

TENANTS' FORUM – Annual General Meeting
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 3 March 2026 at 10:30am
in Committee Room 4, Barrow Town Hall

Tenant Representatives Present:

Chair and Street Voice for Raglan Court and Corporation Terrace

Mandy Anderson

Street Voice for Newton Road area, Dalton

David Pearson

Street Voice Broughton Road area, Dalton

Danny Green

Street Voice for Bank Lane to Millstone Avenue, Ormsgill

Bill McEwan

Westmorland and Furness Council:

Bex Halton, Senior Manager – Housing Landlord and Homelessness Services

Caroline Kendall, Interim Operational Lead – Safe and Strong Communities

Debbie Cubiss, Senior Neighbourhood Team Leader

Peter Rimmer, Senior Surveyor

Cllr Judith Derbyshire, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Cllr Anne Burns

Cathy Kirk, Projects Officer (minute taker)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Street Voice, Nicola Bull and Cllr Anita Husband.

Scott experienced technical difficulties and was unable to connect to the meeting. Cathy will contact him prior to future meetings to ensure he is able to join okay.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 3 December 2025

The minutes were agreed as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 Boundary Fencing at Property on Longway

This work is scheduled to be started before the end of March.

3.2 Roosegate Community Centre

Bex advised that a meeting had taken place with the Community Development Team, who have now linked in with David Joyce (Commercial Estate Manager) and Matt

Messenger (Commercial Development Lead). They will be contacting the current lessee.

The issue has been prioritised.

(The centre sits under the responsibility of the Corporate Asset Team.)

3.3 Environmental Enhancement Budget

Following approval outside the meeting, a quotation of £2,860 has been received from AK Fencing to install fencing on Anson Street to create a community space. Caroline K has provided the contractor with a fencing plan and the locations for gates.

Work is scheduled to begin within the next two weeks.

3.4 Introduction of Awaab's Law

Following suggestion at the last meeting, Senior Surveyor, Peter Rimmer will now attend meeting to provide updates.

3.5 Tenant Perception Survey 2025/2026

The last of the three mailings has now been sent out by MEL Research who are carrying out the survey on our behalf. To date, 400 responses have been received, which is below last year's total of 515.

The survey closes on 6 March, and it is hoped that additional postal responses will be received before then.

A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

3.6 Tenant Engagement Strategy

Following consultation (100 responses) and approval by the Tenants' Forum, Bex has escalated the strategy internally to confirm the formal sign-off process so it can be officially launched.

In the meantime, implementation of the required actions is continuing.

4. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Bex invited nominations for Chair. Anne nominated Mandy, seconded by Danny. With no further nominations, Mandy was reappointed as Chair.

Nominations were then invited for Vice-Chair. Ann nominated Bill, seconded by Mandy. Bill was therefore appointed as Vice-Chair.

The group congratulated Mandy and Bill on their appointments.

5. Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Bex explained that the establishment of a Tenant Scrutiny Panel is an expectation of the Regulator of Social Housing. It will be a significant piece of work, requiring a formal constitution and suitable training - therefore, it cannot be set up solely by the Tenants' Forum.

Key points:

- All tenants will have the opportunity to get involved.
- Separate panels will be created for different topics of scrutiny.
- A minimum of four tenants per panel is anticipated.
- Participation will involve a quarterly voluntary commitment.
- Travel expenses will be reimbursed.

Once the process is finalised, recruitment will begin.

ACTION: In the meantime, if Street Voices know of any tenants who may be interested, they are asked to email Cathy with their details.

6. Tenant Participation Compact Budget £15k Update

Spend since the last meeting

Community Events: £151.94 was spent on Easter eggs for Ormsgill Stronger Together and Love Barrow Families.

Cost of Living Assistance Budget (£13,400)

- Bex reported that there had been consideration of providing funding to Furness For You to support their launderette service. However, this group is due to end at the end of March. The intention is to carry forward funds into the next financial year in the hope that the group will be relocated. Discussions are ongoing.
- Bex also advised that the Housing Estates Team were meeting today to review what items to purchase using the budget. Caroline K highlighted storage limitations within the Town Hall, which may restrict what can be ordered.
- **ACTION:** Following discussion, it was agreed that Peter would purchase a watertight storage container to hold the majority of the items. The container will be securely located alongside other storage containers on the Brook Street site. Approx cost: £2,400, to be funded from this budget.
- Bex is reviewing proposals for using this budget to provide stability for Ormsgill Stronger Together. If required, an extraordinary meeting will be arranged.

7. Environment Enhancement Budget and Officers £10k Budget

The EEB balance currently stands at £2,140.

Bex outlined a proposal from David for the purchase of a 'friendship bench' to be installed on the grassed area at the junction of Dalton Fields Lane and Thornton Park.

The group approved this proposal.

ACTION: Cathy will arrange the purchase. She has sourced a three-person heavy-duty, recycled, weather-resistant, maintenance-free plastic bench, with a galvanised steel underframe suitable for bolting to the ground. Cost: £399, together with friendship plaque for approx. £20

Area Improvement £10k Budget (Officers' budget)

This Budget has been fully spent.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Fencing at rear of property

Bill raised an issue regarding a tenant who had been advised she must fund replacement fencing at the rear of her property, which backs onto a field. Bex explained that responsibility for fencing is defined in law and depends on the boundary in question.

ACTION: Peter took the tenant's details and will investigate and get back to her.

8.2 Quarterly Performance Information

Bex advised that Q3 performance information will be presented alongside Q4 at the next meeting.

Regarding Awaab's Law, there has been a significant reduction in emergency appointments, with strong improvements noted. New procedures are working effectively, and monitoring and reporting continue.

Under the new repairs contract, damp and mould issues will be handled separately, allowing greater control.

8.3 Scaffolding at Raglan Court/Detritus

The Chair raised concerns about untidiness around the scaffolding.

Peter confirmed the work has been completed and that once the scaffold is removed, the area will be fully cleared. These tasks are carried out together.

8.4 Responsive Repairs Contract

Bex advised work is progressing on preparing a tender for the responsive repairs contract. A questionnaire will be sent to all tenants to gather their views on what they

would like included. While some information is available from complaints, a fuller picture is needed.

Street Voices will be asked to encourage tenants to respond, as their feedback will feed directly into the tender process.
Please send any ideas to Cathy.

8.5 Inspection Judgement

Judith shared the positive news of the C2 inspection judgement, expressing her pleasure in reporting this outcome to Cabinet and voicing her thanks to tenant representatives for their involvement and hard work.

Bex added that she will be meeting with inspectors at the end of the month. They will expect an improvement plan and will hold monthly follow-up meetings.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 3 June at 2pm in the Law Library and via MS Teams