	Winchester
David Light	Stanmore
Lin Mellish	Kings Worthy
Gillian Gutteridge	Hyde
A.P White	Hursley
Carole Bull	Abbotts Barton
Julian Perkins	Hyde
Chris Bone	Simonds Court
Peter Beard	Hyde
Victoria Pemberton	Kings Worthy
Doug Dobson	Winnall
Valerie Adcock	Stanmore
Jackie Jones	Stanmore
Sue Green	Stanmore
Sandra Salter	Winnall
Patricia Walker	Micheldever
Josh Christian	Stanmore
Lizzie Christian	Stanmore
Guests	
Cllr Learney	Former Cabinet Member for Housing and Asset Management
Cllr Ferguson	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community and Housing
Cllr Horrill	
Ian English	Osborne Account Manager
Tony Marden	Osborne Voids Manager
Darren Whitfield	Osborne Repairs Manager
Mark King	YBC Operations Director
Prabesh Chhetri	YBC Operations Manager
Michelle Vincent	CCS
Danny Gladwyn	CCS
Richard Botham	WCC, Strategic Director - Services

Amber Russell	WCC, Service Lead – Housing Operations and Community Safety
Andrew Kingston	WCC, Service Lead - Property Services
Janette Palmer	WCC, Housing Policy and Projects Manager
Dee Jenkins	WCC, Performance and Projects Manager
Fiona Churcher	WCC, Estates Compliance Officer
Lucy Spence	WCC, Tenant Involvement Officer

Apologies

Apologies have been received in advance of the meeting from

- Gilly Knight - WCC, Corporate Head of Housing
- Dick Johnson – WCC, Finance Manager Housing
- David and Linda Blyth
- Ted Shepherd
- Deanne Adams
- Hannah Cox
- Sheila Burns