

## 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.	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendees introduced themselves.</li><li>• New members welcomed.</li><li>• Roles and responsibilities briefly outlined.</li></ul>

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

## last one and what's next

- 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.

### Future vlog topics:

- 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.

### PFI Discussion

- 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.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible future vlog on resident-led contracts (gardening, window cleaning) and how residents can influence decisions.</li> </ul>
4.	<b>Surveys – the plan of action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey live, responses already coming in.</li> <li>Managers and coordinators to support paper responses.</li> <li>Aim: Gather resident feedback on service charges for future improvements.</li> <li>Survey includes questions on vlog awareness and engagement.</li> <li>Results expected mid-to-late January; findings will inform 2026 roadmap and vlog content.</li> </ul>
5.	<b>Road mapping of meetings</b>	<p>Toolkit finalized and distributed to managers.</p> <p><b>Guidance document includes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>14 days before:</b> Notification of meeting.</li> <li><b>7 days before:</b> Information pack sent to residents.</li> </ul> <p><b>Resident feedback:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Positive:</b> Advance notice and documentation increased engagement and transparency.</li> <li><b>Issues:</b> Some schemes have not received guidance or meeting dates yet.</li> </ul> <p><b>Manager involvement:</b> Emphasize role of area and regional managers in promoting forums and explaining their impact during site visits.</p> <p><b>Training need identified:</b> Managers require more confidence-building and guidance in handling resident questions and presenting service charge information.</p>
6.	<b>AOB</b>	<b>Core Support Charge Discussion</b>

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