CHS Tenant Committee Minutes
Wednesday 8 July 2026 6.30pm – 8.30pm
The Hive Leisure Centre, Ely and on Zoom

In Attendance	
Tenants	**In Person:** Trish Laver (TL), Chair, Ruth Driver (RD), Louise Downham (LD), Maria Parnell (MP), Gill Drake (GD) **Online:** Sarah Ruttledge (SR)
Guests	Andrea Sullivan (AS) Housing Officer Dan McDermott (DM) Housing Officer Martin Wheatley, Chair (MW) LO, AF, JP, SV tenants
CHS Directors and Colleagues	Chris Harris, Chief Executive (CH) Andrew Church, Director of Communities (AC) Helen Tonks, Director of Customers (HT) Laura Papanikolaou, Customer Engagement Officer (LP) (Minutes) Louise Higgins, Admin Assistant, Customer Engagement (LH)

Item	Subject	Action
1	**Welcome, Housekeeping, Meeting Etiquette & Apologies** Trish welcomed everyone to the meeting. **Apologies have been received from:** Phyl Chigome, Housing with Care Service Manager Tina Warren, Director of Homes Charlotte Daleworth, Senior Housing Manager Tenants GA, TB, MC, DC, SC, JE, JF, DG, EH, SM, CN, CS, PS, JT, ST, HELEN, MT, HW, FW, KE The meeting began with a moment of recognition for former committee Chair Jane Bird who had passed away. Trish said she was a force of nature, it's a sad loss, and she will be remembered and missed.	
2	**Draft Minutes** Matters arising • Trish requested that the names of CHS colleagues be written in full and initials for tenants. • Correction – Jacquie Taylor (JT) was not listed under attendees for the April meeting, to be added. • Laura gave an update on the broken streetlight in the Friar Way carpark in Cambourne, a repair appointment is scheduled for 09/07/26. If Fortem fail to attend, then Yanne Loveday will raise a complaint and ask Brandon Booth to monitor it until completion. • Laura said regarding getting faster fibre Broadband to Mercedes House in March, Bryan Padley made enquires with CityFibre and their response was that they haven't planned any works in the area at the moment.	

	Helen thought this was something CHS could still look into and Trish said they are raising a petition. • Laura said we haven't yet set another date for a building safety forum, but when we do, she will let everyone know. **The minutes of the last meeting held on 29th April 2026 were agreed.**	
3	All attendees introduced themselves and were welcomed to the meeting.	
4	**Tenant voice** • Gill mentioned a concern with visitors entering the Ellis House building. Andrea, Housing Officer, confirmed this had been addressed at the Ellis House Tenant Meeting as normally visitors were known to a resident. • LO raised concerns with fly tipping and the quality of the communal cleaning at Cyprian Rust Way, Soham, and that may cause issues with rats. Andrea, Housing Officer, said there hadn't been much improvement with the cleaning and notices had been put up to deter fly tipping and some of the abandoned furniture had been removed. • Dan, Housing Officer, acknowledged there are issues with fly-tipping in some communal areas. • Trish asked if there was an option to have a skip day. • Andrea felt there was not enough rubbish to justify a skip. • There was a discussion about the Social Value Project. Andrew said that tenants should be involved in social value meetings. Laura talked about the skip day that was done in September 2025 as part of the Fortem Social Value Project. They promised to do 2 tenant-focussed events a year, so there should be scope to do more in 2026. Tenants and staff are encouraged to come forward with suggestions for events or locations. The When its needed (WIN) grant fund is for individual tenants who need a small boost to access opportunities, e.g. a uniform for work, a bus pass, an ID. • Louise Downham asked how tenants can access the Social Value Fund. • Laura said Fortem pledged £10,000 a year and much of the cash element is allocated to our supported housing. Fortem also promised to do a legacy project, like a refurbishment. • Andrea wondered if Sheltered Housing could benefit and Laura encouraged her to put in a request with Kris Cairns. • Laura said the Social Value team that we started working with at Fortem left and there was a gap while they recruited a new team. Kris Cairns met with the new team on Monday, so hopefully she will be able to give us an update soon. • Gill would like to see fun events like a drama workshop • Louise Downham asked if there are any tenants steering the Social Value Fund. She said there should be tenant involvement in Social Value projects. • Andrew suggested that if a couple of involved tenants come forward, they could be invited to discuss social value with Kris Cairns. • AF asked if it was first come first served, and is there a timeframe for applications? • Laura said there isn't a formal application process, please just come forward with your suggestions and we will discuss them.	

