



**MINUTES OF
SENTINEL TENANTS' & RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
MEETING HELD AT
SENTINEL'S BASINGSTOKE OFFICE
ON TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2009**

Present: Arthur Williams Bill Hall Brian Sanders (Chair)
Dawn Moors Dick Wylie George Herbert
Helen Parry Isla Sutherland Kathy Hine
Marion Witts Molly Parrett Tony Mitchell

Absent:

In Attendance: Gin Tidridge, B&Q Val Bagnall Sandra Crook (Minutes)

Distribution: Those Present / In Attendance Neighbourhood Managers

1. Welcome to Open Meeting

1.1 Brian welcomed everyone present to the second Open Meeting of 2009. Future Open Meetings in 2009 are: 23 June 2009 in Fleet and 22 September 2009, also the AGM in Fleet.

2. One Planet Living

Action

Info

Brian welcomed Gin Tidridge, Manager of the One Planet Home Range at B&Q. Gin explained that she had been asked along to the meeting after having met Kathy at an event in London. Gin stressed that whilst she worked for B&Q and the presentation would therefore be geared towards products available from B&Q, the products talked about in the presentation can be purchased from many other retailers.

Gin gave an informative presentation and talk on One Planet Living which is being developed in conjunction with the World Wide Fund. B&Q are working hard to develop a One Planet Home range so that they can help customers achieve some measure of success against the One Planet Living principles. One Planet Home focuses on 6 principles which are save energy; save water; recycle; grow your own; conserve nature and healthy homes. Gin went on to talk about the 6 principles in turn and detailed products that can help customers achieve some measure of success.

Gin finished by answering questions. A question that was asked is why are B&Q still using plastic bags as opposed to paper bags which are more eco-friendly. B&Q no longer leave plastic bags out for customers to help themselves to and do offer a 'bag for life', albeit plastic. Due to the size of merchandise being purchased in a lot of cases plastic bags are not suitable. B&Q have greatly reduced the use of plastic bags by customers but appreciate that more needs to be done in this area.

Gin agreed to pass on Val's contact details to Mike Cartwright, B&Q's Business 2 Business Manager in the light of a discussion about value for money for customers.

Post Meeting Note: E-mail sent to Gin thanking her for coming along to the meeting and passing on Val's contact details.

Gin left 3 handouts – One Planet Home, Let's do it leaflet, Grow your own leaflet and a step-by-step guide, including a DVD, on insulating your home for STARA members to help themselves to. A copy of Gin's powerpoint presentation is available from Sandra.

Brian thanked Gin for the informative presentation after which she left the meeting.

Info

3. Apologies for Absence

3.1 Apologies for Absence were received from Kari and Richard.

Info

4. Minutes of Meeting – 24.02.2008

4.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 February 2009 were agreed as a true and accurate copy.

Info

5. Matters Arising

5.1 No matters arising.

Info

6. Treasurer's Report

Action

6.1	George had received reports from Richard detailing the spend against the STARA budget for 2008/2009 and against the Community Chest budget.	Info
6.2	It would be helpful to be advised of budgets for 2009/2010.	Richard
7.	<u>Publicity for STARA</u>	
7.1	In future it was suggested by Val that Agenda's should be accompanied by all associated papers rather than being tabled at the meeting to allow STARA members to read the associated papers before attending.	Kari / Richard
7.2	Val showed the members what is currently put into the Sign-up Packs for all new tenants to publicise the Panels. The Customer Information Sheet (CIS) 'How you can get involved' and Panel contact details are inserted in the Packs. Val felt that the CIS needed rewriting. Nothing is currently put in the Packs about STARA. It was agreed to set up a Focus Group to address this issue. Dick, Tony, Marion and Brian would meet to take this forward on a date and time to be arranged by Brian. Val is happy to be involved and/or create some ideas to consider. Other means of advertising the Panels and STARA need to be utilised better such as the web-site, plasma screens in the Receptions etc. Samples of how other housing associations publicise their resident groups were available and will be passed to Brian to consider at the Focus Group meeting.	Brian / Val
8.	<u>Short Notice Inspection</u>	
8.1	<p>Val said there is a high probability that Sentinel will be inspected by the Audit Commission, with only 5 days notice, sometime in 2009. The inspection will most likely focus on perceived areas of weakness and will be heavily focussed on evidence, with a likely high input from residents. Therefore, Sentinel need to move to a position of permanent readiness.</p> <p>Bill had attended a Tenant Inspection Day run by TPAS where they advised that housing associations will get 3 days notice, the inspectors will be on site for 3 days, 3 areas of weakness will be inspected and that the inspectors are moving towards 1-2-1 talks with tenants as opposed to meeting in groups.</p> <p>Kathy suggested that we look at the piece of work that was done following the last inspection which detailed what we could do better. Val said it was important to focus on what changes Sentinel have made following suggestions/consultation with Panel/STARA members.</p>	Info
9.	<u>Complaints and Compliments</u>	

9.1 A copy of the Bi-Annual Complaints Board paper dated 30 October 2008 was distributed. The report was for the first six months of 2008. Val showed the members a copy of the extensive excel spreadsheet which held the data relating to the 126 complaints and 155 compliments Sentinel had received during that time and asked the members what they wanted to receive in future and in what format.

A number of suggestions were put forward, including:

- A visual picture of the data i.e. pie graph rather than a written report
- The use of smiley faces
- Panel members should follow 2 complaints and compliments through as an audit exercise every quarter
- All complaints should be closed with a letter from Sentinel
- Panel members who had completed satisfaction calls with tenants in the past, following refurbishment work, said this had been beneficial and could be used to follow up in this area
- For STARA to see a quarterly copy of the complaints excel spreadsheet to analyse. Care would be needed to avoid any Data Protection issues arising.
- As the majority of complaints were about repairs it would be a good exercise to analyse the results at the end of this year, against the results at the end of 2010, to see how well the new contract had worked.

