



Summary of Resident Panel meeting held on August 26 2021 via Zoom

Residents Present: Liam, Chris

Staff/Board: Susan French (SF), Viv Astall (VA), Patrick Penny-Annang (PPA)

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

Apologies were received from Janice and Fenan.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were not taken for which SF apologised.

3. Items from previous meeting

Resident Dashboard update

PPA updated the panel on the resident dashboard. VA mentioned the phone system has been faulty and this led to missed calls. SF mentioned we are aware this is an issue and BHA will be investigating.

Estates Services update new recruit and update on walkabouts.

VA updated the panel on recent Estate Services Officer, Marius, who will be starting on 1st September and will be taking over compliance as well as his caretaking role. It's a new role for BHA and he will be the man on the ground, visible and connecting with residents.

Liam asked how this will work with current staff members such as Michael. VA said Marius and Spencer would form the Estates team, and it may give opportunity for Spencer to move to undertaking some communal repairs. Marius will be doing inspections and external caretaking.

Liam mentioned tenants no longer receive feedback forms when maintenance works are completed. SF added we are looking at a system where we can send residents text and they will provide feedback that way, as we used to have a very poor return rate for forms. We are trying to get more feedback from residents in different ways.

VA updated the panel on Estate walkabouts. These have now started with two completed so far. So far, the walkabouts had few residents attending but had been a useful opportunity for staff to meet and talk to residents and be seen out and about on the estates.

Chris mentioned that we should vary the times for the walkabout to allow for people working. VA mentioned we will look at what times would be better suited for people.

For discussion

4. Take Stock Exchange and other Resident Engagement activities/events

PPA updated the panel on Take Stock Exchange project and presented ideas for potential resident engagement events. SF added BHA want to continue events for residents like the Panto in December. PPA to speak to Liam about logistics and arrange tickets for residents for a show at Hackney Empire.

A Free Ice Cream day has been organised for residents, the van will be visiting Morland Mews, Milner Square & Highbury View.

5. September Fun Day

PPA updated the panel on the Fun day, this year unfortunately cannot take place, as we not want to alienate residents unable to attend due to Covid-19 concerns.

6. Tenant support (Financial Hardship/Digital inclusion)

PPA updated the panel on plans for the Hardship fund and said that he would like to find ways for BHA to improve distribution of the funds, as well as improve digital inclusion. PPA mentioned the low take up of the fund.

PPA asked Liam & Chris whether residents were aware of the fund. Chris mentioned he believes that most residents are not aware of the fund and are more likely contact Islington council for the Resident Support Scheme.

Chris added some residents are proud and would not consider contacting BHA for support. Chris suggested the wording could be more sensitive to encourage people to use it and give residents assurance that it is confidential.

SF added everyone should be aware of the support available and how BHA can help.

Consultation on Policies

6. Domestic Violence Policy

VA updated the panel on domestic violence (DV). The policy changes the way DV is handled, separates DV from Anti-Social behaviour and reflects the latest Domestic Abuse Act.

BHA recognised its strengths and most likely to find out about DV through neighbours. Training will be arranged with contractors and staff to notice tell-tale signs.

Liam asked if there a need for a specialist DV officer. VA advised that we are not large enough to have specialist staff but we would train all staff to understand and spot signs of DV. Typically, we would refer to agencies. We have a good relationship with Solace and are able to work quickly to support the person. We are in a good position to make homes as safe as possible, installing extra locks, spy holes. Rehousing is complicated and we would seek legal advice and how to support the resident.

BHA will provide sensitive support, encouragement to take things forward and make the home safe where we can, and if necessary, rehouse.

The Panel approved the policy.

7. Lettings Policy

VA updated the panel on the Lettings Policy. This has been updated to be fair and transparent. though little of the content has changed.

We deal with 10 to 14 voids a year, though last year dealt with 20 voids. We operate a system of nominations with Islington council, called choice-based lettings. We keep 50% of 1 bedrooms and 50% goes to council for people to bid. The Panel approved the policy.

Other Business

8. Other issues from residents

- Nothing specific raised.
- On the garages, SF mentioned that consultants have been appointed and a design consultation is planned. The market is very volatile at the moment, and we would not go to tender right now.

9. At the next meeting the panel will discuss

- Resident dashboard

The next resident panel meeting will be held on October 28th.

Minutes are published on BHA's website:

<https://barnsbury.org/get-involved/resident-panel/>