	• Maria raised the issue of overheating in the heatwave and said the flats in Windmill Close are very hot. She wondered if tenants could install wall-mounted air-conditioning units. **Actions:** 1. Laura will pass on the details of tenants who would like to talk about social value to Kris Cairns 2. Andrew will raise the air-conditioning query with Tina Warren and come back with a full answer to Tenant Committee.	LP AC
5	**Anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy** Helen introduced the policy as Charlotte Daleworth is absent. Helen explained that in the process of drafting the policy, Charlotte talked to the tenants who volunteered their help, Faye and Helen, and she did a survey with people who had experienced ASB. The policy is now more approachable in tone, it's written in the 2nd person, i.e. speaking to you. The feedback from the survey was on communication, follow-up, and feedback. People who report ASB want to feel well supported, they want to see that CHS have followed through, and to agree an action plan. Faye's suggestions were that the policy should take a victim-centred approach, recognising that experiencing ASB can be traumatic and tenants may find it daunting to report it to CHS. The policy should cover risk assessment, to review what the risks are to the victim, the Housing Officer should make wellbeing checks and reassure the tenant about confidentiality. Gill suggested mediation could be used, and Helen agreed that it can be a useful tool, and that it's best to address things at an early stage. Gill suggested that not everyone's lifestyle is compatible. Helen said one thing CHS need to be clear about is that having a disagreement with your neighbour is not always ASB and there are limits on a landlord's involvement in a neighbour dispute. Louise Downham queried point 5.13. 'If someone complains about you' she thought it was confusing and difficult to understand what it was trying to say, it wasn't clear enough or in plain enough language. Perhaps this could be explained differently. Helen agreed to clarify and simplify this section. Sarah commented that sometimes someone just wants to bring the ASB to CHS's attention and have it noted on record. Helen responded that the action taken would depend on the severity of the issue. **The policy was agreed.** **Action:** Helen to clarify and simplify section 5.13.	HT
6	**Reasonable adjustments policy** Helen introduced the policy. This is a brand-new policy and it is based on the comments gathered in the workshop held at the April Tenant Committee meeting. Trish said it's a great start, and she thinks it might develop over time. Ruth agreed it was clearly written.	

	LO requested to have an agenda pack sent to him in advance of the next meeting so that he could read the policies ahead of time, which was agreed and noted. **The policy was agreed.** **Action:** Louise Higgins will add LO to the list of members to receive agenda packs for the next meeting.	LH
7	**Annual tenant satisfaction measures (TSM) report** Unfortunately, there was an error in printing out the TSM charts and only the charts for questions 1-6 were included in the agenda pack. Laura read out the results for questions 7-12. 78% Overall 71% CHS keeps me informed 79% CHS treats me fairly and with respect 38% Complaints 67% Communal areas are well maintained 53% CHS makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood 57% Anti-social behaviour Helen explained what the TSMs are and covered the headlines. These figures cover the year from April 2025 to March 2026. Overall, satisfaction levels have gone down a few percent. In the previous year the figures had stayed largely the same or improved, and this year they have declined, apart from satisfaction that service charges provide value for money, which has improved. Surprise was expressed as it's not the one anyone expected to improve. Helen said the biggest dip in percentage is satisfaction with complaint handling. There was a big increase in the number of complaints CHS received this year. This is a national trend as people have become more aware of how to make a complaint. Overall satisfaction with CHS has declined. Laura is analysing the comments to draw out the drivers of satisfaction and those will be shared at the Customer and Homes Committee. Helen said a new question: Q13 Have you reported ASB in the last 12 months? will be added to the Tenant Committee report for 2026/27. Helen said that Louise Higgins follows up on any outstanding issues from the TSM comments. The 2025-6 results are published on our website. [NB: The figures on the website are weighted to account for age, following the Regulator's instructions for the submission of TSM results, which means the figures have been adjusted down and are slightly different to the ones shared with this committee. We have shared the unweighted figures here for consistency with what we share throughout the year.] **Action:** Laura will share the corrected TSM charts with the minutes	LP
8	**You Said, We Did**	

