

STARLEY HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE – GENERAL MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2013 AT 7.00PM IN THE VICROFT COURT COMMUNAL  
ROOM.

Agenda 1. Present & Apologies

See meeting attendance register – Apologies also received from G. Birch and John MacSomhairle (Starley staff)

Agenda 2. Minutes of previous meeting: read and agreed and signed by the Chairperson.

Lee Brock chaired the meeting and Doreen Angus took the minutes.

Agenda 3. Matters Arising: None

Agenda 4. Complaints: In the absence of the Co-op Housing Services officer there was no formal report. It was highlighted that during John's absence, any complaints should be submitted to the office for the Committee attention

Agenda 5. Revised draft non asb complaint Policy & Procedures: Copies were available for all members prior and at the meeting, and it was posted to the co-op web-site. In the absence of John, Lee Brock highlighted that in line with the Housing Ombudsman recommendations that due to the co-op size only a 2 stage process was required. A review panel was involved in the process, and if complainants were still not satisfied they can still go to an external body after the co-op process is completed. Voted unanimously in favour of accepting the revised policy in the current format.

Agenda 6. Co-operative correspondence:

1. Lee advised that the co-op needs to carry out a fire drill, and residents will be advised when this will take place in line with the annual risk assessment. Members were reminded that the meeting place is the Ikea plaza. Letter to be sent out before fire drill.
2. Lee spoke about the government Green deal, and the recent issues of properties overheating with the new insulation. Members discussed the matter and that the Management committee had made enquiries about it, and the co-op would not currently be taking it further. Many social landlords were not taking up the deal.
3. The meeting noted a letter to all Vicroft court residents in flats about recent enquiries about window cleaning. Noted that the office had enquired with the current window contractor who would visit site for £10 per flat, but a minimum of 10 flats had to be interested. Members were advised to contact the office if interested, but that it was not the co-op responsibility to deal with it or pay for the cleaning. Sharon advised that the windows were meant to be self cleaning in the communal parts, but this didn't appear to work.
4. Members were informed that Ursula Barrington, who had worked for many years with the co-op when she was employed by BCHS was very poorly, and waiting for a heart transplant. Members wished her well, and noted that a card would be sent from all co-op members.

5. Cancer charity raffle tickets were available in the office if anyone wanted to buy some.
6. Lee Brock spoke about contact with Gary Pittaway from the city council about the old play area. He is chasing up ownership of the land and other issues raised by Lee. Gary has arranged for free plants for the co-op and hanging baskets, there maybe some spare after all the communal garden work is finished.
7. Members discussed reports of asb in the alleyway next to the office which joins Starley Road and Vicroft Court. Members discussed if changing the code would help, and if a CCTV camera should be installed. Members felt it was not needed and intrusive if we starting putting cameras up, and it is likely the cameras would get broken. Members were asked to contact the office with further concerns, especially about any further issues where a member reported someone behaving lewdly.
8. Play area and equipment purchased for the small children: The general members had agreed to purchase play equipment, and where it was to be located at a previous meeting, but several letters of concern were received about the planned location in block 10-13. Members in that communal garden felt that there were no children living in the flats it served, and other members felt that it shouldn't be so close to resident's homes, and that previously play equipment had been vandalised when it was in the communal garden of block 10-13. Members felt that the members in the communal garden where it was planned had not been consulted, and that it was not agreed as suitable. Discussion followed that the best place would be the play "caged area" in Vicroft Court. However the cost to lay the correct surface would be very high. Members asked about making 2 separate areas for ball games/hard surface and for the smaller children. Members felt that there were more younger children and the older children could play on the green or at the local parks. Also Accord permission was required. It was put to the vote that the caged area was the best place for the play equipment, All in favour.
9. A big thank you to Doreen Angus for all her hard work and a great newsletter.

Agenda 7. Share Certificates: Prospective tenant, Neil Young received and paid for his share. It was noted that some shares had still not been collected. Lee proposed that in some cases where members worked shifts, or had good reason for not attending the general meetings etc and cannot collect, that it was looked at on a case by case basis, and that they can collect from the office. Sharon did not think this was a good idea, and all felt that when members were interviewed they all agreed they could attend some meetings, and that it was not just about attending meetings, and were the members good co-op members generally, some people did little or nothing to contribute. Other members asked about different meeting nights etc, Lee said that when the new rules came out, there was some flexibility for this. Agreed that for now, members must attend meetings to collect their share.

