

MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS FORUM

Tuesday 5 April 2016

Present:

Councillor Bull (Chair)
Councillor Henson

Also Present:

Val Ewings	- Exonia Park
Graeme Guy	- Ringswell Park
Steve Porter	- Exonia Park
Alan Southard	- Newport Park
Malcolm Thomas	- Ringswell Park
Wendy Threlfall	- National Association of Park Home Residents
Geoff Threlfall	- National Association of Park Home Residents

Also Present:

Environmental Health Practitioner, Assistant Democratic Services Officer (Committees)

In Attendance:

Caroline Aird	- Age UK Exeter
Denise Dearden	- Trading Standards
Peter Bywater	- Wessex Energy
David Eaton	- Teignbridge District Council

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Morris, Morse and Baldwin, Karen Devaraj (Citizens Advice Bureau), Keith Williams (Private Sector Housing Manager), Sheila Welsh and Debbie Schamroth (Ringswell Park).

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2015 were agreed.

Matters Arising

Minute No. 12 – Telephone Scams

Denise Dearden reported that if a service is required by an official department such as a driving licence or a passport, government advice is to use the gov.uk website and ignore any site that is not a .gov.uk website. Action Fraud is the organisation collecting information about false websites and investigating those with the police. In addition, there had recently been some scams relating to E111 forms and these should be obtained direct from the Post Office. Denise encouraged the reporting of any sites that did not appear to be reliable.

Minute No. 13 – Enforcement Notices

The Chair advised that any charges for enforcement notices was at the Local Authority's discretion, and would need to go through the Council's scrutiny process. It was confirmed that the site owner cannot pass the fee onto homeowners.

Members of the Forum extended their thanks to Alice Hasted who had recently dealt with some issues on park sites.

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INSULATION SCHEME - PRESENTATION BY WESSEX ENERGY ADVICE CENTRE

The Chair welcomed Peter Bywater, Senior Project Manager of Wessex Energy to the meeting.

Peter Bywater gave a presentation on the Exeter Healthy Park Homes Scheme (attached) which was yet to commence, and further comments on the presentation were as follows:

Once the concept of this new scheme is approved, there may be opportunities to contact other funders such as Public Health, who had committed some funding to similar schemes in Dorset.

Wessex Energy will oversee the grant, and qualifying households need to be over 50 years old and in a park home in the Exeter City Council area. Park homes need to be built prior to 1995. Any park homes built post 1995 could take advantage of other energy efficiency measures such as underfloor insulation which will be covered by the £2,000 grant.

Registered installers who are Members of the National Insulation Association will carry out works to properties, and where possible, local companies will be used. Background checks will be made on companies, including its directors, how works are installed and standards within the industry. Reference was made to the Buy With Confidence Scheme and Trading Standards would welcome working with Wessex Energy.

A decision has not yet been made on what heating repairs will be covered by the scheme.

Peter advised that the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) grant will be cut by about 50%, and by 2018 this will change to a fuel poverty led grant. A resident advised that some companies did not recognise the ECO grant. Residents may want to take this into account when considering switching energy provider.

The grant will come from Exeter City Council. A plea was made that the scheme is transparent. The application process had yet to be finalised, and it may involve a pre-survey. There was likely to be a priority list for clients to complete.

If the grant does not cover the total cost of the work, discussions would take place at the application stage in terms of an affordability check. Clients will then be able to prioritise works according to their means with indicative costs provided.

Peter advised that he was meeting with Wessex Loans the following day to discuss their affordability/vulnerability checks and the process around this.

Caroline Aird advised that Turn2Us was not necessarily the best site to obtain advice on grants as often ground rent and service charges are not included as in the case for park homes. Either the CAB or Citizens Advice Bureau would be happy to provide guidance.

The typical width of insulation is 90-110mm. However, it was noted that some park home owners are refusing installation on the grounds of the distance between park homes. Peter advised that they would need to look at this on a case by case basis.

Peter would welcome the opportunity to attend a future meeting once the scheme had been finalised, and the Forum welcomed this.

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FUTURE POLICY FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Future assistance for energy efficiency was included in Peter Bywater's presentation under the previous agenda item.

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ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was suggested that a representative from Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service could attend to give a presentation on the dangers of carbon monoxide.

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that the Government were collecting information on problems with the manufacturing of new park homes, such as issues with windows, damp etc. Trading Standards can be contacted on 0345 4040506, and a request needs to be made to speak to the supervisor.

A request was made for a representative of Rydon Park to attend meetings.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY 25 OCTOBER 2016 AT 2.15PM

The date of the next meeting was noted.

(The meeting commenced at 2.10 pm and closed at 3.23 pm)

Chair