



# Tenants' Forum Newsletter

Jul — Sep 2022  
Issue no — 8



## Forewords

Dear Forum members,

Welcome to the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Tenants' Forum newsletter

On behalf of the Tenants' Forum Committee and active volunteers, I would like to express great sorrow of the death of our sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Few months ago, the Tenant and Resident Associations arranged garden parties to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations and marked the historical occasion. May Her Soul rest in peace

After getting rid of Covid-19 restrictions it was nice to get back to normal and going back to face to face meetings and activities. I would like to thank Hull City Council staff for their efforts and adapting virtual ways of involvement. The Tenant Participation Team trained the active volunteers on how to attend virtual activities, which helped the volunteers to use online services as well. For those who did not have IT equipment, the Tenant Participation Team also launched a digital equipment loaning scheme to provide opportunity to all the volunteers to have their say virtually on Housing issues.

The judges have judged the garden competition and winners have been decided, winners and entrants will receive awards and certificates at the 'Thank you' event in December. Well done to the all the entrants for bringing colours and blooming atmosphere to the city.

On behalf of the Tenants' Forum Committee, I would like to thank all the Neighbourhood Champions and litter pickers for keeping the city and especially their areas free of litter and flytipping. Along with the block champions who on a regular basis carry out inspections to check the cleanliness of the blocks and also raise issues related to the cleaning of the blocks.

If your neighbours or friends would like to join us in bringing positive changes in your area and the City overall, contact Tenant Participation Team via 612010 or email [tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk). The Tenant Participation Officers will get in touch and will arrange an induction.

I would like to thank all the active volunteers for their time, skills and enthusiasm to bring positive change to the Housing Service and City overall.

Nev Allison

Chair – Hull Tenants' Forum

## The Tenants' Forum (TF)

The Tenants' Forum Committee (TFC) arranged four Forums in July, August and September. The TFC held their Annual General Meeting in September and at the other meetings invited Operation Manager, Business Insight & Quality Manager, Performance Manager and Practice Management Officers to deliver presentations on their projects.

### Area Housing Team Overview

#### Operation Manager Neighbourhoods and Housing

The officer explained that the Housing Service is using different approaches to provide better services to the customers. Following are the reasons to the new approaches

- ◆ Clear accountabilities and deliverables
- ◆ Changing the outcomes – modernisation/improving ways of working
- ◆ Meeting customers' needs – more consistency
- ◆ Addressing the changes in legislation
- ◆ Alignment with Hull City Council's Values

#### How are they going to achieve this?

- ◆ Delivering the service through functional areas
- ◆ Improvement to Customer Experience
- ◆ Continuous improvements/learning
- ◆ Creating capacity within the team
- ◆ Build flexibility into the team to manage the highs and lows



The Officer also explained the structure of supervisory and assistant support and answered all the questions raised from the floor.



**Housing Performance and the Housing Business Plan  
Business Insight & Quality Manager  
&  
Performance Manager**

Officers explained that following are the main five objectives of Hull Housing Business plan: -

1. Focusing on customer experience
2. Putting residents first and meeting their needs
3. Safety, sustainability, and climate change
4. Strengthening Hull's neighbourhoods and communities
5. Investing in modernisation and organisational development.

**1. Focussing on customer experience**

**Recent actions taken:**

- 300300 contract with Civica ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 - Council took on direct responsibility for providing service, performance has generally improved.

**Action plan:**

- 300300 – shortening and simplifying IVR (Interactive Voice Response) messages.
- Emergency Repairs to be made available online (TBC).
- Repair notifications being improved and expanded.
- Complaints – working with some teams to reprioritise speedier response.

**2. Putting residents first and meeting their needs**

**Recent actions taken:**

- Let 57 properties more April – July than the same period last year.

**Action plan:**

- Reducing relet times / backlog of empty properties in the system:
  - ⇒ Working with our contracting partner KWL on range of measures.
  - ⇒ Closer working between Allocations Officers and our Homeseach Team.
- Further data analysis on best measures for this theme.

**3. Safety, sustainability, and climate change**

**Recent actions taken:**

- Won national award for strategic approach in our gas safety awareness training for officers at different levels so they could undertake their roles with a greater knowledge and informed decisions.

All gas services overdue are in managed process.