#### Agenda 8 – Update on CCTV & Wi Fi

CCTV will be installed as agreed and consulted on to staircase 2 shortly.  
 WiFi – as the office extension cannot take place due to planning restrictions, the co-op is looking into community WiFi. The test in Starley was successful; Vicroft Court will be tested next. It should be available in a few months. The co-op is also looking

for funding for notebooks/lap tops for on line claims, as benefit claims are all going to be on-line.

Agenda 9. Allocations – Draft Amendment to the Transfer/Housing Member Policy. All members had been circulated with the amended policy. The amendment was mainly to address the “bedroom tax”, and would allow people to downsize even if they had rent arrears. Previously no-one was allowed to transfer/exchange/ be offered a co-op home if they had rent arrears. The amount of arrears was discussed and agreed that the 31 day level was sufficient, and each case would be looked at individually with office input into whether the member was adhering to agreements to address rent arrears before agreeing to allow transfers to smaller homes. Sharon proposed to accept the amended policy in the draft presented, and seconded by Doreen. Agreed in favour unanimously.

- The issue of a recent re-let to a family member in a 4 bed house was discussed. One member felt that it was the family home, and that it should remain so. Lee Brock advised on the situation and why the Management committee took their decision.
- Prospective tenant present at the meeting asked why the co-op committee had refused them a 2 bed home, which would allow their sister to live with them. They felt in times of austerity that it was cheaper for people to live together. Lee Brock explained why the co-op committee took the decision that they were only allowed a 1 bed home, as often if families “fell out”, then the co-op would be in a position with members in properties too big, and expectations from family to be re-housed separately. General member present felt that as a small community, everyone knew everyone and their circumstances, and was surprised that the allocations and the committee did not take this into consideration, and felt that sometimes personal bias may sway decisions. She also felt that as a co-op we should be looking after the long standing members. Lee said he would take the general members wishes on this matter back to the management committee, and highlighted that if this decision caused problems in the future, then it was the general members wishes, and not committee to blame.
- Minor discussion took place about Coventry Homefinder, and the current situation with the partnership, and that other local authorities had moved away from CBL policies. The co-op was fortunate that they had a back up with the prospective tenant list.
- Members asked about a possible empty 2 bed flat, as they understood that the member had gone. Lee advised that he could not discuss this as it had not gone to the committee yet.

Agenda 10. Treasurer Report – Read by Lee Brock, noted the co-op bank balances at the 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2013

Agenda 11. Rent Report – there was no formal report due to staff annual leave. However Lee reported that the committee were updated at each meeting on high rent arrears cases, and the under-occupancy cases due to the “bedroom tax”, and said that pleasingly most members were paying the weekly rent due to under-occupancy, but there was some cases who were not paying or falling behind. The committee were monitoring this.

Agenda 12. Repair Report – there was no formal report due to staff annual leave.

Agenda 13. Social Report – There was no formal report. However the Co-op's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party was discussed briefly, but one member felt it should be on the Sunday and not on Monday. Agreed by members that it would be held on the Sunday.

Agenda 14. Garden Report –

- Memorial plaques for the communal garden 10 – 13
- Bench in block 16/17 needs a revamp
- The communal garden block 16/17 has had a makeover and looks great.
- Lee advised the skip should be on site in Starley Road shortly in the parking bay, and one in Vicroft court in August. The Vicroft Court one will be addressed nearer the time, as putting a skip onto the court during school holidays may not be a good idea.
- Lee Brock to ask Management if we can re-imburse a member for compost purchased for the garden work.
- Lee Brock mentioned that members had suggested we purchase a large amount of compost and pots to make the front gardens look nice. Lee to take to management, although it was too late for this year and would be better for next Spring.

A.O.B

- Member asked about the CCTV in Vicroft Court and the positioning. Lee advised it shouldn't be intrusive and near members own property entrance doors, as it is meant to cover general areas. It was felt that the issues in block 2 had calmed down since it was notified that CCTV would be covering the area.

Meeting closed at 8.54pm