



Minutes of PBHA Forum Tuesday 22nd March 2016

Present: 9 Tenants, 1 participant, Vanessa Morris (Head of Services), Mandy Mansfield (Participation Officer)
Chair: Patrick Caffrey
Minutes: Mandy Mansfield

Agenda

- 1 Matters Arising
- 2 Support Changes
- 3 Arrears (Vanessa)
- 4 Women's Group
- 5 Cost of Seaside Trip
- 6 Peer Support Activities
- 7 Expert by Experience Personal Development Group
- 8 Clissold Canteen Update
- 9 Sustainable Food and Isledon Canteen Cost consultation
- 10 Board Meeting Reporting and Invite
- 11 Registering to Vote and Mayoral hustings
- 12 Turle Road
- 13 Welcome Breakfast Club
- 14 Dates of next meeting
- 15 AOB

1 Matters Arising

- **Minutes** - The minutes of February's Forum were not read or approved.
- **Ground Rules Reminder** – The Chair reminded the forum to treat each other with respect, to listen and not interrupt, and not to raise any personal issues
- **Date of CCTV installation** – The installation is planned to be installed week beginning 4th April. One tenant reported feeling threatened by another tenant who does not want the CCTV. Vanessa replied that this is inevitable that some people are not happy and they should be referred to Management.
- **Over 50's Club** – The planned Tea Dance was cancelled due to a flood at Isledon. The next Over 50's Club will be a trip to Islington Boat Club on Tuesday 26th April, where they are offering free boating activities for Over 50's on Tuesdays.

2 Support Changes

Vanessa gave an overview of the changes to Supporting People contracts in both Hackney and Islington. In Islington, the contract expires in June and in Hackney it expires in October. There are two kinds of tenants: the short term tenants and longer term tenants. The short term tenants are covered by the contract, but PBHA will no longer be funded to offer support in the same way it does now to longer term tenants. PBHA is in discussions with both boroughs to provide a new Tenancy Sustainment Service funded through service charges. PBHA is liaising with Housing Benefit to ensure this is covered by Housing Benefit.

One person objected to paying service charge for support that he is not receiving.

It was asked whether there will be staff available to help with benefits and paperwork. At the moment, we do not know whether we will be funded to provide this.

There was a comment that the government is removing support by stealth and that generally the public is not aware of it. Vanessa informed the forum that the DWP is reviewing supported housing funding, and the National Housing Federation is collectively campaigning on this issue. PBHA is also in liaison with MPs, but it is also up to individuals to protest. It was suggested that PBHA starts a petition.

It was asked if tenants with long term higher support needs can be moved to a different organisation. There are a few individuals where this is being looked into but not many will be rehoused.

Support Changes will be a standing Agenda item and the forum was encouraged to keep having conversations and raising any concerns.

3 Arrears

Vanessa advised the forum that we are collectively owed £200,000 in unpaid rent and service charges. 13% arrears come from supported tenants and 5% come from general needs. Half the arrears are from rent and half are from personal service charges. PBHA needs rent to invest in improvements to properties and are developing a new approach to arrears, including a Prevention of Arrears Policy. We would like tenant's to help us by answering the following questions:

- ☐ Is there anything PBHA could do before you sign your tenancy that would help prevent you from getting into any arrears?
- ☐ What situations can cause arrears?
- ☐ What are the most important things PBHA could do to help
 - a) prevent arrears, and b) deal with arrears?

This will be discussed more fully at the next Forum.

4 Women's Group

PBHA is restarting the women's group, which will be held on the first Monday of the month at Isledon canteen. Women are encouraged to bring knitting, crochet, sewing, cross-stitch, colouring books etc. Ideas will be shared and tenants can learn new skills from each other. The first group will be Monday 4th April from 2pm-4pm.

5 Cost of seaside trip

In the past, PBHA has charged tenants and participants £5 for the trip, which pays for lunch, with PBHA paying £500 for the cost of the coach. It was proposed we charge £10 for the trip this year, which will split the cost of the coach with tenants. Tenants were asked if this is reasonable. It was generally agreed that this is a reasonable cost, especially if tenants can pay in two lots. It was asked whether there can be a relief fund for tenants who can't afford to pay the £10. People who genuinely can't afford £10 but want to go should speak to their Support Worker to work out how to budget for the trip.