Action plan:

- Working with our contracting partner KWL to minimise gas services overdue.
- Introducing Total Compliance Workbook (TCW) software to easily capture performance data on the “big six” responsibilities.
- Reprofiling this year’s decent homes programme.
- Introducing NEC Asset Management module to better manage investment in Decent Homes.
- 98-homes Dane Park new build eco scheme – trying to make viable.

### 4. Strengthening Hull’s neighbourhoods and communities

Recent actions taken:

- Big improvement by Building Cleaning in standards of cleaning in communal areas, multi-storey blocks.

Action plan:

- Teams working together to improve standards in communal areas of low-rise blocks.
- Reviewing our Service Level Agreement with Streetscene for maintenance of housing land - achieve greater clarity on services provided.
- Supported by increasing frequency and coverage of estate inspections – to complement estate walks by tenant reps.
- Reviewing the Service Level Agreement with Community Safety particularly around high-rise blocks & exploring different options for reducing ASB and increasing safety within communities



Due to the shortage of time, officers decided to close the session until next update and informed the Forum that at the next update they will start the presentation with the undelivered slides.

## The Tenants' Forum (TF)



### The Tenants' Forum Annual General Meeting

The members of Tenants' Forum attended the Annual General meeting and elected the following committee

- Nev Allison – Chair (Unopposed)
- Darren Milner – Vice Chair (unopposed)
- Chris Rogers – Secretary (Unopposed)

There were seven candidates for the position of general members and following volunteers were elected at the AGM for this position:-

- Dawn Chehreh
- Peter Doncaster
- Ann Hodges
- Ann Reekie

### Consultations

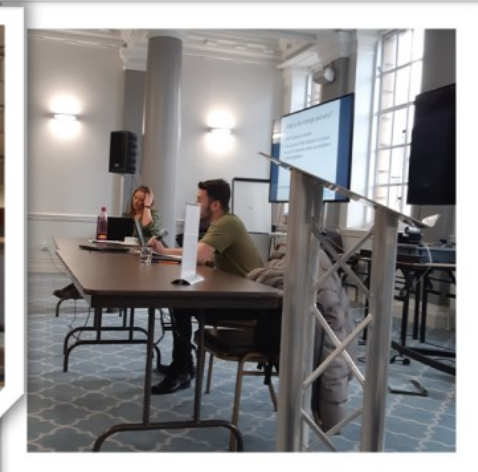
The Tenants' Forum with the support of the Tenant Participation Team arranged the following consultations and invited all the active volunteers.

#### Consultation on Succession, Left in Occupation and Assignment

The Practice Management Officers Neighbourhood & Housing and Practice Monitoring Officer Neighbourhood & Housing attended the Tenants' Forum to deliver a presentation on potential changes to the Succession, Left in Occupation and Assignment Policies. Officers delivered presentation on explained following subjects: -

- What is a tenancy succession?
  - Which family members can succeed to a tenancy?
  - What conditions must be met to allow a succession to take place?
  - What is the change and why?
- Left in Occupation
  - Officer explained the current policy and proposed changes
  - Eligibility
  - Affordability

- The circumstances of how they came to be left in occupation
- Housing need & support required



- Assignment
  - What does it mean to 'assign' your tenancy?
  - What conditions must be met to allow an assignment to take place?
  - Do you need permission to assign your tenancy?
  - Can an application to assign a tenancy be refused?
  - Different types of assignment
- Joint to Single
- Sole tenancy to another sole tenant

At the end of the session officers asked volunteers' views on these changes and responded to the questions.

### Consultation on Government proposal to cap 2023 rent increase

- The consultation needed views on proposed changes to the social housing rent policy.
- It focused on the introduction of a rent ceiling from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, which would act as an upper limit on the maximum amount by which social housing rents can increase in that year.

What is being proposed?

Officers explained the proposal and shared what is happening in Hull. Officers recorded volunteers' views and suggestions and submitted the responses to Central Government.

## The Tenants' Forum (TF)



### Consultation on the new safety regime for occupied high – risk buildings

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) published a consultation paper on how the new safety regime introduced by the Building Safety Act will apply to occupied high-rise buildings. The Tenants' Forum arranged a consultation on this paper and invited all the active volunteers, volunteers took an active part in the consultations and Tenant Participation Officer recorded and submitted the responses to DLUHC on behalf of the Tenants' Forum.

