

# ENGLISH RURAL HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## RESIDENTS PANEL MEETING

Notes of meeting held on Wednesday 17 March 2010

Present: Jane Jennings (JJ), Lesley Childs (LC), Christine Knight (CK), Tony MacArthur (TM), Lisa Swan (LS), Martin Collett (MC), Kathryn Watson (KW)

		ACTION
1	<p>APOLOGIES</p> <p>Apologies received from Pauline Rose, Martin Clements and Tom Wratten</p>	
2	<p>CHAIRS WELCOME &amp; INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>All were welcomed to the meeting and introductions made.</p>	
3	<p>SERVICE BRIEFING – RENT &amp; SERVICE CHARGES</p> <p>Service briefings would be included in future meetings to highlight how various services within English Rural operate and to gain feedback on these.</p> <p>MC explained how English Rural use a rent restructuring plan to work towards achieving target rents set by the Government. This is to standardise rents across local authority areas and between housing association and local authority properties, with rent figures based on property values backdated to 1999. Rent increases are calculated using the annual RPI and as a result of a negative RPI a small number of rents have reduced for the coming year 2010/11.</p> <p>Up until 2009 ground rents on shared ownership properties have not been increased. However, it is likely these will also increase inline with RPI in future.</p> <p>Service charges are now calculated on a scheme by scheme basis using actual costs incurred such as ground maintenance costs, sewage treatment plant service costs and also provisions made for sinking funds for repairs to communal areas including drives, fencing and parking areas.</p> <p>KW distributed the relevant rent increase documents which English Rural issue to residents. These include the legal notices for increasing rents and service charge statements which are required for all developments with</p>	

	<p>service charges.</p> <p>Queries were raised over rent statements and delays in payments showing on the account. It was suggested that statements include a note to allow 3-5 working days for giro payments to reach the account. The possibility of new payment methods are being considered and suggestions will be brought to future meetings.</p>	
4	<p>OPEN MIC FOR RESIDENTS</p> <p>TM queried the grounds maintenance at Shiplake. This is all undertaken by Sovereign HA who own and manage the rented units on the development as no communal grounds in English Rurals ownership.</p> <p>External decorations – poor quality workmanship was highlighted as a problem in the past. This particular Contractor is no longer used by English Rural and feedback has been positive on work over the past 2 years.</p>	
5	<p>NOTES OF LAST MEETING</p> <p>These were agreed.</p>	
6	<p>RECRUITMENT OF PANEL MEMBERS</p> <p>It was agreed that a panel member be sought to represent Test Valley. The need for further English Rural panel members would be reviewed at a later date once the Panel is fully established.</p>	MC
7	<p>HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</p> <p>KPI's were circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>It is difficult to get satisfaction returns from tenants following repairs. LS suggested that it may be helpful to give tenants priority times over the phone when a repair is reported. This will give tenants an indication of the date by which a repair is due for completion.</p> <p>Consideration would be given to adding a repairs satisfaction form onto the new website to allow tenants to give feedback online.</p>	MC/BC  MC/SB
8	<p>BOILER SERVICING ARRANGEMENTS</p> <p>The new contract with Rok seems to be working well with positive feedback received from residents. Rok have 3</p>	

	<p>dedicated engineers to cover English Rural properties and can use additional staff from regional offices if the need arises. They are working towards synchronising servicing across developments so all services are undertaken at the same time.</p> <p>At the moment the servicing contract is not available for shared owners to buy into however this could be considered in future.</p>	
9	<p>ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY</p> <p>The updated asset management framework and action plan were circulated.</p> <p>Now that properties are becoming older and more in need of major repairs it is necessary for English Rural to have in place a detailed asset management strategy for long term maintenance and management.</p> <p>The strategy will be brought to future meetings for discussion so residents can have an input on setting priorities for work based on what they want.</p>	
10	<p>AOB</p> <p>Housing Management Tours – these will include visits to 4 or 5 different schemes within one geographical area. It is not necessary for the whole panel to attend every tour but it is preferable that resident panel members attend those local to them.</p>	
11.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Next meeting to be held at 9 Graphite Square on 13 May 2010.</p>	