

The Scheme Executive

Minutes of a meeting held on 22 November 2006 At 10.00 am in room 8, University House

Apologies

Jason Hayes
Andrew Lee

Hull and District Landlords Association
University of Hull

Present

Simon Allison
Chris Baker
Ben Ball
Bob Bousfield
Richard Farr
Belinda Garry
Niki Marshall
Ciaran Norris
Bryony Paice
Natalie Pell
Ian Sanders

University of Hull
Hull City Council
Chairman
Hull and District Landlords Association
University of Hull
The Scheme
Advice Centre, University of Hull
President, Hull Student Union
VP Welfare & Equality, Hull Student Union
Student Union, University of Lincoln.
Hull City Council

In attendance

Jemima Lloyd

Receptionist

1. Matters arising from meeting held on 28 June 2006

(a) International Students

The Landlords have forwarded a list of suggested responsibilities for international students to BB. It was agreed that an outline of the scheme should be included in the international students welcome pack translated into various languages and included with contracts.

Subject to some rewording and consultation with the international office the document was approved in principle. It was agreed that a document should be prepared for the September International intake. The Union representative was happy for either The Scheme or themselves to talk about housing and obligations in accommodation as part of Welcome Week.

(b) Security

BG is currently working with Trevor Waudby. BG asked for current statistics on crime to enable targeting of particularly insecure properties. CN spoke of a £9700 grant for Smart Water; he has been working closely with the council for the launch of this new anti-crime method that launches on 23 November 2006.

(c) Insurance

Insurance has been taken out independently from 1 October 2006 and covers the Scheme and the Executive up to £1m at a cost of £813.65.

(d) Mystery Shopper

BG is checking up on the progress of this. CN agreed that this initiative is supported by the Union who would be willing to work with the Landlords and The Scheme to obtain maximum use of Mystery Shoppers. It was acknowledged that BG needs evidence of landlords breaching any agreement before any action can be taken. NM had agreed to talk to the Union Jobcentre in relation to recruitment of 'shoppers'. CN had agreed to liaise with one of the HDLA landlords.

(e) Annual Student Survey

NM has not seen the analysis of the last survey, and suggested by now it was out of date. It was noted that any further survey should not be carried out on behalf of The Scheme. BB queried as to the cost of an independent survey and questioned whether or not it would be useful. It was agreed not to do one in the short term and if carried out in the future it would need careful thought and restructuring.

2 Memorandum of Understanding

Two copies have been supplied for consultation, one produced by the university and the other amended by the Students Union. The following changes were suggested and agreed:

2.2(i) Concern was expressed over the amended language 'to ensure compliance' it was thought this may not be fully achievable. CN suggested this document was to set objectives and could be expanded in any appendices.

3.1(i) Other concern arose from 'Executive board to ensure participating landlords adhere to the Scheme' CN said the use of the word 'ensure' was important as it was proactive and students need to know the scheme is working for them. CB said this language was too much of an absolute in terms of the ethos of the executive. SA suggested more developmental language to intimate the partnership between the landlords and the Scheme. After further discussion the aims of the scheme were outlined by SA to encourage and support both of which were agreed: 'Encourage and support all participating landlords in adhering to the aims of The Scheme.'

3.1(viii) The date of the nomination of representatives to oversee the accounts has been changed to 1 December annually as this would adhere more readily to ongoing calendars.

6.1 CN said this change was necessary as the university constitution is being re written in response to requirements of The Charity Act.

6.2 The date of 1 August is to be changed to the 1 December as this historically is the date of the nominations of the first Representatives.

Appendices Administrator Role Description

No changes could be made to this as it was subject to HERA at present. The role was always designed to be developmental and changes would be inappropriate at this time.

It was agreed that the document should be signed by all appropriate signatories as a matter of urgency.

3. Lettings Policy

BG has sent this out to all parties as agreed upon at the last executive. The policy is similar to last years with a few amendments. This year the letting dates are strict and properties should not be viewed or Let until the pre agreed date of 7 February 2006. An amendment to the Letting Policy for the benefit of the students is to be made which allows those existing tenants of a company to pre- view other properties with the same company a week prior to the accommodation fair. BG to send out amended information.

4. Complaints Procedures

The Union felt the Scheme complaints procedures should be clearer and possibly more like the Hull CC complaints procedure where issues eventually go to a review board. CN suggested this could be a model for the Scheme. CB suggested that, unlike the Scheme the CC are in a position to enforce and take direct action. He said to date no one has been taken to the review board and only very serious or persistent issues would be referred. The HUU would like to see a clearer complaints procedure and for it to be displayed on The Scheme website. A campaign is planned by the HUU for January to inform students of their rights. It was agreed that guidelines for different types of repairs are to be displayed on the website.

5. Update on Additional Licensing

CB outlined the current extra licensing issues. There has been a recent meeting between HDLA and central government in relation to additional licensing. A further meeting on 11 December will check the progress of this matter. This may apply to student accommodation and CB suggested a separate meeting to discuss this would be fortuitous. The current position is in negotiation and a current Amnesty on licensing is in place until Jan pending clarification, it was thought rewording would resolve this.

6. AOB

(a) Access to the Scheme back office

IS would like access to the Scheme back office. The major CC concern is a mandatory licensing one; access to the back office would allow the no. of occupants in a house and the addresses of the landlords' houses to be made available. Data protection is the primary issue as some landlords don't wish to have their details accessible to all. BG suggested this is a reoccurring issue. BB suggested Lloyd should be involved concerning the potential of the

software and that Student Pad should be actively up-to-date to enable accurate information exchange. BBd explained some landlords object to this kind of access as they worry what reasoning the information is assessed under. IS said if back office access is rejected a list of houses with 3 or more occupants should be supplied to the CC to enable enforcement of licensing. BB stated it was understood that Lincoln Police, the Fire Brigade and the Council all had access to the Lincoln University back office and this relationship was working well. SA and BG have agreed to liaise with Lloyd on this matter.

(b) Tenancy Deposit Scheme

IS attended a HMO network meeting in London and noted the NLA would be a nominee and the decision was almost agreed. BG suggested this may not be independent enough as the government had agreed to nominate an independent third party. CB was of the opinion that this had been decided.

(c) Scheduling of the Next Executive

BB suggested scheduling an executive soon after the 7 February, unless any concerns arise from the lettings procedure. A short meeting in January was also recommended to discuss Mystery Shoppers. It was agreed by all a full Executive will be scheduled between 15- 30 February 2006.