

TACT (Tenants and Council Together)
Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 23 November 2023, 10.30am
Godson House Common Room, Lawn Street, Winchester

Attendance:

David Chafe (Chair)	Stanmore
Monica Gill (Vice Chair)	Central
Julian Perkins	Hyde
Lin Mellish	Kings Worthy
Carole Bull	Abbots Barton
Sandra Salter	Winnall
Victoria Pemberton	Kings Worthy
Chris Bone	Abbots Barton
David and Linda Blyth	Central
George King	Central

Guests:

Cllr. Caroline Horrill	Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing
Cllr. Chris Westwood	Portfolio Holder for Housing
Andrew Donaldson	Service Lead – Property Services
Lucy Spence	Tenant Involvement Officer

		Actions
1.	Welcome, introductions and apologies. Apologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sue Green ▪ Gillian Gutteridge ▪ Doug Dobson 	
2.	Third Committee Member Vote of confidence in Julian Perkins to confirm appointment as Communications Officer. Lucy handed out anonymous voting ballot papers and confirmed that Julian had been voted in as communications officer.	
3.	Housing Cabinet Committee Report and Housing Revenue recommendations to date	

		Actions
	<p>A tenant commented that she found the way the budget was presented at the previous HRA special tenant meeting by Simon Hendy really engaging and helped her have a better understanding of what it takes to balance the budget.</p> <p>Cllr Westwood thanked her for her comment.</p> <p>There will be an overview of the HRA at the next TACT meeting.</p>	
4.	<p>Housing Issues</p>	
4.1	<p>Damp and Mould in Tenants Homes</p> <p>A tenant in Kings Worthy outlined her situation with damp and mould in her home. It is a 1930s bungalow. They have had an inspection and was told it could be rising damp. There is condensation and no ventilation in the cavity walls. A more specialist surveyor has been called to look at the property.</p> <p>Another tenant from Lawn House, Sheltered accommodation, explained the damp and mould in his property is so bad he was sleeping in the living room. He has had 3 surveyors visit to look at the issues. He has been complaining for 6 months. He stated it is very frustrating when you receive a letter saying the job has been finished. No, it hasn't. The issues are very much still there.</p> <p>Cllr Horrill commented that it seems tenants are rightly frustrated that a job gets closed when they are still living with the issues.</p> <p>Monica Gill stated that she has spoken to some of the sheltered officers, and they have to report any issues exactly the same way as tenants. They have no faster procedure.</p> <p>David Chafe commented that there are 2 properties he is aware of at The Valley, Stanmore, who are experiencing issues with damp and mould. Tenants who have recently moved out of a flat at The Valley commented that it always had damp, they cleaned it regularly.</p> <p>A tenant gave the example of Winnall Flats. She said there is nowhere to dry clothes other than on airers in the property. She said she believes the idea of a washing and drying room has been discussed previously but turned down. Could this be investigated again? David Chafe commented that he believes the issue previously is people being told by friends how to access the facilities.</p> <p>A discussion around airing cupboards not existing anymore, they now contain the Combi boiler.</p> <p>A tenant gave a positive story, that she lived with damp and mould for the first three years living in a bungalow. They had the pointing re-done,</p>	

	Actions
<p>extractor fans and a new door fitted and since then they have not had any problems.</p> <p>Andrew Donaldson said the Damp and Mould Policy and procedure is currently being finalised. It will come to tenants to review. Most damp is as a result of condensation. The best way to overcome this issue is to ventilate so that moisture in the air is removed. If residents can maintain a moderate heat within their homes throughout cold periods this will help retain moisture in the air.</p> <p>A discussion took place around the difference between the old style 'pull cord' fans and the newer Humidistat fans. These can measure the humidity in the air and react accordingly. Ideally humidity should be at around 50%, much more than that, increases the chance of condensation occurring which if not dried and mopped each day will lead to black mould. You can purchase a humidity checker yourself if you have concerns.</p> <p>A detailed damp investigation can take between 4 and 5 hours.</p> <p>Rising damp is extremely rare and is often thought to be a defective damp proof course which is unlikely. It is common that rising damp will be caused by the damp course being bridged, for example if debris has been piled up against the outside of a property.</p> <p>The tenant from Lawn House commented that he is sure his problems come from the roof and the guttering needing clearing. Andrew commented that the gutters are booked for next week.</p> <p>Andrew stated that we can't prevent condensation, we produce it just through living. We need to learn how to deal with it. Humidistat fans running constantly go a long way to help. The newer fans are very quiet and only cost about £5 a year to run.</p> <p>4.2 Anti-social Behaviour</p> <p>Monica stated they have an issue at Godson House. She believes the council needs to work with the young people and they need something to do. Cllr Westwood asked how often they are about. Monica clarified that it is usually after school time. However, they haven't been around recently.</p> <p>A discussion took place around young people and whether they realise they are being anti-social. What is anti-social behaviour? There is a difference between annoying teenagers during the day, families tormenting other tenants in a block of flats and young people behaving in a criminal manner.</p> <p>An example was given of children climbing up a wall and standing on someone's first floor balcony. Advise given that in that situation the police should have been called, as it could have been a direct threat to the tenant inside.</p>	