	Laura shared how tenant feedback had been used to make service improvements, including changes to repair appointment processes and compensation policies. AF asked whether Fortem employing more operatives able to work at height would affect tree-cutting. It was explained that tree-cutting is covered by a different contract. Maria expressed concern that Sureserve were using WhatsApp to rebook appointments as she is not online at home. It was explained that this is an additional, optional service but it won't replace telephone bookings.	
9	**Complaints Panel update** Ruth gave an update on the work of the Complaints Panel. They looked at an interesting case where the tenant was hearing a low-level noise that was giving them migraines and they couldn't live in their flat. The tenant felt that they weren't believed by CHS. Different staff came and went, and the tenant wasn't told promptly that staff were off sick or had left. Eventually an extractor fan was changed, and the tenant was happy to move back in. The complainant was offered compensation at stage 2, whereas it could have been offered at stage 1. The whole thing took a long, long time. The members felt there was a lack of compassion in the tone of the complaint response. The Panel reviewed a complaints and satisfaction report and found that most complaints were about sub-contractors and delays in repairs getting completed. Fortem had made some improvements that were mentioned in the You Said, We Did section. The Panel looked at the self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code, and there were just a couple of areas that had been updated. Ruth thanked Helen for her good work on the self-assessment. Ruth is going to be involved in the selection process for a new Corporate Complaints Manager in the last week of July. Hopefully the Complaints Manager will join the Complaints Panel for meetings. Gill feels she is well is supported at Ellis House and well informed by staff.	
10	**Scrutiny Team update** Louise Downham gave an update on the work of the Scrutiny Team. They were asked by the Property Team to look at the automated repairs survey and the 5 questions that tenants are asked in a phone call or text message, once a repair is completed. If a tenant is dissatisfied, then a member of Customer Services calls them back. The purpose of the project is to find out why satisfaction is very high, when there has been a big increase in complaints about repairs, and why the response rate has gone down. The Team's second project is about communication with CHS. CHS tenants are not using the MyCHS portal to see their rent account as much as they could. The Team hold evening online meetings, and daytime in-person meetings in the office to be accessible to all tenants. Currently there are 5-6 volunteers and they would welcome more. The recent Scrutiny report on the Tenants' Handbook was taken to the Board. The handbook was 72 pages long, and the Team recommended it is made shorter and more concise. Each department wrote their own sections, and the Team recommended one person to oversee it and make it consistent. They learned from the Housing with Care handbooks. Better guidance was needed around bereavement for relatives who need to end a tenancy.	

	Martin Wheatley, the Chair of the CHS Board said the report on the Tenants' Handbook was a good example of the tremendous value that the Scrutiny team achieves for CHS and provides insight that we wouldn't get elsewhere. **Action:** Laura will give Maria Scrutiny meeting dates on a text message.	 LP
11	**Housing with Care update** Andrew provided an update on behalf of Phyl Chigome who gave his apologies. Dunstan Court open day is this Saturday: you can get a tour and see some flats and there is a prize draw. There will be another open day at Richard Newcombe Court in Nov/Dec. Maria asked why Vera James House was sold. Andrew explained the Board decided to simplify the range of services CHS provides. Andrew said at each of the Housing with Care schemes there are monthly tenant meetings. Things that have changed as a result of those meetings are at Moorlands the main grounds maintenance contractor is doing grass and hedges, and they have employed a local gardener to do flower beds, and the tenants are very pleased with the results. Dunstan tenants wanted something to remember tenants who have passed away, and they have created a remembrance tree. At Richard Newcombe Court the management team have got quotes for an overhaul of the garden. All sites now run strength and balance classes, and a women's and a men's groups at Dunstan.	
12	**National and regional tenant events** Louise Downham and Trish went to Stoke for a meeting of the National Tenant Alliance, Martin Wheatley, the Chair of the CHS Board, is also involved in this initiative. Hundred Houses hosted a local workshop in Cambridge to strengthen the voices of social housing tenants in our area. It was a very good meeting; Cambridge City Council, South Cambs District Council, Papworth Trust, Hundred Houses and BPHA attended and a working group came out of it with representatives of each organisation. Martin commented there are massive developments planned for the Cambridge area and it is important there's a voice for social housing tenants, so that affordable housing is built that people want to live in and to hold developers to account. Louise agreed that tenants want amenities as well as housing, including facilities, healthcare and schools. Trish pointed out that with increasing heatwaves, water provision needs to be planned. We also need better broadband connection. **Action:** The working group representatives Trish, Louise D and Laura can keep everyone updated on progress with the group in the newsletter. **Action:** Trish, Louise D and two other tenants are going to Tpas conference next week, and they will report back at the next Tenant Committee meeting.	 TL, LD & LP TL, LD
13	**AOB** Maria said she found out today she was in arrears with her rent and she didn't even know. She received a text from CHS, then she rang Customer Services and Karen explained it and she helped Maria set up a Direct Debit to clear the arrears. Maria wished someone had got in touch with her sooner. Helen noted	

	that if CHS need to communicate with Maria about rent, they should send a paper statement in the post and call. Maria finished by saying CHS is still the best Housing Association and many members agreed. The tenants thanked Helen for her many years of service and support to involved tenants, and they presented her with gifts and a card for her retirement in September. **Next meeting:** Wednesday 28th October at 6.30pm at the Meadows.	