



## Minutes of the Tenants' Voice Meeting

Held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024

At Council Chamber, Cinderford Town Council, Belle Vue Centre, Belle Vue Road,  
Cinderford, GL14 2AB

Agenda Item No	Report No (if any)	Resolution	Resolution No
1.	N/a	<i>It was resolved to appoint Sadie Jolly as Chair and Jemima Phelps as Vice Chair of the Tenants' Voice.</i>	TV1



## **Minutes of the Tenants' Voice Meeting**

**Held on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024**

**At Council Chamber, Cinderford Town Council, Bel le Vue Centre, Belle Vue Road,  
Cinderford, GL14 2AB**

**At 15:30 hours**

<b>Present</b>	Sadie Jolly, Chair Jemima Phelps, Vice Chair David Skipp Helaina Ellway Isabelle Dutton Joanne Wilkinson Ken Durham Teresa Basher Yvonne Leishman
<b>Two Rivers Housing (TRH) Staff</b>	Ann-marie Russell, Head of Communications Anthea Tawney, Senior Business Partner (Engagement & Coregulation) Chris Watkins, Interim Assistant Director of Assets Daniel Hughes, Grounds Maintenance Team Leader Hannah Farrugia, Executive Assistant to the CE (minutes) Hayley Selway, Chief Executive Rachel Smith, Assistant Director of Housing Sara Hendry, Head of Tenancy Services Carol Dover, Corporate Director – Resources Leanne Buffin, Community Connector Luke Warren, Community Connector

### **The meeting commenced at 15:35.**

Hayley Selway, Chief Executive, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the first constituted Tenants' Voice meeting. The Chief Executive highlighted the importance of these meetings and how they were instrumental in connecting the voice of tenants to the decision makers at TRH, at the highest level i.e. the Board Member and Executive Team . She committed to ensuring both Board Members and the Executive Team attending the meetings going forward. She commented on the meeting's importance to the Board which was evidenced by the Chair being in attendance.

Those present introduced themselves.

### **Helaina Ellway joined the meeting at 15:38.**

Agenda	Title	Action
<b>1. Appointment of Chair &amp; Vice Chair</b>		
1.1	The Senior Business Partner (Engagement & Coregulation) announced those elected ahead of this meeting by members. Sadie Jolly had been appointed as Chair and Jemima Phelps as Vice Chair.	
1.2	Members congratulated Sadie and Jemima on the appointment.	
1.3	<b><i>It was resolved to appoint Sadie Jolly as Chair and Jemima Phelps as Vice Chair of the Tenants' Voice. (Resolution TV1).</i></b>	Gov.
<b>2. Apologies for Absence</b>		
1.1	Apologies were received from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audrey James - Committee Member</li> <li>• Jo Morris - Officer</li> <li>• Matthew Dunne – Officer</li> <li>• Ian Faul- Officer</li> </ul>	
1.2	No other apologies of absence were received.	
<b>3. Declarations of Interest</b>		
3.1	There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>4. Minutes</b>		
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 28 <sup>th</sup> February were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.	
<b>5. Matters Arising &amp; Action Log</b>		
5.1	The Senior Business Partner (Engagement and Coregulation) presented the Matters Arising Action Log which was reviewed and progress noted.	
<b>6. Chief Executive &amp; Chair of TRH Board Report (T24-01)</b>		
6.1	The Chief Executive presented the report.	
6.2	The Chief Executive referred (2.3) of the report 'M4(3) homes' and clarified this was terminology used for accessible bungalows.	
6.3	The Chief Executive discussed the upcoming Executive recruitment and how tenants and colleagues were included in the recruitment process.	
6.4	The Tenants' Voice noted the report.	
<b>7. TRH Values</b>		
7.1	The Head of Communications delivered her presentation.	
7.2	The Head of Communications asked members if the ICARE ( <i>Integrity, Collaboration, Ambition, Respect, Ethics</i> ) values felt appropriate.	
7.3	Ken Durham said it was about trust, respect and doing what you say you are going to do. He added that TRH had not been reliable in terms of service, and often communication had been poor. He commented that he was pleased to see grounds maintenance on the agenda and action being taken.	
7.4	Teresa Basher highlighted how more questions were being asked as a result of the Tenants' Voice discussions, so things are moving in the right direction and driving openness.	
7.5	Ken Durham challenged values in terms of the grounds maintenance service charge being part of overall rent.	
7.6	The Chief Executive asked the group what words are triggered by good or bad experience. Teresa Basher said it was about <i>listening</i> to customers. Helaina Ellway added it was about <i>putting yourself</i>	

