

**ORWELL RESIDENTS GROUP MEETING
MINUTES**

**Monday 27th January 2024 6pm - 8pm
Crane Hill Lodge**

			Action by
1.0	Attendees	Mary Ager (MA) Val George (VG) Jackie Millar (JM) Mike Warr (MW) Michelle Lunt (ML) Sarah Parramint (SP)	
	Apologies	Michael Barnard (MB) John Burman (JB) Maggi Miller (MM) Claire Townley (CT) Alice Moore (AM)	
2.0	Minutes from last meeting	Michelle highlighted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment for further ORG members will take place in 2025. The Voids Scrutiny has now been shut down and the action plan handed over. Budgets have been increased for this year. <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2024 were agreed.</p>	
3.0	Round up of December meeting	As this was the Christmas Party, no formal minutes were taken.	
4.0	Communication scrutiny update and action plan	Sarah presented a summary of the report to the group and highlighted the following key points: <p>Methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints were not covered in this review as they mirror the feedback obtained through transactional surveys and TSMs. Since the team took over customer feedback, numerous comments about communication have been received and therefore it was decided that further primary research was not needed. The report uses existing data sources - calls, customer insight metrics, customer feedback from 9 transactional surveys, Tenant Satisfaction Measures feedback, Housing Management and Estate Services Scrutinies. 	

Strategic objectives:

- Orwell has a number of strategies and objectives relating to communication, engagement and customer experience. The main objective in the Strategic Plan relating to communication is to *“Provide customers with a choice in the way they communicate with us both digitally and in person”*. This is fed through into other strategies such as the Customer and Communities Strategy, the External Communication Strategy and the Digital Strategy.

Service Standards:

- Orwell aims to provide excellent services and has developed a range of service standards so that customers are aware of the level of service they can expect to receive
- The specific communication services standards regarding contacting Orwell and complaints were highlighted.
- There are other service standards for providing information, tenancy management, repairs and maintenance, rents and rent recovery, estate gardening and communal cleaning, getting involved and housing support and advice.

Communication channels:

- Orwell offers a variety of methods for customers to contact staff including phone (including direct to staff via mobile phone), email, post, in person and digital self-service options such as the Orwell App, Portal, forms and chat-bot.
- There are between 372 and 442 calls and emails per day from customers to CST and repairs. This does not include direct calls or emails to staff.
- Each method of contact currently requires some level of staff intervention as processes are not automated.

Customer contact details:

- The information we collect about customers is vital to Orwell being able to deliver an efficient and effective service.
- A table was provided showing the numbers/% of contact details – mobile, email and home phone – that we currently hold for customers.
- Numbers vary across property type and contact type. For example we hold mobile phone details for 87% of customers, compared with 56% for email and 32% for home number. Mobile usage is higher in general needs properties (90%) than extra care (47%).
- Two of the barriers to providing an efficient service are data accuracy and digital poverty. Data accuracy can be through human error, customers changing contact details and not keeping us informed and Orwell not checking when speaking to customers. Even when customers have mobile phones, it doesn't mean these are smartphones. Certain groups are disproportionately impacted by digital poverty including social housing tenants, women, people with disabilities/vulnerabilities and older people.

		<p>Customer Insight metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 transactional surveys, 7 of which ask questions about communication. • Target for satisfaction is 90%. Only lettings meets/exceeds this target currently at 95%. • Communication is often the area that Orwell scores the lowest on. • Although some of the stats look low i.e., complaints, in a recent benchmarking exercise, Orwell placed 3rd out of 20 local landlords and just below the LCRA upper quartile – a national figure for all housing providers. <p>Examples of positive and negative feedback were shared before discussing the key findings and recommendations contained in the action plan. ORG members were able to add their comments to the action plan.</p>	
5.0	Review letter and infographic for Housing Management Scrutiny	<p>Michelle showed ORG the draft letter from Jon Cox and explained the background. The letter draws a line in the sand as to the role of the housing officer as their time is currently taken up with other duties such as reporting/following up repairs etc.</p> <p>The following suggestions were made by ORG members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add in a sentence in bold to make it clear that repairs should not be reported via their housing officer. • Maybe include a sentence about customers contact details being kept up to date. <p>The infographic and contact sheet was shown in draft and ORG agreed it was a good idea.</p> <p>Once this is sent out to customers, the Housing Management scrutiny will be closed.</p>	ML to follow up with AM/JC
6.0	2025 Scrutinies	<p>Some discussion about scrutinies had taken place at the December Christmas Party but no decision reached. The current proposal is for the following:</p> <p>Paypoint – we will be contacting customers to understand why they don't use DD to pay and the barriers of Orwell introducing new payment methods.</p> <p>Net Zero retrofit – customer feedback on contractors is leading this but the scrutiny is not confirmed yet. Further discussion is needed with Mike Penman.</p> <p>Damp and mould – scope yet to be determined.</p>	
7.0	Neighbourhood champion update	<p>Mary and Jackie have volunteered to be Neighbourhood Champions.</p> <p>Although 55 customers said they were interested in being Neighbourhood</p>	

		Champions when asked as part of the Housing Management survey, only 5 of those have confirmed they are still interested. Will be asking the housing team in February for what they think would be helpful to them.	
8.0	Dates of meetings for 2025	The dates proposed include 2 dates which are mid month – May and November.	ML will share with minutes
5.0	Any other business	All ORG members were asked to send in a paragraph describing how they've found the scrutinies this year – what was good, what you enjoyed etc. The information will be shared with Board in February. Michelle will discuss with Mike separately about his role will be at the Board meeting.	ORG members ML/MW
6.0	Date and time of next meeting	24 th February – 18:00 to 20:00 22 nd February – CHAT meeting Consumer Standards – 2 meetings needed. Mike will be away at the end of April.	ML will send out dates