Val hoped to have a Board Report on the year's findings by early May 2009 and would ensure STARA members receive a copy. It was agreed that a decision on how to take this forward would be made following receipt of this Report. A separate Focus Group may be set up to analyse the data and report back to STARA .

Val

9.2 Brian thanked Val for attending the meeting after which he left.

Info

10. **Change of Time of Meeting**

10.1 It has been suggested that holding meetings in the evenings was not appropriate for everyone and that alternating morning, afternoon, evening meetings might be more suitable for tenants. 4.1 of STARA's Constitution states that 'All meetings will start from 7.00 pm and the venue will alternate between the Basingstoke and Fleet Boardrooms as agreed by the Committee'. Therefore to change the start time a Resolution would have to be passed at the Annual General Meeting. Concern was raised over being able to find a venue if the time of future meetings were changed to office hours. This would not be a problem if the decision was taken to alternate the times of the meeting in 2010 as rooms could be booked after the AGM. It was suggested that STARA might like to try having 2 meetings, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, similar to what Winchester Housing offer their residents. Following discussion a vote was taken and it was agreed, by the majority, not to change the start time of STARA meetings.

Info

Action

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Dick , Tony and Brian had attended a meeting called by the Chair of the Board on 23 March 2009 to discuss the future of STARA, with Martin and Val in attendance. At the meeting the following was discussed:

- New generation of customers for both STARA and the Neighbourhood Panels
- Reaching out to all our customers
- Selecting STARA's main objectives, which are
 - Review all Policies and that comments made by STARA members are reflected in the final document
 - All tenants have a Sentinel employee, possibly accompanied by a tenant representative, visit every 3 years – hard target to achieve but we will pursue it
 - Blog on the net advertising involvement, the Neighbourhood Panels and STARA to all customers
 - Tenant representatives to make themselves known to tenants
 - Review Complaints and Compliments received
 - View feedback from customers and statistics

Info

11.2 Arthur reported that he hoped to work with Sentinel in tackling the parking problems in South View following the response received from residents in a survey sent out late in 2008. Arthur would be going along to a meeting on 31 March 2009 to discuss the development of waste land behind Doswell Way to highlight the parking problems.

Info

11.3 Kathy Hine's 3 Year term of office as a Resident Board Member is due to come to an end in September 2009. Kathy can be nominated to stand again.

In accordance with STARA's Constitution STARA has to nominate 2 persons for the position who will then be interviewed by the Board Interview Panel before the July Board Meeting. STARA members who would like to be considered for the Resident Board Member position should put their names forward at the April meeting so that STARA can nominate 2 people.

All

11.4 It would be interesting to see data that shows how many hits Sentinel's website receives.

Sandra

11.5 Could Mary Gober training be arranged for Molly, Brian, Dawn, Arthur and Bill?

Post Meeting Note: No Mary Gober training currently being arranged by Sentinel but HR will inform Richard/Sandra when training is available.

Info

11.6 Sentinel had not come back to STARA about interview training for front-line staff. It was put forward that Sentinel arrange to train the four Board members and that they could cascade this training down to others who were interested.

Sandra

Action

- 11.7 It was reported that a member of staff had been assaulted by a tenant in Sentinel's Basingstoke office. STARA wanted to know what lessons had been learnt from the incident and what Sentinel were doing to ensure this does not happen again. It was strongly felt that where the subject matter is potentially contentious that two members of staff should attend.

Post Meeting Note: Following the assault on a staff member in the Basingstoke office, Sentinel have taken the matter very seriously. To date, the following action has been taken:

- The panic button in the Snug has been relocated to above the light switch.
- A second panic button will be placed underneath the table
- The panic button in the quiet room is being replaced
- In future receptionists will be asked to notify staff if they have reason to believe that a customer may be under the influence of drink or drugs or simply behaving aggressively.
- Different sorts of personal alarms have been ordered.
- Signage has been put into all interview rooms stating that abusive behaviour could lead to prosecution.
- We have been successful in obtaining an injunction to prevent this tenant having any contact with the staff member concerned, visiting Sentinel offices without a written invitation, warning him about aggressive behaviour towards Sentinel staff or premises and about abusive behaviour towards staff.
- The staff member concerned has received personal support.
- All lone workers to attend a course of conflict resolution training to enable them to recognise and deal with difficult situations.

Info

- 11.8 It was reported that Mitie are being selective about the staff they take on from Brades. This was mentioned as concern was raised about the suitability of some staff.

Info

- 11.9 It was strongly felt that STARA should be stronger in getting issues resolved, perhaps through the Chair taking up with staff within Sentinel if necessary and that timescales should be set to expect a response from Sentinel. This was raised following the time wasted out at Pyestock on the Estate Inspection where no issues raised at the time were followed up by Sentinel but a Councillor comes along and things happen. The setting of a timescale suggestion results from not hearing back from Sentinel about interview training despite it being raised over a year ago.

Richard

- 11.10 Emma Sutton had raised the question of whether tenant representatives would be happy for their name, photo, telephone number and e-mail, if applicable, being available on the website so that customers can contact them. Individual sheets, with the above information, were handed round for members to check the data and indicate if they were happy for the information to be put on the website. The Sheets were collected and passed to Emma.

Sandra

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

Action

12.1 The date of STARA's next monthly meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 28 April 2009 at 7.00 p.m. in Sentinel's Fleet Office.

Info

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.