

ENGLISH RURAL

RESIDENTS FORUM

Notes of meeting held on 27 February 2008 at
Ashdon Village Hall, Essex

Present: Canon John D. Brown, Martin Collett,
Kathryn Watson

Apologies for Absence: Lesley Childs

In attendance: 3 Residents

ACTION

Residents were invited to contribute to the meeting.

Hatfield Broad Oak:

No. 4 (bungalow): Concern over uneven concrete/gravel surface in driveway. HHA surveyor was asked to inspect and advise re suitable replacement surface in November 2007 but has not yet visited. MC and KW have inspected today and will now seek best solution to problem.

MC/KW

No. 4 also experiences a problem with water coming in under back door.

KW

Access way to Nos. 2 and 3 covered with weeds. All residents pay towards a sinking fund, but there is no service charge for maintenance.

MC

Occupants of Nos. 1 and 2 use pathway to the rear of No. 4 to gain access to relative in No. 5. Resident at No. 4 had concerns about privacy when she is in the back garden.

Heating in rented properties at Hatfield Broad Oak is by means of electric night storage heaters. Tenant at No. 4 stated that she felt these did not offer sufficient heat during cold spells. MC explained Stock Condition Survey currently being undertaken. English Rural examining possible alternatives to electric central heating over a period of time.

MC

Although wheelchair access to the property is possible, some design features have hindered usage. In particular the angles of doorways/entrances, width of hallways. MC explained regulations have changed since houses built some 12 years ago.

MC

MC explained current situation with housing management undertaken by HHA and the fact that English Rural are hoping to take this in-house by the end of 2008. Residents views are being sought on this course of action.

All residents present felt that the clarity of having one contact would be beneficial. Although they have no specific complaints about Hastoe staff, they have experienced a degree of frustration over who to contact, particularly when trying to resolve repairs and maintenance issues. They were supportive of the proposal, especially if services and accountability would improve as a result.

JB stressed the importance of the Residents Forums which enabled those attending to express their concerns. He told those present English Rural wish to offer an exemplary service. JB expressed the advantages of making a DVD of the latest English Rural housing which could be shown at such meetings.

MC

Ashdon:

Have now raised £42,000 for green. Waiting for Section 106 agreement. Land still belongs to Uttlesford District Council. Will start to order equipment in a couple of months.

Problems relating to car parking. Several properties have 2 vehicles. Only 2 visitor parking spaces for the whole scheme. No. 20 using car port as storage space. No. 16 uses car port for storage, has 2 cars and partner has a van which leads to other parking spaces being blocked.

Small triangular area currently landscaped is hindering parking. MC sought quote to remove .

JB noted MC and KW have a degree of authority which they can exert on residents.

The issue of dampness was raised as a concern.

Residents Association: Church Field has 4 reps. All Saints Close has 1 rep. JB suggested meeting with reps to discuss parking and any other issues of concern. MC has promoted the formation of the Residents Association in the Newsletter in the hope of encouraging others to take up this idea.

Speeding traffic a problem particularly for young children who tend to play outside. JB questioned whether sleeping policemen might control traffic in Church Field. There was a small one but this has now been removed. MC thought this was probably to allow the adoption of the road to go ahead. Road is not in English Rural's ownership. Possibility of additional signage to be investigated.

MC/KW

MC

Painting contractors only turning up during the afternoons. They have requested residents remain at home and leave doors and windows open. MC requested continued feedback.

Need to consider interior construction of houses together with car parking, green spaces, etc. at outset of scheme. MC explained that plans are now being seen by housing services at a much earlier stage.

No problems with HHA but sometimes very abrupt on telephone.

One tenant enquired whether buildings were assessed with a view to those with disabilities. MC explained that there is a Disability and Equality Scheme and Action Plan which is currently being reviewed and residents input would be welcomed. Both residents present from Hatfield Board Oak would be willing to be involved with this. MC agreed to make contact.

JB thanked those present for attending.