### The Tenants' Forum Committee

- The TFC met monthly to discuss performance information and to set the agenda of the Tenants' Forum.
- Chair and Vice Chair of TFC attended Scrutiny Commission meetings on quarterly basis.
- Chair and Vice Chair of the TFC and Chair of the Repairs and Maintenance Project Group was invited to meet with Assistant Director Neighborhoods & Housing and Business Leader (KWL) to discuss any issues and for updates.





## **Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)**

The TARAs are carrying out face to face meetings and have been active feeding issues from their members to the relevant service areas, carrying out local area walks and litter picking and block walks to improve the kerb appeal of their areas.

Committee members have been in regular contact with the Tenant Participation Team, who support them in finding a resolve to the issues/concern they may raise.

### **Bayswater Court TARA**

The committee members have continued to feed in any issues that are brought to their attention on behalf of their members. They have representation on the main groups in the involvement structure including the Multi Storey Living Group, Estate Management Project Group and the Tenants' Forum.

Bayswater TARA arranged their Annual General Meeting. The new committee are as follows:

- Jean Stephenson – Chair
- Craig Smith – Vice Chair
- Chris Rogers– Secretary
- Darren Milner – Treasurer
- Karen – General member
- Gary Lloyd – General member
- Mike Bickerstaff - General member
- Kate Smith - General member

With regards to meetings and events, the group are now holding events when the weather is good such as weeding Saturdays in the communal garden and coffee mornings.

For the Bank holiday the group held a BBQ in the communal garden which went down well with residents.

Bayswater has also won the best communal garden in Hull, that makes it 5 years on the trot!

They have planted the rose bush in the garden along with a commemorate plaque for the Queens 70 year Jubilee.

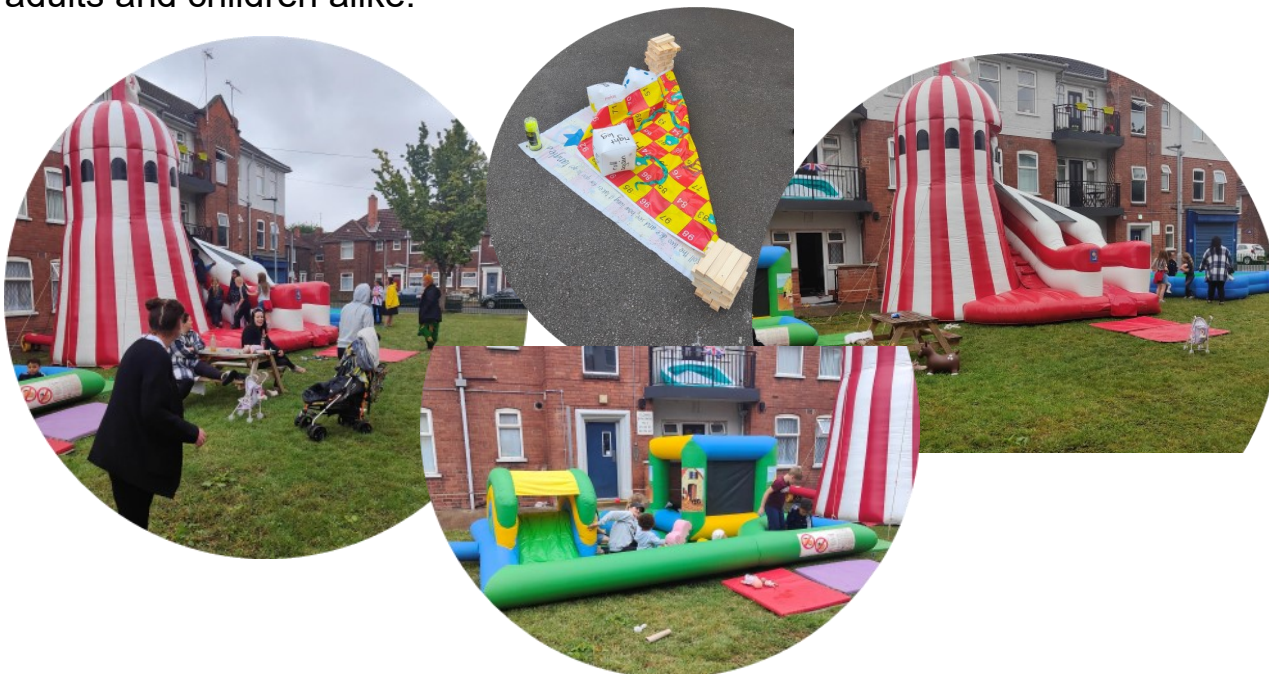
The communication channel continues to be a fantastic communication tool

and is being updated every week with information relevant to the block.