6 Peer Support

PBHA's aim to strengthen existing peer support structures, such as the Tenant's Committee, the Over 50's Club and the new Women's Group, for example. Mandy distributed examples of activities that a peer supporter might do on a one-to one basis. PBHA will provide training to tenants interested to getting involved, including Mental Health First Aid, Applied Suicide Intervention, and confidentiality. A tenant said they had repeatedly asked to go on first aid training. **ACTION:** Mandy to email Pam about this.

7 Expert By Experience Personal Development Group

Two members of staff will be piloting a new therapeutic support group, who will meet once a week for 10 weeks. Tenants will learn techniques for managing mental health including stress management, positive thinking, relaxation techniques and active listening. Places are still available, so those interested should speak to their support Worker or contact Ann Carolan.

8 Clissold Canteen Update

Precious advised the forum that contractors had been out to measure the floor, so hopefully new lino will be fitted soon. A date has been set for food hygiene training on Wednesday 30th March and Wednesday 6th April at Kingsland Hub. Two tenants were unhappy that there has been no communication about this and could not attend at such short notice.

9 Sustainable Food and Isledon Canteen Cost consultation

Precious proposed that PBHA try to introduce sustainable food workshops at Clissold canteen, as well as embed the concept in a wider sense within PBHA.

Introducing sustainable food to Isledon would involve raising prices at Isledon canteen to cover the cost of buying from local shops. Clare had prepared some preliminary figures proposing an increase of 20% to trial this for consultation. This would mean the cost of a one course meal would be £3.00 and a three course meal would be £3.50. One tenant felt this is too much an increase.

It was pointed out that participants at Isledon will not eat certain health foods, and very rarely eat salads. Volunteers at Isledon canteen felt strongly that they should have been involved in any meetings and discussions about this prior to the forum.

10 Board Meeting reporting and Invite

Up to three tenants are invited to attend the next Board Meeting in May. One tenant put his name down, and this will be advertised in the next Rising Star, due out soon.

It was asked what is in place for tenants to be kept updated of what's happening on The Board. Item to be brought to the next Forum.

11 Registering to vote and Mayoral Hustings

PBHA will be supporting tenants to register to vote. A voting registration day will be held at all the Hubs in April, and will be advertised in the Rising Star.

PBHA have tickets for staff and tenants to attend a Mayoral Hustings on 25th April, 6pm-7pm. A hustings is a meeting at which candidates in an election address potential voters. If anyone is interested to attend, speak to Mandy.

12 Turle Road

PBHA has taken over management of a new high support mental health service. The property in Islington has 6 tenants and has 24/7 support for people who have come out of hospital. The tenants committee are invited to visit the service to welcome the new tenants to PBHA. **ACTION:** Mandy to arrange over the next few weeks.

13 Welcome Breakfast Club

The Welcome Breakfast Club has been postponed until Wednesday 13th April, 11am – 1pm, at Isledon canteen. It will be advertised in the Rising Star. Tea, coffee and pastries will be provided. New and existing tenants are most welcome. **ACTION:** Mandy to do posters and remind Support Workers to bring new tenants along.

14 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 19th April at 1pm at Isledon canteen. Islington Supporting People are attending the next meeting. Andy Love, Chair of the Board, is also attending.

15 AOB

- Crisis management. A tenants asked why, when a suicidal person rang the Duty Line, they were advised to ring The Samaritans. Vanessa advised that PBHA is not funded to provide crisis support. There are Crisis Lines for both Islington and Hackney. Islington: 0207 226 9415 / 0800 345 7779 Phone line is open at night time 5.00 pm- 6.00am. Hackney: 020 8432 8020 Available 24 hours a day. **ACTION:** Mandy to do a poster with these numbers for Isledon canteen.
- A tenant asked about being involved in contract renewal. Nicole from property to be invited to the next forum to discuss.
- Patrick stepped down as a Committee Member. He was thanked for all his hard work and contributions. Ads for Committee Members will be in the next Rising Star.
- Participation Budget on next Agenda.
- Gardening at Isledon on next Agenda
- Mandy apologised for the overlong agenda and will do no more than 9 items in the future.