

Service Charge Meeting Minutes

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 2pm

Housing 21 Chair: Tracy Jones - Head of Operational Development

Resident Chair: Tom Long

Attendees: Housing 21 Representatives:

- Richard Lawton – Head of Resident Charges
- Anthony Walker – Head of Retirement Living South West
- Amber Crick – Resident Engagement Coordinator

Housing 21 residents:

AA, DD, ID, SM, DB and TA.

Apologies: MR and RB

Title of agenda item		Summary of discussion
1. Welcome and Introductions		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendees introduced themselves.• New members welcomed.• Roles and responsibilities briefly outlined.

2. Actions From Last Meeting	<p>Previous minutes confirmed as accurate.</p> <p>Completed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October vlog finalized and published; strong engagement reported. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ YouTube stats: 412 subscribers; most popular vlog on sinking fund (445 views). ◦ End-of-year statements vlog: 235 views; October vlog: 301 views. • Service charge brochure updated and distributed (terminology changes implemented). • Survey finalized and launched: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Digital link and QR code available. ◦ Paper copies provided for those without digital access; managers to assist with input. ◦ External cost for paper survey processing was too high (£60k+), so internal solution adopted. • Feedback: Vlogs and toolkit empowering managers and residents. <p>Budget Presentation Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents found accountant-style brackets confusing for negative figures. • Suggestion: Use red text instead of brackets for clarity. • Consider vlog update to explain changes and terminology adjustments. <p>Legislation Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential changes to service charge legislation expected in new financial year. • Leasehold Reform Act consultation closed in September, awaiting outcomes. • Proposed changes may include Section 20 thresholds and presentation requirements.
3. Vlogs – any feedback on the	<p>Positive feedback on current vlogs.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p>

last one and what's next	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase promotion via scheme Facebook pages and newsletters. • Continue including vlog links in meeting invites and newsletters. • Encourage managers to play “Understanding Your Service Charge” vlog at meetings or coffee mornings. <p>Future vlog topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on sinking fund terminology change (now “maintenance fund”). • Include explanation of budget presentation changes and feedback loop (“You asked, we did” approach). • Consider publishing forum recordings or highlights on YouTube for wider engagement. • Explore resident participation in vlogs to share impact stories. • Add clear disclaimers for PFI/PPP schemes and Guernsey differences. • Explain resident-led decisions (e.g., hiring additional cleaners and impact on costs). • Clarify differences between rented, shared ownership, and leasehold schemes. • Possible vlog on resident-led contracts (gardening, window cleaning) and how residents can influence decisions. • February vlog proposed: Survey results summary, response rates, key feedback, and how it will shape next year’s agenda. • New idea: Demonstrate that it’s okay for managers or staff to say “I don’t know, but I’ll find out” to build trust and transparency. <p>PFI Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity of PFI contracts noted; difficult for residents to understand. • Suggestion: High-level vlog or guidance on PFI basics and common queries. • Agreement to include disclaimers in vlogs for PFI/PPP and Guernsey schemes.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible future vlog on resident-led contracts (gardening, window cleaning) and how residents can influence decisions.
4.	Surveys – the plan of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey live, responses already coming in. Managers and coordinators to support paper responses. Aim: Gather resident feedback on service charges for future improvements. Survey includes questions on vlog awareness and engagement. Results expected mid-to-late January; findings will inform 2026 roadmap and vlog content.
5.	Road mapping of meetings	<p>Toolkit finalized and distributed to managers.</p> <p>Guidance document includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 days before: Notification of meeting. 7 days before: Information pack sent to residents. <p>Resident feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive: Advance notice and documentation increased engagement and transparency. Issues: Some schemes have not received guidance or meeting dates yet. <p>Manager involvement: Emphasize role of area and regional managers in promoting forums and explaining their impact during site visits.</p> <p>Training need identified: Managers require more confidence-building and guidance in handling resident questions and presenting service charge information.</p>
6.	AOB	Core Support Charge Discussion

- Previous concerns about unclear coverage of core support charge revisited.
- **Tracy Jones** confirmed:
 - Original documentation assumed integrated care and housing provision.
 - Review underway to clarify expectations for third-party care providers.
 - Project team formed (**Tracy Jones, Carrie Anderson, Sophia Nakhooda & Sarah Herrington**).
 - Plans to set KPIs and service level agreements for external providers.
 - Literature and trial proposals expected in coming months.
- **Resident feedback:**
 - Need clearer explanation of what core support covers.
 - Issues with inconsistent charges across regions.
- **Next steps:**
 - Draft papers reviewed by Extra Care Committee.
 - Future resident consultation planned.

Recognition of group's impact on Housing 21 literature and communication.

- Positive comments on collaboration and influence across resident groups.
- Future resident consultation planned.

Calendar established for future meetings.

Communications review underway (led by **Ian Devereux** and team) to improve consistency and reach.

- Aim: Align service charge forums with broader Housing 21 communication strategy.
- Marketing theme proposed: “Join the Conversation” to attract more residents.
- Shared spaces for documents and shared calendar being developed for transparency.

	<p>Group agreed to keep the 19th December meeting as a short, festive session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose: Celebrate achievements, share updates, and maintain continuity. • Agenda: Minimal, capped at 1 hour. • Richard noted: 19th December is the final deadline for service charge budgets to be signed off, making it an ideal date for a wrap-up meeting.
Meeting Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep prompting vlogs (Tracy Jones & Lucy Nixon). • Ensure service charge brochures are displayed on notice boards (Managers). • Share toolkit guidance document with residents (Amber Crick). • Next year's meeting dates to be sent out after Christmas to avoid email overload. (Amber Crick) • Progress core support charge review and update residents (Tracy Jones & Project Team). • Plan next vlog topics (Tracy Jones & Group). • Review budget statement formatting for clarity (Richard Lawton). • Continue manager training and guidance to build confidence in service charge discussions (Richard Lawton & Ops Team). • Monitor Leasehold Reform Act developments and report back (Richard Lawton).