	<i>in the shoes of your customers.</i> She referred to a recent repair where TRH had failed to keep her updated and kept delaying. The Chair said it is about <i>communication</i> and there is too much <i>mis-communication</i> .	
7.6	The Chief Executive said repairs were clunky at the moment, and TRH were aware of this and were trying to resolve with the Group Board. Repairs would be added to a future Tenants' Voice agenda as an item for further discussion.	<b>Gov&amp;PA</b>
7.8	Teresa Basher said the TRH website could provide more updates on planned work to save phone calls from customers. The more information shared the better.	
7.9	David Skipp said it was important not to change appointment dates as this breaks trust with customers. He added how important it was to consider older homes as well as building new homes.	
7.10	The Chair shared an example where Centigen operatives had been really helpful. They attended her property, identified issues and appointments were booked within a week.	
<b>8. Grounds Maintenance Review</b>		
8.1	The Chief Executive opened the presentation. She said it was about being transparent on where the service was at the moment, and sharing the information available to evaluate the service. Grounds maintenance had been previously discussed at Challenge and Change, but not much action was taken as a result. However, TRH did listen at the end of last year in terms of the permanent resource being put in place.	
8.2	The Chair asked if the programme was scheduled by area to ensure best value for money. She had witnessed half an area being cut and the operatives returned the next day to finish. She challenged if it would have been better value for money to have finished the job the same day saving a return journey. The Grounds Maintenance Team Leader said maps had been reviewed to ensure the planned schedule was efficient and minimised travel.	
8.3	Yvonne Leishman said the period April to June seemed to be the most common time for complaints and that this was a trend seen year-on-year. The Chief Executive said last year there was an issue around recruitment, preventing the season starting as intended. This year has already seen one cut in most areas, however two cuts should have been carried out according to the Service Level Agreement (SLA). The cutting season would therefore be extended into October this year. She added that communication could have been better.	
8.4	The Interim Assistant Director of Assets said from a Centigen perspective, the Grounds Maintenance Team Leader had done a lot of work on oversight of the team as well as reviewing the maps. New equipment had been purchased allowing clippings to be collected on all cuts, which had not been feasible before. This will provide an enhanced service to some areas. Additional training had been delivered as well working with the IT team to share more information internally and externally.	
8.5	The Grounds Maintenance Team Leader said Centigen were now	

	recycling all cuttings rather than sending to landfill, providing better value for money, as well a better environmental impact.	
8.6	The Head of Tenancy Services said the GIS mapping system was helping with understanding the TRH areas of land. She said it was about managing expectations and added that in 2025/26 she would like a locality plan, encouraging a more joined up approach as a team, with customers and partners.	
8.7	The Assistant Director of Housing asked Tenants' Voice members for their views and questions.	
8.8	Ken Durham highlighted how grounds maintenance did not just refer to grass cutting. He also added that there was a Winter programme, and customers were paying for a 12-month service, which included: gardens, pathways, salt bins and hedges.	
8.9	The Assistant Director of Housing said this meeting had focussed on grass cutting, but more information could be provided on the whole grounds maintenance service as well as a breakdown of how service charges were dis-aggregated across a 12-month period, including a Winter schedule. The Chair said this would be helpful and it was agreed to bring this back to the next meeting.	<b>AD-A</b>
8.10	Yvonne Leishman commented it was important to be clear on what the service costs, as well as what TRH are charging. It was important to understand costs versus what customers want in terms of service. She said this was a further conversation that was needed.	<b>AD-A</b>
8.11	The Chief Executive asked if customer satisfaction of '7 out of 10' felt about right. Teresa Basher said where there were two areas next to each other on different cuts, this generates a lot of complaints. The Chief Executive explained that there was complexity as a result of the stock transfer, particularly as Right-to-Buy (RTB) properties do not include service charges. This results in different levels of service which does mean that some common areas can look <i>messy</i> which can then cause tenant dissatisfaction.	
8.12	The Vice Chair said as a shared owner she pays a service charge to TRH, but the service was delivered by another party, which she was not aware of. There was a lack of clarity on what TRH and Management Companies deliver in terms of service. There could be improved communication around this topic.	<b>AD-H</b>
8.13	The Chair said it would be beneficial for Centigen to post on the TRH Facebook page to update when areas are due to be cut as well as when a planned cut cannot be carried out due to sickness or inclement weather. The Head of Communications said this information would be shared on the website and socials, and she was working with the Grounds Maintenance Team Leader to progress this. The cutting schedules had already been shared. The Grounds Maintenance Team Leader advised the first cut was taking longer than anticipated due to weather conditions impacting on growth.	<b>AD-A</b> <b>HoC/</b> <b>GMTL</b>
8.14	Teresa Basher said it would be good to share on socials ' <i>you said and we did</i> ' in relation to grounds maintenance.	<b>HoC</b>
8.15	A report would be taken to the TRH Group Board on the Grounds Maintenance Service and any amendments made. This would	<b>AD-A</b>

	help with the decision-making in terms of budget setting.	
8.16	The Chief Executive asked if this meeting format worked. Teresa Basher said it was positive and requested if some of the GIS maps could be shared. The Chief Executive said the team would share some of the maps on Decision Time for the meeting to view. The Senior Business Partner (Engagement and Coregulation) passed round an example of the GIS map.	<b>SMP-E&amp;C</b>
<b>Leanne Buffin left the meeting at 16:59.</b>		
<b>9. Regulatory Environment and TSMs</b>		
9.1	The Assistant Director of Housing delivered her presentation.	
9.2	The Assistant Director of Housing presented an overview of TRH's regulatory environment, explaining the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) sets the standards for all landlords. There are seven standards TRH must comply with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety and Quality</li> <li>• Neighbourhood and Community</li> <li>• Tenancy</li> <li>• Transparency, Influence and Accountability</li> <li>• Governance and Viability</li> <li>• Rent</li> <li>• Value for Money</li> </ul>	
9.3	The Chief Executive referred to ' <i>Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard</i> ' and said more information would be included in the resource centre on Decision Time after the meeting.	<b>AD-A</b>
<b>10. Date of the next meeting</b>		
10.1	The date of the next meeting would be confirmed by The Senior Business Partner (Engagement and Coregulation) who was planning the next meeting date in July. A full forward schedule of meetings would be provided.  <i>Post meeting update: Date of the next meeting confirmed for Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2024, 15:30-17:30 and forward schedule of meetings circulated.</i>	<b>SMP-E&amp;C</b>
10.2	To add agenda item at the end of future agendas ' <i>Review of Meeting</i> '.  Members feedback that they felt the meeting went well, information shared was useful and the location worked well for the majority.	<b>Gov&amp;PA</b>
10.3	The Chief Executive thanked Sadie Jolly for Chairing the first constituted Tenants' Voice meeting.	

**The meeting closed at 17:37.**