



**MINUTES OF
SENTINEL TENANTS' & RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
MEETING HELD AT
SENTINEL'S BASINGSTOKE OFFICE
ON TUESDAY 27 JANUARY 2009**

Present:	Bill Hall Dick Wylie Arthur Williams	Brian Sanders (Chair) Molly Parrett Isla Sutherland	Dawn Moors Helen Parry Tony Mitchell
Absent:	George Herbert	Kathy Hine	Marion Witts
In Attendance:	Val Bagnall Richard Pilbeam	Kari Tourle	Sandra Crook (Minutes)
Distribution:	Those Present / In Attendance		Neighbourhood Managers

	<u>Action</u>
1. <u>Welcome to Open Meeting</u>	
1.1 Brian welcomed everyone present to the first Open Meeting of STARA and was disappointed not to have any Guests to welcome. Future Open Meetings in 2009 are: 24 March 2009 in Basingstoke, 23 June 2009 in Fleet and 22 September 2009, also the AGM in Fleet.	Info
2. <u>Apologies for Absence</u>	
2.1 Apologies for Absence were received from George, Kathy and Marion. Brian advised the members that George had suffered a stroke and was in hospital. Tony had spoken to George's wife to find out how George was and would pass on the members Best Wishes for a full and speedy recovery.	Info
3. <u>Minutes of Meeting – 16.12.2008</u>	
3.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 December 2008 were agreed as a true and accurate copy.	Info

Action

4. Matters Arising

4.1 Kari agreed to provide Dick with an extract from the Housing Act 1988 in answer to his query with the wording of the Assignment & Succession Policy.

Kari

4.2 Training Log & Evaluation Form – Richard handed round a paper he had put together on the Evaluation of Training Courses and asked for members to let him know their thoughts on it in due course.

All

4.3 Those that attended the Corporate Induction on 22 January 2009 said how beneficial they thought it was. Brian felt it was important for all STARA/Panel members to attend a Corporate Induction and Richard agreed to find out from Heather when the next one is planned.

Richard

4.4 Richard reported that George is now receiving the Remittance Advices he needs to allow him to complete the books.

Info

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 In George's absence, nothing to report.

Info

6. Board Meeting Minutes – 04.12.2008

6.1 The Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 4 December 2008 were noted. It was pointed out that under Minute SHA.197/08 in the fourth paragraph it should read that ' a meeting had been arranged in January with the Residents Day Working Party to discuss the future of the Residents' Day' not with STARA.

Info

7. Review of Internal Decoration Contract 2008

7.1 Kari gave a summary of the Contract (copy attached to Minutes). Val said that he was disappointed with the outcome of the Contract which was due to the way the Contract was managed within Planned Maintenance, the delay in the start date and that complaints were received from customers for a free service. Lessons had been learnt and would be implemented should the Contract run in 2009. Val advised that money had been set aside in the budget and there was no reason to believe it would not go ahead in 2009. After discussion, STARA members on the whole felt that the Contract had been successful despite the complaints.

Info

8. Social Fund

- 8.1 Val advised that this is something Sentinel are considering setting up but that the decision to go to the Board with the idea could not be decided until the rents had been set for 2009/2010. There is the possibility of a significant rent rise this year as the formulae for the increase is set in September 2008 when RPI was at 5%, 0.5% is then added and an additional £1-£2 can be added to bring the rent up to the minimum rent so in some cases rents may rise by up to 7-8%. Sentinel approached the Tenants Services Authority (TSA) to see if there was any flexibility with the rent being staggered but was advised No on the grounds that in 2010 rents may decrease due to a possible negative RPI in September 2009. However, the TSA have now advised that they will review the rent increase but Val believes the about turn is too late as budgets have been set. Val is hoping to discuss this at the Chair's meeting on 28 January 2009.

