



HullSTARS Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

13th January 2015 – 12.30pm

Meeting Room 2, Second floor, University House

Attending:

Toni Proctor (HullSTARS); Paul Traynor (HullSTARS); Jennifer Day (Vice President for Welfare and Community); Gina Rayment (Advice Centre Manager); Ian Sanders (Hull City Council); Jill Cooper (University Accommodation Manager); Debbie Drake (Humber Landlord Association); Christine Kirk (Hull Student Landlord Association).

Non-committee members:

1. Apologies

None.

2. Introduction to Paul

TP introduced Paul Traynor to the members. Paul stated a brief description of his background and his pleasure to be working for HullSTARS and to provide a contact point and support to the landlord population, with a focus ultimately to help and support the students.

3. Figures for the year

TP detailed the figures for the year for HullSTARS as follows: registered properties 173, this figure is down on previous year figure of 348 which is due to only having a 10% representation of University and Head Leasing properties.

57 of the properties were audited in semester 1. HullSTARS is still awaiting documents for a small number of these in order to complete the audits. 3 re-inspections have been carried out this year, of these 1 property has moved from 3 to 5 stars, 2 have moved from 4 to 5 stars. Currently 25 properties are registered for 2015/16 through biennial subscriptions.

4. Issues with criteria

Conversation was opened in relation to the mechanism of closing fire doors. CK stated problem is with the 2 stage closing of fire doors which causes a 'clunk' that is why doors often get propped etc. by students and not allowed to close, thus affecting their ability to work correctly – and then closer readjustment becoming necessary. General conversation referred to not all landlords addressing the problem or checking the doors, so leaving the problems in place.

CK stated that landlords should check their fire door self-closers are properly adjusted so that they close effectively into the door frame. This could be all that is required to achieve a higher rating.

Fire detection and alarm system inspection – TP explained purpose of the tests essentially for HullSTARS to receive valid and correct documentation to state systems are in safe working order.

IS contributed to clarity around the complexity of certification for the systems. Basically 2 cert types called part 1 and part 6. Certification relates to type of system. Also issues around competent persons to do the testing explained.

DD requested some info in relation to this area be drawn up and made available via the HullSTARS website.

Action: IS to supply some clear information on certification and competent persons, e.g. in relation to accreditation to electrical regulatory bodies, local authority requirements.

Documentation. TP stated that documentation needs to be uploaded to website 7 days after audit. Also for expiring documents that the up to date versions are uploaded in time – i.e. before end of expiry.

DD stated there are issues with loading document types in open office.

Action TP: Look into issues with attaching/ uploading documents in Open Office and having to convert to word.





5. Changes to Website

TP discussed that HullSTARS had a very small amount of money to spend on improving the HullSTARS website for its users and asked for feedback from landlords as users. Quotes will be requested from the web developer and HullSTARS will make the changes the budget will allow.

First discussions relating to maps. Link to be in place to a Google map location of property and show estimated walking distance from the university. CK asked if a simple type of radius circle image could show walking distances from campus

Action: TP to investigate using the radius circle image on front page.

Changing website to improve the student experience of leaving a review. Presently too slow and too administrative – there is a waiting time issue with the arrival of confirmation email to student account – student has by then often lost interest. DD expressed concern with changing the review system if it will make in more complex or cause security issues.

Action: TP to look into the IT situation – looks like a server problem and also to assess or trial a newer way to do it.

CK stated she had had some feedback that the 'look and feel' of the website was not great and it was not always easy to navigate through. TP stated changes will be made to the website and a small budget is available for implementing any updates to it.

CK asked about seeing advertising on StuRents, and was advertising space being sold there for properties, as that's what it was.

Action: JD and TP to find out situation with StuRents.

A discussion was had in relation to students being approached very early into semester 1 for sign up for the next year. JD stated that the steer is very strong from HUU that students wait until semester 2 to assess their housing situation and that message is going out. CK thinks that message not getting through and students are afraid to wait.

TP, JD and GR mentioned that they have attended The Lawns to speak to students directly about the surplus of housing in Hull and to drive the Don't Panic campaign. TP mentioned that she also worked with JD, HUU Homes and the HSLA to do a joint leaflet drop in semester 1 to promote the Don't Panic message and the Housing Fair.

Action: All members of the group to consider how we can work together to avoid students signing up.

6. Housing Fair

JD explained how the Housing Fair day will run. IS asked for an invitation, JD agreed an invitation to HCC.

Action: JD to organise a stall for HCC.

Questions were asked around who is allowed to attend. TP stated it is HullSTARS registered members only, and JD clarified max 3 persons to a stall and a strict no flyering policy anywhere on campus and in the building. It was stated parties not invited or excess people will be asked to leave.

IS asked a question as to how the message of who the fair was for and what its clear purpose was – would be put to the students so they would be clear on why to attend. JD re-iterated that that message would be clear and sent out in the very near future.

TP stated if you have won an award there is a banner to display at your stall, which is mandatory and will be provided on the day.

DD asked about power supply to stalls, JD said that were could be power and she will email landlords to find out who needs power. There will be a cut off for arranging a power supply; the deadline will be outlined in the email sent to landlords with stalls.

Action: JD to email all attendees including Ian, as to power supply situation for each stall.

7. AOB





Auditing will begin from 9th February 2015. PT will be attending some of the audits for training purposes.

HCC will not allow HullSTARS to use their logo as landlords are not required to register their full portfolio of properties. Using the logo may imply that the council can be affiliated with landlords who have only registered a small number of properties.

Action: TP and JD to discuss the prospect of requiring landlords to add all properties for next year.

HCC will be re-inspecting a portion on audited properties under HHSRS to ensure HullSTARS Property Auditors are picking up the safety issues. The portion of properties was discussed, IS put forward 8 properties as a starting point (5%). Discussion was had as to which properties were to be picked, a sample based on rating, at random, and who should pick.

IS expressed concern that HCC would need to ensure access could be granted to the property and who should arrange access.

Action: TP, JD and IS to discuss further and confirm figures.

IS asked to move future meetings to 1pm.

Action: TP to book room from 1pm.

8. Next meeting – 14th April 2015, 1pm, meeting room 3.