



Tenants' Forum

Newsletter

March—July 2020
Issue no —1



Dear Forum members, welcome to our first Tenants' Forum newsletter

Covid-19 has changed the picture of our communities and it has had a massive impact on our lives. In accordance with the Government guidance we have suspended all the public meetings. During lockdown Hull City Council (HCC) established a dedicated helpline and Housing officers started ringing and visiting vulnerable residents.

Although we were all in lockdown some tenant involvement activities still continued i.e. virtual meetings of the Tenants' Forum Committee, volunteers' virtual meetings with Assistant Director Neighbourhoods & Housing and Business Leader – External Partnership (KWL), volunteers attended virtual national and regional meetings and conferences and solo litter picking etc.

Although the lockdown has eased now, we are not sure when life will go back to normal. At the moment the Tenants' Forum Committee and Tenant Participation Officers (TPOs) are working on how we can go forward and we have come to the conclusion that a digital Tenants' Forum is the only way possible at this present time. With the help of the Information Technology department of Hull City Council we are developing digital plans. Your views are very important to us for a way forward.

Finally stay safe and listen to the government's instructions carefully

Nev Allison
Chair—Tenants' Forum

Response to Covid-19

During the lockdown some Tenant Participation Officers (TPOs) have been working in the Covid-19 response hubs. TPOs have telephoned 695 vulnerable residents and spoken to 552 residents. TPOs also visited 972 vulnerable residents and managed to speak to 748 residents on their door steps whilst keeping the rules of social distancing. Alongside the emergency response TPOs kept on reporting issues such as fly tipping, bulky items, fire hazards removals and supporting the Housing Facilities Teams. TPOs delivered more than 2,300 leaflets with Covid-19 safety information in two days to all tenants living in the high rise flats.

A TPO started ringing active housing volunteers once a week to check on them. Within 18 weeks he has made 539 calls and 314 calls were answered. He has sorted 3 communal repairs, helped 2 volunteers to get food shopping and raised 1 social services query.

Tenant Involvement - Digital future



Due to the Pandemic and lockdown, the Tenant Participation Team (TPT) had to suspend 'business as usual' and whilst some staff hit the ground running, others are working hard behind the scenes trying to improve on our digital future. They have a vision to enable tenants to remain actively involved and have been given permission to use the remaining Digital Champions funding from Efficiency North to this aim.

The team are currently working in conjunction with the Information Technology department to ascertain what equipment and data packages might be suitable and also what security measures need to be utilised to ensure safe use and loan of the equipment. They are also actively looking for other providers and funding streams to help with this project.

Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)

TPOs have spoken to the representatives of all recognised TARAs to discuss a way forward to help their communities and about the support available from the TPT. Many of the TARAs are looking to widen their communication methods by using digital platforms like; emails, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc. TPOs supported TARAs with funding forms to allow them to access funding to buy digital equipment to set up WhatsApp groups and create a Facebook page to enable them to communicate with wider membership.

TPOs worked with the TARA committees in the flats that have communal facilities to make the rooms Covid-19 ready so they can resume their activities, with limited numbers, and the communal rooms will be monitored on regular basis.

Bayswater Court TARA

- TPOs arranged a health & safety induction session for the residents on how to use the communal room with limited number of people.
- Bayswater Court Communal room is covid safe in line with Government guidelines.
- Residents have offered the Tenants' Forum Committee access to have meetings in the communal garden keeping the social distancing rules.
- TARA members have continued to maintain their garden, which they have entered into the garden competition.

Covid induction session



Pop in



Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)



Dorchester Road And Midmere Avenue (DRAMA)

DRAMA will be able to start online meetings very soon.