To help lessen the impact of the high rent increases, Sentinel will make a significant rise in their investment in properties to bring them up to Decent Homes Standards a year early. Another suggestion was to introduce a Social Fund to help out those in need in the coming year. Val asked the members for their thoughts on the idea and whether they had any suggestions as to how it should be delivered and what criteria tenants needed to meet to be eligible. It was felt that if it was money that was to be given that it should be a loan. Kari advised that she did not see the Social Fund as a loan facility as Sentinel already offered help with budgeting etc. coupled with the introduction of Credit Union. Other ideas included funding school uniforms, paying utility bills, training and get back to work schemes, food hampers or supermarket vouchers etc.

The Social Fund would be advertised in all local newsletters, Your Housing News, Receptions, Sheltered Schemes and also in CAB offices, Dr's, Health Centres, Playschools etc.

Kari agreed to come up with some ideas and would involve Arthur, Helen, Tony, Bill and Brian in future discussions.

Kari

9. **Resident Involvement**

Action

9.1 The TSA is the new independent regulator for homes owned by housing associations and co-ops and the first thing it needs to do is to draw up a new set of standards for all landlords. It is the TSA's job to ensure that landlords deliver high quality services to tenants and that landlord organisations are run properly. Where there are shortcomings the TSA will step in and take action to improve things. The National Conversation (NC) is the biggest ever consultation asking what tenants want to see in the new standards and is taking place between January and March 2009.

Richard will be putting together a schedule of 'Conversations' to take place in sheltered schemes and the neighbourhoods over the coming weeks after having liaised with the Neighbourhood Managers to determine the best locations.

Val advised that a meeting had taken place earlier today with Sappling and Wayfarer to come together to hold a joint 'Conversation' across Hampshire. It had been suggested that Basingstoke was a central venue and that an evening meeting i.e. 5.00 for 5.30 – 8.30 p.m. late in February would be ideal with refreshments served at an interval to be agreed. Finding a suitable venue and an appropriate Guest Speaker i.e. Peter Marsh would need to be sorted as soon as possible. A Steering Group has been set up to get the wheels in motion and members should let Richard know if they have any ideas or feelings on how the meeting should be run.

All

9.2 Val left the meeting at 8.30 p.m.

Info

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Richard handed round the Notes from the meeting held on 17 December 2008 with Simon Martin, a TPAS facilitator, where the Aims and Objectives of STARA were discussed. It was generally felt that the facilitator did not add any value to the meeting and disappointment was felt that this issue was no further forward. Kari agreed to facilitate a meeting in late March which Richard is to set up to resolve this pressing issue.

Richard /
Kari

Post Meeting Note: Meeting arranged for 10 March 2009.

10.2 It was agreed that Dick, as Secretary, would write to all the Residents Associations on the list provided by Richard to introduce themselves and the Neighbourhood Panels, advise them when meetings were taking place and to encourage them to get more involved in decision making in their area.

Dick

10.3 Richard would speak to Heather about outstanding Parking Permits for tenants who regularly attended meetings.

Richard

Action

10.4 Bill and Dick had both attended the TPAS Southern Area Meeting in Hastings and had picked up a leaflet on Resident Involvement Champions which they did not fully understand. Richard to speak to Bill and Dick at the end of the meeting to clarify.

Post Meeting Note: Richard would report back to STARA on RI Champions which is specific to Richard's role and not something members would get involved in.

Dick commented that Sentinel's tenants association members were very well informed and that Sentinel is a far better housing association compared to others following his observations at the meeting. Dick noted that Value for Money was addressed slightly differently by another housing association that we might like to consider.

Richard /
Bill / Dick

10.5 3 spaces were available on the 'Start to Sign' course being held in the Fleet office on Thursday 12 March 2009 from 9.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Dawn, Isla and Molly put their names forward.

Post Meeting Note: The names of those interested in attending were passed to HR on 28.01.2009.

Sandra

9. Date of Next Meeting

9.1 The date of STARA's next monthly meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 24 March 2009 at 7.00 p.m. in Sentinel's Basingstoke Office.

Info

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.