### **Charterhouse TARA**

Group members are still actively involved in local area walks and litterpicking, they have also attended the Estate Management Project Group, feeding in their local concerns for the area to the wider work streams of the Council. The wider audience of the group are kept informed by local newsletters regularly produced and hand delivered.

In late August they held a “Fun Day” in the area, which was well attended by adults and children alike.



The community allotment situated on Aldbro Street has continued to flourish, producing some home grown produce for everyone to sample and enjoy. In the coming year, the membership hopes to be expanded and children are also welcomed to get involved.

### **Gatwick House TARA**

The group are regularly attending both MSL and Estate Management Project Groups, feeding in their issues from their block and surrounding area and in turn feeding back to their group and wider audience on the work being carried out and how the blocks issues are going to be resolved. Members have also carried out 3 litterpicks, collecting in excess of 60 bags of rubbish in their area. Newsletters are also produced on a regular basis to keep the tenants of the block up to date. These are hand delivered by the group.

## **Great Thornton Street TARA**

The Great Thornton Street TARA members met with Ward Councillors, ASB officer, Housing Facility Officers, Neighbourhood Coordinator and Housing officers to discuss the issues and any progress on the previous issues raised by the GTS members.

GTS TARA arranged their Annual General Meeting and following are the are names of new committee

- Peter Doncaster – Chair
- Julie Murphy – Vice Chair
- Sana Benali – Secretary
- Tina Green – General member
- Joan Shepardson – General member

GTS TARA in with collaboration of ASB team organised a community safety event “Not where you live” on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022 at the GTS communal garden. The Police Service, Area Team, Fire Service, The Conservation Volunteer and Citizen Advice Hull & East riding along with the Neighbourhood and Nuisance Team were in attendance.



## Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)



Local Ward Councillors funded a day trip to Bridlington. GTS TARA Committee arranged this trip in collaboration with As-Suffa education centre and more than 200 residents from Great Thornton Estate joined the trip. All the residents provided very positive feedback on their return.



The Chair and Vice Chair of GTS TARA carried out litterpicking and collected 30 bags of rubbish and carried out 3 estate walks. Members of GTS TARA have worked hard in the communal gardens.



## Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)



### Great Thornton Street TARA

The GTS TARA planted rose bush in one of their communal gardens along with the plague in commemoration of Queens 70 years Jubilee.



The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and General members of GTS TARA regularly attended Multi Storey Living Project Group, Customer Access Focus Group, Estate walks Focus Group and the Tenants' Forum to raise the issues and keep residents up to date on the information received from these meetings via GTS Facebook.

GTS committee can be contacted via Facebook or email

[Great Thornton Street Estate TARA](#) or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gtstara>

[agreatthorntonstreet@gmail.com](mailto:agreatthorntonstreet@gmail.com)

### Oakington Garth TARA

Members of the TARA have been keeping up to date with local area issues, by feeding them into the Estate Management Project Group, they are also giving their group and a wider audience update on what work has been carried out to alleviate the issues in their local area and citywide. Regular newsletters are produced by the TARA to keep everyone up to date on relevant information, they also hand deliver these around the Garth. The group are carrying out local area walks, reporting any issues they find.

### Padstow House TARA

The Chair of the group is an active member of the Multi Storey Living Group and takes back the information received to the rest of the Padstow community. Their communal room is open for meetings and they are keeping on top of their communal garden. The group hand delivered information leaflets regularly.

## Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)



### Hutt Street Pop In

Members of this group are keeping up to date with local area issues, by feeding into the Neighbourhood Management Project Group, they are also giving their group and a wider audience update on what work has been carried out to alleviate the issues in their local area and Citywide. Group members are also actively carrying out litterpicking on a regular basis to clean up their street, so far this quarter they have managed to collect 9 bags of rubbish and have carried out numerous local area walks.

For the future the group are looking to resume outdoor meetings to get everyone together and move forward with activities to benefit their area.