Charter House TARA

- Charterhouse TARA have been carrying out litter picking on their own, in their area
- TARA members have created a wildlife garden which has already attracted bees, squirrels and a multitude of birds
- They have reported issues, pathways around the area and these have been replaced, which has improved health and safety
- Residents have entered the garden in the garden competition

Gatwick House TARA

- TARA's work on the garden is well underway, showing really good results
- All the communal benches are looking superb after re- painting
- The communal doors to the front and back of the block have been replaced
- Residents have entered the garden in the garden competition

Great Thornton Street TARA (GTS)

- Vice Chair of GTS TARA has done solo litter picking twice during lockdown
- GTS TARA Committee met in July to discuss the way forward and decided to have virtual meetings as a committee and with general members as well
- ITV Calendar interviewed the Vice Chair and Secretary to capture their views on - how residents were finding their life during the lockdown especially living in high rise flats.



Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)



Muswell Court Pop in

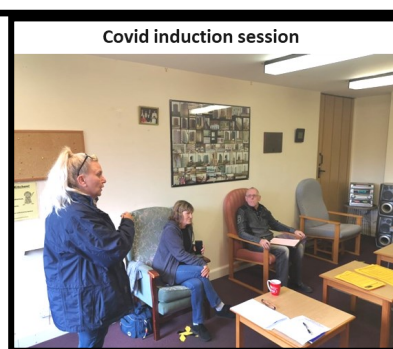
- Following a health & safety induction session provided by TPOs, Muswell Court communal room is Covid safe in line with Government guidelines. Now residents can use it for their activities.
- Residents have entered the garden in the garden competition

Oakington Garth TARA

- TARA have been working hard, whilst socially distancing, to clear overgrown shrubs
- TARA has re-grassed the areas to improve the appearance

Padstow House TARA

- Padstow House TARA have now undertaken their Covid 19 health & safety induction so that the communal room can re-open
- TARA will be holding different activities throughout the week
- Communal garden looks great due to all the hard work of tenants



Repairs and maintenance Project Group (Virtually)

The Repairs and Maintenance Project Group met via Microsoft Teams on 24 June 2020. This was the first digital meeting attended by 6 tenants, TPO, Partnership Manager Repairs, voids & Internal Planned Work, External Relation Manager and External Relation Officer.

Unfortunately not all members of this project group were able to access the meeting digitally, contact was made with these volunteers to provide them with an update following the session.

The Project Group received an update on how the Housing Service delivered repairs during the initial lockdown from Covid-19. The update included how the Housing Service dealt with emergency repairs, annual gas servicing and how none urgent requests were put on hold. The group was informed on how they plan to reinstate the service and deal with the backlog. The group also received a demonstration on how to report a repair online, as to which they all agreed to become advocates. Confirming that if they hadn't already they would create an account, report repairs online when necessary, promote self-serve to friends, family and neighbours as well as helping others report repairs online. The volunteers will provide feedback of their online experience to the TPO.

The volunteers who attended the virtual meeting provided very positive feedback and all mentioned that they felt confident in participating virtually. When asked how satisfied they were with the meeting, 1 – 5 (5 being very satisfied) the meeting scored 5s and 4s.

Solo Estate Walks are to resume

As we get back to normality and some restrictions are lifted, the area where you live may be in need of some tender loving care. This is why we are asking all our Estate Champions to get back out there to check their streets. The solo estate walks are a great way of getting out and about whilst checking your area, giving you a sense of ownership and promoting why your street is good or needs to improve. Estate Champion sheets are available in the usual way, either by post or e-mail, and any service requests will be put through and recorded. So far this year we have carried out 35 estate walks, sent out 36 untidy garden letters and raised 26 service requests.

Garden Competition

The garden competition entries have now closed and this year the TPT received 44 entries. TPOs are busy videoing the entrants to allow judges to decide winners by viewing the videos which will be provided to them along with the relevant paperwork for each category. The results will be sent back to the TPT and winners will be announced virtually in September. There are some great gardens and TPOs also captured tenants' views about their gardens by asking them "What does your garden mean to you, especially during lockdown".



