

**FIRST CHOICE HOMES OLDHAM
SADDLEWORTH & LEES LOCAL BOARD**

*Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 12th July 2006
at Old Mill House, 7pm*

Present: **Councillors:** Brian Lord, Chair; Val Sedgewick

 Tenant Members: Bill Hullah; Jean Bradley; Edith Bentley

 Independent Members: Winifred Dillon

 In attendance: Sue Walker, Board Support Officer;
 Gary Walsh, Repairs Manager; Lynn Phillips, Minute Taker
 Zerg Raja, Tenant Participation Officer

Members of the public present: Clarice Fletcher, 50 Old Mill House
 Helen Thewlis, 43 Old Mill House
 Katie and Walter Jones, 45 Old Mill House
 Neville Ibbotson, 30 Hood Square
 Mary McCleverty, 22 Hood Square

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Steve Yorke, Director of Management Operations; Paul Newcombe, Project Manager.

2. ANY ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIR

Following the departure of John Hudson as Councillor, the Chair agreed to approach the Area Committee office in order to select a Councillor to join the Saddleworth & Lees Local Board in Councillor Hudson's place.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ANY CONTRACT OR MATTER TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING

There were no declarations of interest.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 MAY 2006

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

5.1 Bill Hullah raised item 8 of the previous minutes: Mr Ibbotson's complaint regarding Apollo's attendance to repair his heating. Bill agreed with Mr Ibbotson that the service Apollo provided was poor. Mr Ibbotson again asserted his complaint about Apollo. Gary Walsh

AGREED to speak to Colin Greenwood regarding the matter immediately.

- 5.2 Val Sedgewick raised the subject of the flat at Old Mill House that was suspected of being sub let. Gary stated that he did have information but that it was unsuitable for open session discussion and that this should be discussed in closed session later in the meeting.
- 5.3 Bill raised item 5 of the previous minutes: the request for Alan Caddick to attend the next Local Board meeting. It was established that some tenants had recently received a newsletter from Housing 21, however some had not. Cllr Lord explained that financial issues were delaying the signing of the contract.
- 5.4 It was noted the fire brigade has just condemned the fire alarm at Lees House. The Board held a short discussion regarding the poor state of the fire alarm and the central heating. The Chair **REQUESTED** that the remaining residents be re-housed as soon as possible (subject to the residents wishes).

AGREED:

- (a) Gary Walsh to speak with the Director of Repairs & Renewals regarding recent complaints about Apollo Heating.
- (b) that enquiries are made immediately to look at re-housing the residents of Lees House in light of poor state of central heating and the fire alarm.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Neville Ibbotson of 30 Hood Square stated that ASB in the vicinity of Old Mill House in recent weekends was causing problems for local residents.

The Chair supplied the names and numbers of local police officers to the meeting and public. The Chair assured Mr Ibbotson he would raise the matter at the Area Committee on 14 July 2006, and would speak to Inspector England in person.

Winifred asked if the FCHO could re-instate the security patrol to provide security for its tenants. Gary **AGREED** to look into the matter.

7. CENTRALISATION OF VOIDS

The Board received a presentation regarding a recent initiative to centralise the voids process. Gary explained that communications needed to be improved, and operating over six areas has made this difficult. A void pilot scheme has been instigated in West Oldham, which will operate for several months to identify any operational issues.

Winifred requested clarity as to what type of voids were being discussed: Gary clarified it was normal management voids that are presently taking

on average 69 days to turn around. Gary finished by stating that he was confident the new system would be successful.

8. **STREET SCENE; SLA**

The Board **ACCEPTED** the report for information. The Chair explained that the problem with the Service Level Agreement: it is doubtful that work (for example, mowing grass) is actually being completed, as there is a lack of checking. In the past, the wardens were checking the work was being completed.

Winifred queried the £275,000 saved on grounds maintenance will be spent and if its to be apportioned to the Local Boards, how much Saddleworth & Lees might receive. Sue **AGREED** to supply the Board with a breakdown of figures to clarify the matter.

9. **PERFORMANCE CONTRACT**

Apologies were given, as figures were unavailable at the meeting. However, it was agreed that the performance contract would be distributed with the minutes from the meeting with an opportunity at the next meeting to raise any issues.

10. **FEEDBACK FROM SPECIAL INSPECTION TOUR TO IDENTIFY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

Gary clarified the budget remaining for Saddleworth and Lees. He asked the Board to consider which schemes the Board would like to see go ahead and in what priority. The following was agreed:

- Heywood Lane
- Brownhill Lane
- Ancoats Street
- Stoneleigh Street
- Briarfield Road, Dobcross
- Beech Avenue, Greenfield
- Chew Vale, Greenfield
- Lees Park (2-36 Dowry Road, Lees)
- Tree pruning across area

The Board was concerned £10k may be insufficient for the amount of tree pruning that was needed, however Susanne Knapper, Project Officer, had assured Gary this sum was sufficient.

Zerg suggested that the mail shot 100 could be used to ask tenants their suggestions for tree pruning: a feedback newsletter was due to be posted next week. The Board **AGREED** to this. Zerg will feedback the results to the Board, together with any other issues that may have been missed.

It was **AGREED** to complete all schemes, however Gary would prioritise the schemes.

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday 16 August 2006, Old Mill house.

Closed Session

(Confidential matter, as per previous minutes)

Gary re-opened the discussion regarding the tenant suspected of sub letting his property at Old Mill House. Ray Wallace, Housing Officer, has stated he is not in possession of diary sheets. A warning has been given to the tenant, however he has denied the allegations. Gary will chase up the diary sheets.

12. ANNUAL HEALTH CHECK

Sue introduced Hilary from the Enlighten Consultancy, who reviewed the FCHO Constitution last year. The results of this review were distributed to the Board. Sue explained improvements have been seen already, however certain areas are lacking: e.g. monitoring customer satisfaction. There are issues the Board need to pick up. A satisfaction survey has been issued to tenants, however the results are on a Borough level. Sue will report back on the findings when local area figures have been identified.

Enlighten have formulated a discussion paper. Hilary commented there was an impression that when the new allocations policy was presented to the Local Boards, members felt disenfranchised from the decision making process. Members approved the policy without considering the impact on their local areas.

Sue explained a framework must be put in place so that Local Board input is not lost, but fed back to the Main Board. The Board recognised that the new lettings policy has impacted on the residents of Saddleworth & Lees. Hilary agreed it is a good example of how a policy impacts locally.

Sue suggested:

- She and Gary meet to identify issues
- Strategy is reviewed in September.

One issue, in terms of the business plan, would be identified and discussed across all six local Boards.

The meeting ended at 9pm.