### Muswell Court Pop-in

Although this group is not officially recognised as a TARA, they do come together to make sure that Muswell court residents have a voice. They have various block champions that will support other residents when there is an issue that they can feed in to be resolved.

Muswell Court have now resumed face to face meetings in their community room on a monthly basis.

### Valiant Drive (pop in)

As part of the 'Not Where I live' national campaign officers from the Anti-social Behaviour team, Housing, Recycling, Neighbourhood Co Ordinator, Housing Facilitator, Tenant Participation Team and The Police carried out an event in July. Residents and Tenants were able to discuss any issues or concerns they may have and encouraged to give feedback on improving the community.

Over the last 3 months 13 Tenants have signed up to the recycle scheme and are using the clear bags provided by the Housing Facilities Officer, these are disposed of in the new blue bins. This continues to be a success with an average of 36 bags per week being recycled. Plans to improve and update the flats is ongoing, this includes cleaning the outside of the blocks.



## Tenant and Resident Associations (TARAs)



### Commonwealth Homes

Tenant Participation Officers are currently working with the residents of Commonwealth Homes to set up a new TARA. The group has not taken off yet as it is still in early stages.

### Customer Access Focus Group

The Customer Access Focus Group elected Paul Reynolds as Chair and Robert Banthorpe as Vice Chair and went through the terms or reference of the Focus Group. Officers provided following updates to the group.

#### Update on 300300 – Business Change Manager

#### Customer Services Corporate Priorities

- Improve customer experience
- Offer a choice of ways to get in touch Encourage online engagement
- Improve information provision
- Manage customer expectations
  - Reduce the calls to the contact centre

**Contact Centre** – Review – officer explained that in the last 12 month 42% of customers service engagement was via contact centre. He further added that since contact centre was incorporated into Hull City Council, they have noticed general improvement. There was a peak of inbound calls in March due to Council tax.

#### Contact Centre

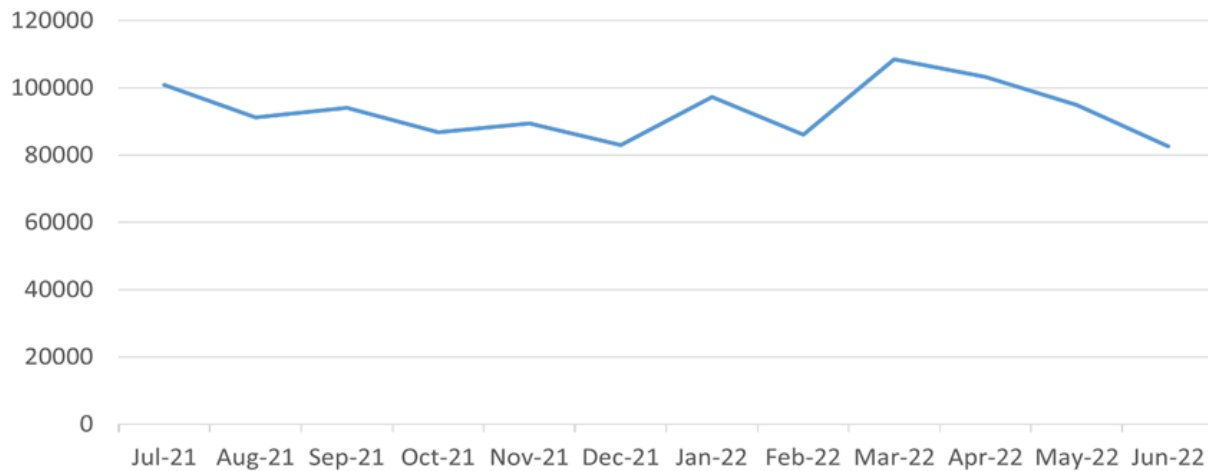
Officer explained that there is a steady decrease in average handle time in 12 months and a significant decrease in average wait time. Previously specialist advisors used to attend the calls but now all the advisors handle all sort of calls which means that more calls are answered now.

#### Contact Centre - Highest Volumes and Housing Breakdown

Housing makes up around 20% of overall call volume. Housing, revenue & benefits and waste management make up over half of all calls.