Garden not only gives me enjoyment but helps others who may not be garden minded to create their own. People who are walking by often comment on how well the garden looks, which makes me feel good and gives me a sense of worth and wellbeing. Wildlife is also enticed into the garden as well creating a happy environment for all

Forres House, Dalsetter Rise

Being from Poland and having a history of vegetable and fruit growing, moving to England has given the family the confidence, motivation and wellbeing to start growing their own produce not just for the themselves but to give to neighbours and the local polish shop which creates community spirit

Buckingham Street

Having a garden means everything to us at this time of crisis. It gave us peace and harmony, allowing the fellow tenants to either sit in the garden for 5 minutes just to get away from it all or spend the afternoon in there surrounded by friends who also enjoy peace and tranquillity

Muswell Court



Tenants' Compact Consultation



Covid-19 has not only changed our socio-economic lives but also the services provided by different agencies as well. Many of the activities provided by the Tenant Participation Team are now not possible due to the Government guidance. The Team are looking at how engagement with the Housing Service will look moving forward and the Tenants' Forum Committee are involved in the drafting of ideas. This will mean enabling more access through digital platforms, but ensuring there is, when possible, access to involvement via the more traditional face to face methods. We will therefore have to review our Compact document, The Key to our Future, to ensure it is fit for purpose in these changing times. Along with the TPOs, we hope in the next couple of months to consult with you on how we can move the partnership forward.

The TPT have submitted award entries for Tpas and we are so proud that we have been shortlisted for Excellence in community action (Great Thornton Street TARA), Community Focused Service/ Product of the year (Laundry task and finish group) and Team of the Year award (Tenant Participation Team). Due to Covid-19 the award ceremony was cancelled in March 2020 but now a virtual award ceremony will be taking place on 18th September 2020 — Good luck to all the nominees



Tpas Awards

Multi Storey Living Project Group The MSL group will be meeting virtually in August 2020 to receive the annual fire safety update, during the pandemic fire safety has remained top of the agenda in and around the flats. The Housing Facilities Team have taken vans loaded with items that have been left in the communal areas or fly tipped around the buildings to the waste management site 3 to 4 times a day. Specialist Housing Facilities Officers carried out disinfectant spraying in the buildings on a weekly basis.

Access to Council buildings In line with government guidance and advice, Hull City Council (HCC) is carrying out Health and Safety Assessments for all the public buildings, including the Wilson Centre, and local housing offices. HCC will announce when public buildings will be open to the public, keep checking their website, Twitter and Facebook. Meanwhile the Housing Service is encouraging customers to use online services for paying rent, checking rent accounts, reporting and tracking repairs etc.



TPOs virtual meetings

- One of the TPOs joined a virtual networking discussion for local authority tenant engagement staff, with officers from Harrogate Borough Council, Selby Borough Council and East Riding Council, to discuss tenant involvement during Covid-19. Moving forward the group will be inviting tenants from these Councils to virtual meetings to network and share ideas. Stay tuned for further information.
- The team have also provided updates at many regional and national meetings and in April a TPO attended the TPAS national roundtable and presented the fact and figures of TPT's response to Covid-19

Virtual meetings attended by tenants

- The Tenants' Forum Chair attended a Tpas meeting where they discussed "Local Authority Engagement – what's the future"
- The Tenants' Forum Committee (TFC) members attended the following round table Tpas meeting:-
 - ◆ How do we ensure tenant engagement stays top of the agenda?
 - ◆ What will engagement look like after lockdown?
 - ◆ Local Authority Engagement – What's the future
 - ◆ Tackling Stigma – where are we now?
- Chair and Vice Chair of the TF also attended following meetings
 - ◆ Tpas Scrutiny week started on 27th July 2020, Chair and Vice Chair of the Tenants' Forum delivered a presentation on "Scrutiny in Hull"
 - ◆ Vice Chair of the Tenants' Forum presented a paper at a "See the person" virtual meeting and CIH appreciated the presentation

Feedback

Your views, suggestions and feedback are very important to us and help us to improve the Tenants' Forum. You can provide us your views, feedback and suggestions via:-



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Please leave a message



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Hull Tenants Forum