

MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS FORUM

Monday 19 August 2013

Present:

Councillor Heather Morris (Chair)
Councillors Hannaford, D J Henson, Leadbetter and Newby

Also Present:

Val Ewings	- Exonia Park
Marlene Gribble	- Exonia Park
Jan Grundy	- Exonia Park
Graeme Guy	- Ringswell Park
Sheila Riglar	- Newport 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
Julie Wale	- Ringswell Park

Also Present:

Environmental Health Manager, Licensing Solicitor, and Assistant Democratic Services Officer (Committees)

In Attendance:

Caroline Aird	- Age UK Exeter
Richard Radmore	- Exeter City Council
Acting Inspector Julian Pezzani	- Devon & Cornwall Police
Andrew Barley	- Devon County Council Trading Standards
Denise Dearden	- Trading Standards
Nicola Dukes	- Devon & Cornwall Constabulary
Steve Cox	- Torbay Council

21

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Baldwin, Councillor Bull and Robert Norley (Assistant Director Environment).

22

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 MAY 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2013 were agreed.

23

EXETER CITY COUNCIL HOME CALL

The Chair welcomed Richard Radmore, the City Council's Senior Controller to the meeting.

Richard advised that his role involves working with CCTV, out of hours calls and the Home Call alarm service. Some residents from park homes were already clients of Home Call.

Home Call provides alarms for rent to people at risk, including the elderly and those with either medical or mobility problems. The service is also for residents who are on their own or do not have neighbours that call in regularly to check on them.

The alarm can be used if the client is feeling in a vulnerable situation, such as bogus callers. The alarm system allows the operator to contact the emergency services to attend if necessary.

Wireless sensors are also available to be programmed into the system which act as a smoke and CO² detector. As well as providing a warning to the resident, it will also go through to the control centre which will enable them to contact the Fire Service.

Clients are asked to test their equipment once a month to ensure it is working correctly. If a test is not undertaken by a client, the control centre will ring to check they are ok and the equipment is working. An 'At Risk' check is carried out if no response is received.

There is no installation fee. There is a quarterly charge of £3.53 + VAT per week in advance. The smoke alarms are provided at an extra £1.00 per week.

It was suggested that details of the service could be included in residents' newsletters.

Leaflets were distributed at the meeting, and further information can also be found on the website www.exeter.gov.uk/homecall.

24

AGE UK

Councillor Morris welcomed Caroline Aird to the meeting.

Age UK are working on a campaign about fuel poverty in relation to the particular difficulties faced by park home residents in improving the energy efficiency of their homes. They are hoping that this issue will be discussed in the autumn by the All Party Parliamentary Group on park homes, and to support that discussion, Age UK is distributing a short survey.

On online version of the survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FY38TQT>

A copy will also be attached to the minutes.

Members were encouraged to participate in the survey and to distribute it as widely as possible.

25

TRADING STANDARDS, DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Morris welcomed Andrew Barley and Denise Dearden from Devon County Council Trading Standards to the meeting.

The Enterprise Act is an extra tool for Trading Standards which helps to combat businesses that breach civil legislation. This involves meetings between Trading Standards and business owners to encourage them to become more compliant. If there is no improvement, an Undertaking is sought by a Court Order.

It was noted that residents can come forward to Trading Standards as a collective if they have a similar complaint.

Trading Standards are working in partnership with Devon & Cornwall Police in relation to doorstep crime. An information pack on doorstep crime was circulated to members, which included an evidential form. From evidence collected, it was hoped to build a database of information to help disrupt criminal activities.

'No cold callers' stickers were also included in the pack which can be displayed to be visible from the front door. A 'No Cold Calling Zone' would need to be organised amongst residents. Trading Standards do not provide signs to place at the entrance to parks, but these can be bought privately.

Reference was made to photographing cold callers. However, it was noted that care should be taken, as notices should be displayed advising how they are to be used. Cold callers was an issue the Police were aware of, and Acting Inspector Pezzani advised that taking photographs could encourage confrontation. A 'no cold callers' sign on site would be the most effective course of action. If a sign is placed at the site entrance, or stickers are displayed on doors, and they still call at an address, the Police can be called to attend, as this is a criminal offence.

The 101 number should be used, but in the case of a confrontation, 999 should be used. Any information on the evidential form would be useful, with a timescale. The neighbourhood police team can then make a reassurance visit.

26

MODEL SITE LICENCE

Following the last meeting, members were asked to email any comments or suggestions for changes to the Model Site Licence.

The Site Licence was attached to the agenda, with proposed amendments highlighted in yellow.

All sites currently have different conditions, and it was proposed to use the Model Site Licence so the same standards are applied to all parks, except for Ringswell Park which would also include the condition imposed on it by the Court. By having a model standard for all sites, it would make the enforcement procedure easier.

Elaine Kale, Licensing Solicitor, advised that park rules would reflect the site licence. The local authority has the power to alter conditions in a site licence at any time. However, this will exclude conditions imposed by the court. If the new model is adopted, this will be a wholesale variation of each site licence agreement. Notice is required to be given to the site licence owner. If the owner is aggrieved by the changes, they have a right of appeal to the Magistrates Court. A consultation exercise would be carried out prior to this to get an indication of any agreement.

Discussion was held on the following changes:

2(iv)(a)- The removal of the last sentence in relation to only one door being permitted at the entrance of the porch or on the home, was agreed.

2((iv)(f) – The maximum height of fences and hedges between caravans was agreed at 6ft (1.83m)

3(x) – the provision of grit bins is not currently a requirement. However, it was noted that grit bins are provided on two of the three sites that were present today. Discussion was held on liability and the ability of residents to collect the grit, and

that other residents may be able to assist them. It was agreed that as grit bins are already provided, this suggested wording in relation to park owners to provide grit bins would be removed from the model site licence.

5 – the additional wording of ‘at the park owner’s expense’ was agreed in relation to roads, communal footpaths and pavements to be adequately lit.

15(ii) – Following concerns over maintenance responsibility, it had been suggested to include a plan which marked areas that the owner is responsible for maintaining. It was noted that surveyor companies that specialise in park home sites could be used to carry this out.

It was considered that some clarification was needed over the type of maintenance. The meaning of the word ‘maintenance’ was covered in The Mobile Homes (Selling and Gifting) (England) Regulations 2013.

It was agreed that common areas should be identified.

Following a suggestion that the City Council undertakes the survey to produce the site plan, it was noted that they had no right of entry onto the site to prepare the plans. It was therefore agreed that the site owner should produce the site plan, with a copy being kept at the City Council offices for reference.

27 **PROCEDURE FOR VARYING SITE LICENCES - ELAINE KALE, LICENSING SOLICITOR**

Elaine Kale, the City Council’s Licensing Solicitor, advised that she had already covered much of the procedure under the last item.

The site owners can make representations on the changes, and a consultation exercise would be embarked upon before formal alteration of the licences.

It was felt that there should be uniformity across all four parks, but this would not be possible where the court had imposed conditions on a particular licence or where the Council had settled an appeal against amendments to existing conditions by agreeing alternatives.

Elaine Kale agreed to review past negotiations over the various site licence conditions to identify this latter category of conditions.

It needed to be ensured that any changes to the site licence will be enforced.

28 **ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Fire Prevention Team would be invited to attend the next meeting. A presentation would also be given on energy efficiency.

29 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:**

The dates of future meetings were noted.

(The meeting commenced at 2.12 pm and closed at 3.43 pm)

Chair