

ENGLISH RURAL
RESIDENTS FORUM

Notes of meeting held on 25 March 2008 at
St. Johns Church Centre, Milford, Surrey

Present: Canon John D. Brown, Martin Collett,
Jane Jennings, Chris Graves

Apologies for Absence: Lesley Childs,
Kathryn Watson

In attendance: Mrs Mary Grove (5 Duncombs
Cottages, Hambledon)
Mr Shickell (5 Oak Close,
Ewhurst)
Mr Ottery (20 Nugents Close,
Dunsfold)

ACTION

JB welcomed all present to the meeting.

MC referred to the proposal to bring Housing
Management services in-house. A
consultation document had been circulated
recently requesting comments on the existing
service and seeking views on the proposal.

A request was made that longer notice be
given when correspondence sent out by ER
requires a response.

Dunsfold:

Neighbours weeping willow tree has grown
too high. MC asked resident to inform Jo
Passmore (HM).

Noise from water feature in neighbouring back
garden.
Refer to JP.

MC/KW

Leaking guttering affecting neighbouring property also. Refer to JP since properties must be kept in reasonable state of repair.

Problems with boilers which were moved when it was found that flues were too close to back doors. Boilers not moved have not experienced these problems.

Need for more consideration to be given when siting sockets.

Absence of outside taps. MC explained that this was not considered eco-friendly.

Gap between value of share in property and current market prices too wide. Need for affordable 3 bedroom units as families grow older. MC aware of this and has spoken with the Development Team.

Small grassy area has wooden posts around edge. Children swinging on these and breaking posts. Rails required. MC to contact JP and ask her to inspect and report. MC

Ewhurst:

One shared-owner had attempted to contact ER on several occasions during the past year and had been unsuccessful. JB asked that it be made absolutely clear to tenants and shared-owners as to telephone number to use to contact ER.

Boiler problems s. A shared seemed to be a common theme affecting those present. MC encouraged those present to report all faults to ER since isolated incidents are often not recognised. Advice and guidance is always available to shared-owners.

Possibility of further schemes in Ewhurst

providing opportunity to move to larger property. MC confirmed that ER are in discussion with Ewhurst Parish Council re a further development if suitable land can be found.

MC confirmed extensions not permitted. Conservatories are allowed on shared ownership homes although ER would need to see design first. Guidance lines are available on application.

Request re conditions regarding change to inside of properties. MC confirmed ER would need to see any proposed design changes which would need to comply with building regulations. There is a need for any internal changes to be reverted back to the original in the case of a house move. Loft conversions are not permitted.

Mortgage company have stated they would need permission from ER for equity in house to be used for home improvements. MC confirmed that this is correct. Permission is given on condition that borrowing does not exceed the percentage owned. A mortgage protection clause is included in the lease and covers additional borrowing. JB stressed the importance of always checking with ER before embarking on any modification of property.

MC confirmed that moving to another scheme to acquire a larger property would be permitted if a local connection to that scheme could be proved.

MC explained the procedure required should a shared-owner wish to sell. Information is sent out detailing this procedure as necessary. Stamp duty no longer applies to any ER properties.

Hambleton:

Creaking floor boards upstairs. Problem has been rectified in one room but builder used has now gone out of business. NHBC certificate required to pursue this. MC will find and will also seek action.

JB explained original properties built by RHT and managed by ERHA (? !By who Carol!?). ER now building their own properties and can exercise more control over contractors used.

MC

MC explained that sound insulation between properties must meet current building regulation specifications.

Ground rent and service charge had increased last year. MC explained that this was due to a review of service charges and contributions are now based on actual costs. Detailed statements are sent concerning such charges. MC suggested resident peruse statement. If still not satisfied, JB suggested writing to Chris Graves (HM) with any concerns about contractor performance.

Internal condition of properties difficult to monitor. ER consider shared-owners have made an investment. Although retaining a part share in the property, ER take the view that not all residents would be willing to allow them access. JB noted that with rented homes a Stock Condition Survey is undertaken regularly. External decoration is carried out every 5 years and properties are thoroughly inspected when vacated.

Request that shared-owners be offered boiler servicing when tenants receive this service. MC explained that this would be something that could be considered when HM is brought in-house.

Fencing along back gardens has never been treated. CG explained that treated timber would have been used. Fencing will be inspected when external decorating inspection is carried out. When treatment is necessary, the offer could be extended to shared-owners but no stipulation to accept can be made.

Council Tax banding too high. MC explained that this is not within the jurisdiction of ER. Appeal should be made to local authority.

JB thanked those present for attending.