## Contact Centre – Total inbound calls



### **Customer Service Centres**

- Foot fall has increased following the easing of Covid restrictions
- Footfall capture form is being trailed at Orchard Centre which will be useful to understand customer's needs and improve customer services.
- 4% of customer accessed the services via Customer Service Centres.

### **Website**

42% of customers accessed the services via website and 2% via emails in the last 12 months and due to Council tax 58% customers used website in April. The officer shared that redesign, contents review, and new search functions are ongoing.

### **Improvement – Completed in 2022**

- KWL repair notifications has gone live
- Environment 'leave a message' option is live now
- Action plan in place with Neighbourhoods & Housing to reduce inbound call volume
- Action plans in place with Streetscene to reduce inbound call volume
- New Repair digital inclusion survey run to understand why customers call
- Repair Programme set up to bring together various projects

### **Improvements – Outstanding for 2022**

- LiveChat to launch on Hull City Council website (August)
- Online myAccount to be improved with better information provision (December)
- Emergency Repairs to be made available online (TBC)
- Repair notifications to be improved (TBC)

## Customer Access Focus Group



### Special “Engage” module “virtual meeting”

The Business Change Manager arranged a special online meeting for Customer Access Focus Group in July. They discussed the “Engagement” module, which will eventually replace “My Housing Online”. It is designed first for access via smart phone and will be available as an app. This app will allow the customers to check their rent balance and much more. Hull City Council is still working to improve this app. This app has been approved by Housing Senior Management Team and will be live sometime 2023.

## Multi Storey Living Project Group

In the last 3 months the group have continued to hold their monthly meetings face to face. The group is expanding with a number of new members joining the meetings.

The group have had guest speakers join the meetings to discuss a range of topics.

- Operations Manager and Housing Tenancy Manager to discuss changes to management of Highrise flats and a new team that is being introduced
- Head of Service for Neighbourhoods and Housing to discuss the Community Safety service level agreement and Street Scene service level agreement.
- Business Insight Manager and Building Cleaning Managers to discuss updates and performance.

Several group members are not only Block Champions for their own flats but also are involved in carrying out Benchmarking inspections though out the city. This has resulted in some positive outcomes and brought attention to areas of concern.

The group continue to make a difference to multi story living and support their own local TARA's.



### Estate Management Project Group

The group are meeting up face to face now every 6 weeks. From July to September 2022, the group have discussed Estate Management, the Streetscene Service Level Agreement and the Community Safety Service Level Agreement, with a 'critical friend', Paul Reynolds from the group regularly meeting with Officers to discuss and amend the documents.

#### Estate Management Issues

The Officers and the group discussed a wide range of issues affecting the City, with flytipping and rubbish being the topic of conversation. The Area Housing Teams and Neighbourhood Co-ordinators are collating information, this will give a better picture of the issues in the City and determine what action to take.

#### Local Area Walks and Litterpicking

Our Local Area Walks programme is going from strength to strength with the intrepid volunteers out and about weekly and monthly, checking areas for a wide range of issues. Since July 2022, there has been a recruitment drive for the champions through the Hull Housing News, resulting in a further 4 Local Area Champions joining the team making a total of 70 in all, which is fantastic. Here is the July 22 to September 22 summary of what has happened:



### Local Area walks

Number of assisted Local Area walks carried out = 11

Number of solo walks carried out = 13

### Service requests raises

Number of assisted service requests raised = 40

Number of solo service requests raised = 51

Untidy garden letters sent out = 0

Tidy garden letters sent out = 0

### Litterpicking

Again, the momentum for this activity is growing. So far this year we have seen a massive increase in individuals and communities litterpicking in their areas.

This has created some great community spirit and help build some strong friendships along the way. The data collected is also being fed into the Council's climate change agenda.

Bags of litter collected during litterpicks in the City = 256

Number of bags of litter to recycling = 30

## Communications & Publications Panel

From July 2022 to September 2022, the group have continued to hold regular meetings online, through Microsoft Teams and have been finalising the Autumn edition for the Hull Housing News due for release in early October 22.

The group looked at the following articles:

- Annual report
- Ask Nic Harne – Building Safety
- Blooming Marvellous
- Cost of Living Starburst
- TARA focus – Great Thornton Street

## Communications & Publications Panel



- Beware Loan Sharks
- What you are entitled to
- Stop smoking
- Designated Panel
- Chat with Chair – Councillor Jan Loft
- How to bleed radiators

The group are always on the lookout for other volunteers to join the Communication & Publications Panel so if you are interested get in touch with Tenant Participation Team.

