

The Scheme Executive

Minutes of a meeting held on 22 February 2007 At 10.00 am in room 2, University House

Apologies

Niki Marshall Advice Centre, University of Hull

Present

Simon Allison	University of Hull
Chris Baker	Hull City Council
Ben Ball	Chairman
Bob Bousfield	Hull and District Landlords Association
Reece Andrew	University of Hull
Belinda Garry	The Scheme
Andrew Lee	University of Hull
Ciaran Norris	President, Hull Student Union
Bryony Paice	VP Welfare & Equality, Hull Student Union
Natalie Pell	Student Union, University of Lincoln.
Ian Sanders	Hull City Council

In attendance

Stephanie Kirke Secretary

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chairman welcomed Reece Andrew, Director of Facilities, University of Hull and Gary Thompson, Hull and District Landlords Association.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2006

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2006 were approved as a true record.

3. Mystery shopper exercise

Vacancies for mystery shoppers were advertised in the Job Exchange, Hull University Union but these had not been filled and no mystery shoppers were sent out. Mystery shoppers from the University Lincoln made several visits, however and reported that only two agencies had made appointments in advance of the letting date, these being Accommodation Warehouse and GPL.

4. Accommodation Fair

An overview of the Accommodation Fair was circulated. The general consensus was that the Fair had been a great success, with high numbers of students attending and very positive feedback from landlords. The Chairman thanked all concerned.

Recommendations for 2007-08 included:

- Change the title of the Housing Roadshow to reflect its true nature

- Change date back to the first Wednesday of Semester 2 i.e. 30 January, 2008.
- Encourage landlords to arrive early
- Improve publicity
- Ensure venue and date are agreed by all parties by June 2007

5. Feedback on Lettings Policy

A paper was circulated showing alleged breaches of the lettings policy. BG had visited all local landlords and re-iterated the lettings policy and outlined the allegations.

Discussion took place regarding possible penalties to be imposed where such allegations were proven. The differences between significant and minor breaches of the policy were important. Penalties might include being barred from attending the lettings fair, having free tip permits withdrawn or not being allowed to advertise on the Scheme website.

It was agreed that the lettings policy would be refined, to provide clear examples of good and bad practice. The revised version would be presented to the next meeting.

The Chairman wished to record the enormous progress made by the Scheme since its inception, reminding members that a few years ago, lettings would have begun in October.

6. Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding had now been signed by all partners and BG agreed to distribute signed copies to all concerned.

7. Insurance

A quotation for Public Liability insurance had been secured. However, the mechanism of paying for it was difficult as the University's financial regulations meant that it was unable to enter into a financial agreement on behalf of a third party.

8. Budget

Following discussion it was agreed that further funding should be sought. SJA had bid for a contribution towards BG's salary in a recent budget submission. The contract with Studentpad would be re-negotiated in August 2007. BG was planning to bid for further funding from the Northern Area and Wyke committees, although it was noted that these committees were concerned about issues such as waste left by students which had led them to question the effectiveness of The Scheme. BG clarified that she regularly looked at this issue, making visits with the local Residents' Association to try to alleviate matters. RA also confirmed that the University had recently entered into a contract regarding the upkeep of the gardens of student properties, which included disposal of waste. An inflationary increase in subscription fees of £2 was also suggested.

9. Landlords Forum

It was suggested that a meeting of the Scheme Executive should be held during mid to late April at which the Landlords' Forum would be discussed with a view to it being held in May or June.

10. Union Complaints Procedure

CN and BP had circulated a copy of the Complaints Procedure incorporating suggested amendments. It was agreed that members should study the amendments and bring their comments to the next meeting. The Chairman recommended that the different strands of complaints might all be incorporated as part of this process. Landlords would also be asked to comment on the amended document.

11. Any other business

(a) International Students

Work on a bullet point list for international students had already commenced and BB agreed to progress this for the next meeting.

(b) Myspace.com

After discussion, it was agreed that no response should be made to comments made on 'Myspace.com'.

(c) Resignation of Chairman

The Chairman declared that he wished to stand down. He thanked members for their support. Nominations for a new chair would be requested by email.

SJA and all members joined in thanking the Chairman for all that he had done during his term of office.

(d) Additional and mandatory licensing

CB confirmed that an agreement on various issues had now been reached with regard to additional licensing. Upon inspection, six properties had been found without mandatory licences, meaning that they could be prosecuted, with a penalty of up to £20,000 being imposed. Under additional licensing properties with six or more tenants would be affected but this was in its final stages of agreement. BG agreed to communicate information via the website with regards to additional licensing to all landlords once everything was approved.

ACTION LIST

Minute	Action	By whom
4. Accommodation Fair	(a) Change title of Housing Roadshow (b) Change date to 30 January 2008 (c) Improve publicity (d) Ensure venue and date agreed by all parties by June 2007	BG BG BG, HUU BG, HUU
5. Feedback on Lettings Policy	Refine lettings policy and present to next meeting	BG
6. Memorandum of Understanding	Distribute copies to all partners	BG
8. Budget	(a) Negotiate contract with Studentpad (b) Bid for funding from Northern Area and Wyke committees (c) Consider inflationary increase in subscriptions of £2	BG/SJA BG All members
9. Landlords' Forum	Arrange meeting of Scheme Executive during mid-late April.	BG
10. Union Complaints Procedure	(a) Study amendments and bring comments to next meeting. (b) Ask landlords to comment on amendments	All members BB via HDLA
11 (a) Resignation of Chairman	Seek nominations via email	BG
11 (d) Additional and mandatory licensing	Communicate information via website to all landlords re licensing	BG,CB/IS