		Actions
	<p>The city centre Rangers were discussed and what their remit for tackling ASB is.</p>	
4.3	<p>Grounds Maintenance</p> <p>Monica stated she doesn't think the Shrub beds have been attended to at Godson House for 5 months. <u>Discussion around the grounds maintenance monitors and whether they are still active. Lucy will speak to Caroline Robinson to find out.</u></p> <p>Cllr Westwood commented that Grounds Maintenance will be included within the current review of engagement.</p>	Lucy Spence
4.4	<p>Communal Area Issues</p> <p>A tenant commented that she wanted to give praise to Geoff, one of the cleaners, as he always does a good job. However, they have had real issues with the cleaning recently. They were on a 2 weekly cycle that changed to 4 weeks, it has now returned to 2.</p> <p>A suggestion of a cleaning contract monitors programme was discussed.</p> <p>Lucy stated that Blue Frog the cleaning contractors will be at the January SDG meeting and read out an update from Fiona Churcher, Estates Compliance Officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new cleaning contract was effective from 1st July 2023. • Only two cleaners were TUPE'd from YBC – one who works solely at Chesil Lodge and one other. There are 4 cleaners who clean our stock (excluding the Chesil Lodge cleaner); one of those cleaners is the one who TUPE'd and 3 'new' cleaners were employed. • At the outset of the new contract with Blue Frog there were issues with frequency, as they were down to 3 cleaners for a period of time. At the end of September, Fiona met with the Director to discuss the fact that not all sites were being cleaned as per the schedule and of those that were cleaned, the standard wasn't always met, as they were trying to get to all sites. As expected, a number of complaints were being received from residents and Neighbourhood Services Officers. The Director pulled a supervisor from another contract to support our contract and since then they are attending as per schedule and the number of complaints has reduced. 	

		Actions
4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiona has regular meetings with Blue Frog and speaks to them almost daily. She also receives a daily report of where cleaners have been the day before and can access their portal to review activity. There are obviously some issues that will crop up, but Fiona is finding Blue Frog much more responsive to and acceptance of issues, which makes it easier to resolve concerns. <p>TACT support Monica explained for those who are not aware what the TACT support group does and who is on the group.</p>	
5.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The length of time tenants are having to wait on the phone was raised. An example was given of an hour to speak to responsive maintenance. They just wanted to speak to someone in charge of a piece of work, but they couldn't be told who that was. A message had to be taken and wait for a call back. <p>Andrew Donaldson explained that the 'housing Hub' has now been divided into two. This is not fully staffed yet, but interviews have taken place and staff have been recruited. Previously, training has not been up to standard and there has been a high turnover of staff as they have not been happy.</p> <p>Andrew stated that he has started a review of the repairs service from when a tenant reports a repair to getting the job completed.</p> <p>He is also working on an improvements programme with Osborne. There is 2 years left on their contract and the process of procurement needs to begin now. Tenants will be consulted widely on how the service could improve?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lucy reminded everyone that the Tenant Involvement Christmas lunch is on Wednesday 6th December. If anyone would like transport arranged, she will get this sorted for them. 	
6.	<p>Forthcoming meetings</p> <p>Housing Revenue Account Special meeting – Wednesday 29 November, 2pm, Middle Brook Centre.</p> <p>TACT - Thursday 11th January 2.30pm The Walton Room</p>	