## Designated Panel members group

Designated Panel members met on the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2022 to review 'Hull City Council working in partnership with The Designated Tenants Complaints Panel Terms of Reference'. As part of this review, The Panel discussed the proposed changes to Stage 1 Complaint Response Letter. The panel approved the updated version and the letter has now been corporately adopted by Hull City Council. The next meeting is scheduled to take place at the end of October.

## Stop Social Housing Stigma (SSHS) in Hull.

Volunteers are looking at developing a new group to support the national campaign *Stop Social Housing Stigma*. Hull City Council already sponsor this campaign and have had agreement that we can continue using this name and their logo to progress work in Hull. The volunteers have produced an Action Plan for the attention of the Head of Housing and Senior Management to support their plans and help to drive the campaign forward.

We will be looking for volunteers to come on board and join the group, further meetings will be advertised in due course.

## Tenants Garden Competition

2022 has been a strange one weatherwise, but this has not stopped the green fingered tenants in the city from creating some wonderful gardens and entering them into the garden competition.

Throughout the application period we received a staggering 36 entries, in all

categories which were:

- Best Individual Garden
- Best Communal Garden
- Best ECO Garden
- Best Container Garden

Again, the standard was above the bar, the judges had a real tough job in making decisions for each entry. All decisions were carried out digitally using photos of the gardens done earlier, they narrowed down the entries to the following winners:

- Mr Hardy - Park and East - Best Unique Container Garden 2022
- Bayswater Court TARA - Park and East - Best Multi Storey Living Communal Garden 2022
- Ms Swales - Park and East - Best ECO Garden
- Mr and Mrs Stephenson - Park and East - Best Individual Garden
- Lanyon Close Community - Park and East - Best Communal Garden
- Mrs Degutiene - Riverside, Wyke and West - Best Individual Garden
- Mr Knox - Riverside, Wyke and West - Best Container Garden
- 26-32 Outram Close Community - Best Communal Garden
- Mr and Mrs Steeley - North and Foredyke - Best Individual Garden
- Mrs Linley - North and Foredyke - Best Container Garden
- Great Thornton Street TARA - Riverside, Wyke and West Extra Ordinary Achievement 2022
- Miss Krapane - Riverside, Wyke and West - Extra Ordinary Achievement 2022



## Tenants Garden Competition



There were also 6 highly commended gardens.

Everyone who took part was also asked the question “what does your garden mean to you”, to which we received some great feedback from them, here are some quotes:

- Whilst visiting a garden for the competition, the tenant said that he found gardening therapeutic for both his mental and physical health, watching his garden grow from a blank space into the creation it is now was very rewarding.
- Whilst visiting a garden for the competition, the tenant explained that having a garden is wonderful for her wellbeing, as she was from Poland, she did not have the chance to have a garden due to her living in a garden tenement block, so moving to England has given her the opportunity to express herself through creating a great garden.
- Mrs Hargrave said that her garden was very special to her, she has crafted her skills and now teaches others on the gardening skills she has gained herself. Many people have gained valuable knowledge by her teaching.



The trophies will be presented to the winners at the annual “Thank You Event” on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

## Cold Callers

Some tenants have received phone calls from people asking if they are satisfied with their housing repair. When caller has been asked if they are from the council, he or she has declined to say. These calls have NOT been made by the Council, because the Council collects feedback by the repair worker leaving a feedback form with the resident to complete and return. The calls are scams and yet another way of trying to persuade people to make disrepair

## Cold Callers



claims.

As you didn't give the caller your number, these are nuisance calls. Often, they leave a mobile number for you to call back, which means you can report them to the Information Commissioner's Office via the [ico.org.uk](http://ico.org.uk) website. The Commissioner will then investigate and has the power to fine the company.

You can also reduce nuisance calls by registering with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) by calling 0345 070 0707. Registration is automated and available 24 hours a day, and the service is free.

It's against the law for salespeople from the UK or overseas to call numbers registered with TPS. However, registering won't stop computer generated

### Feedback

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



01482 612010

Please leave a message



Hull Tenants Forum  
Hull City Council Housing



@HCCTPT



[tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk)

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