

Trafford Tenants & Residents Federation



Annual Report 2006 - 2007

www.traffordfederation.org.uk



Working to build the blocks for communities across Trafford



Our vision

Our philosophy is that we will always work with all tenants, residents & leaseholders, along with under-represented community groups who have similar aims to ourselves. We are keen to provide the commitment and the right level of motivation for those neighbourhoods or communities wanting to set up a successful community or residents group. Our long term aim is also to increase individual or group resident involvement and participation opportunities.

We will offer guidance and support to the diverse communities across the borough, working in partnership with various tenant participation teams. We are on hand to provide support to all tenants and every resident.

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Forward

The work of the Trafford Tenants & Residents Federation can often fall into many categories. Primarily, we are here helping to support tenant and resident groups in Trafford – this could mean help establishing a group, locating suitable meeting premises or supporting committee members as they develop their roles and become familiar with the day to day running of their group. Our role also includes representing our tenant and resident group members collectively on issues such as housing, service provision, or general improvements within our neighbourhoods.

Currently our main discussions on behalf of residents are with our main partner, Trafford Housing Trust, however we are hoping that we will soon be in a position to represent all tenants and residents living in the borough of Trafford and as such, aim to build partnership working arrangements with other Registered Social Landlords.

We hope that this Annual Report captures the determination and efforts made by Federation Members.

Many of us have spent numerous years working with housing organisations and local service providers trying to improve neighbourhoods, communities and the general quality of life for residents of Trafford and we hope to continue in this vein for future years to come.



Acknowledgment

Our thanks to The Executive Committee and members for their contributions in supplying the information contained within this report. Thanks are also given to Shaun Wilson for his assistance in helping us to design and produce our first annual report.

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Annual Report 2006 – 2007

Officers

Chairperson
Steve Leathwaite

Secretary
John McNuff

Treasurer
John Kill

Executive Committee

Jan Howell
Stretford House Tenants &
Residents Association

Ron Baker
Sapling Grove Tenants &
Residents Association

Eleanor Crowther
Rivers Estate Tenants &
Residents Association

Contributor

Ron Smith
Altrincham Area

Marketing & Publicity Consultant

Shaun Wilson Cert. CIH
Trafed Local Community Marketing

Tenant Involvement

Sharon White
Tenant Involvement Officer
Trafford Housing Trust

Partners and colleagues

Trafford Housing Trust (Funding Body)
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
VCAT (Advisory & consultancy)
TPAS (Independent Advisor)

Member Groups

Broomwood Community Association
Beech Farm Community Association
Broadheath Community Association
Circle Court Residents Association
Daresbury Close & Rostherne
Bungalows Residents Association
Granville Road Tenants and Residents Association
Hale Moss & Wellgreen Community Association
Leverett Close Tenants and Residents Association
Lime Tree Residents Association

Lostock Friends Tenants & Residents Association
Lostock Tenants and Residents Association
Meadows Tenants and Residents Association
Miltoncan Residents Association
Mossvale Cr Tenants and Residents Association
Easbrook & Ormeston Lodge Tenants
& Residents Association
Positive Partington
Rivers Residents Association
Sapling Grove Residents Association
Shrewsbury Street Residents Association
South Devon Residents Association
Stretford House Residents Association
Tamworth Estate Residents Association
The Gorse Residents Association
The Grange Community Association
Wardle Close Residents Association
Woodsend Community Group
Pavillion Lodge & Links Tenants and Residents Assoc
Peel Road Community Forum
Trees Tenants and Residents Association

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Contents



Chairs report



Constitution



Service Level Agreement



Income & expenditure



Training for communities and groups



Residents Conference



Marketing & Publicity



Chairs Report

2006/2007 has been a very busy year for the Federation. We have spent a lot of time concentrating on ways in which to revitalize the Federation, encourage popularity and participation and increase the number of residents who we represent. As such, we have focused on promoting the benefits of being a Federation member and our members and other community stakeholders have seen a vast increase in the volume of literature distributed to them. We have also held a number of General meetings throughout the borough and it has been very encouraging to see some new faces as well as usual attendees.

Our residents' conference took place in October 2006 and the topics discussed at this event were determined directly by suggestions forwarded by our members – the residents of Trafford.

We have in place a Service Level Agreement with Trafford Housing Trust (*our main partner and funder*) and this details the services we either do at present, or aim to do in the future. All the services included are aimed at improving neighbourhoods in Trafford and encouraging resident participation and involvement to ensure that residents living in the area have a voice on any decisions that may have implications to their quality of life. Our funding from Trafford Housing Trust is largely determined by our performance against standards included in this agreement and we are working through action points to ensure that we deliver a range of services that truly reflect the needs and priorities of local residents & communities.

We have also spent time in developing as an organisation and considering our future role within the borough. The Executive Committee have looked at their group dynamics and behaviours and intend to continue in this work to develop themselves as both individuals and team players to meet the changing and evolving needs of the organisation. A culture of continuous evaluation and improvement is key to our growth and success and we intend to embed this into our working practices, policies and procedures – making continual review, monitoring and evaluation part of our everyday function.

For the year ahead, we have big plans. We have very recently begun investigating the possibility of becoming a charity and intend to carry out some visioning sessions in April to focus upon our future long term plans and role. You can find out a little more about this further into this report.



Constitution

The Federations Executive Committee have been working throughout the year on reviewing their constitution and associated policies and procedures. The current constitution is dated, bureaucratic and restrictive and if the Federation want to be a truly representative body, careful consideration is needed to decide how to successfully achieve this 'true representation' whilst maintaining the ethos of a Federation.

The Committee have thought long and hard about this and have recently submitted proposals to the Federations General Membership on how they thought this could be achieved. As with most consultations, there were comments and suggestions received and some good ideas have come forward. In view of this, the Federation Executive Committee have made the decision to recommend only very minor constitutional amendments to any forthcoming extra ordinary General Membership for approval and are intending to investigate the possibility of obtaining Charitable status.

Becoming a charity would have many implications, all of which need to be fully considered. Only one other Federation has obtained this status in the country and we are in the process of making arrangements to visit them to discuss the benefits and process involved in this. In order to ensure that we are fully informed prior to this visit, we have arranged some working sessions with VCAT (Voluntary Community Action Trafford). The outcome of these sessions will hopefully be that all Executive Committee Members and other interested parties involved will be fully conversant with the implications of becoming a charity, will be clear on the future role of the Federation and its long-term vision and will have established key aims and objectives. Whether or not these fall in line with the charities commission requirements will help determine the way ahead for us.

At this stage of our investigations, it is anticipated that we should be in a position to make firm recommendations regarding the future status of the Federation and the development or amendment of its constitution and associated policies, three months after our AGM (August 2007). Should charitable status be investigated satisfactorily and be supported by the general membership, we would hope that this would open new doors for us and allow us to further develop and increase our range of services for the benefit of the residents in Trafford and our neighbourhoods.



Service Level Agreement

A Sub-Group of the Federation Executive Committee worked for a period in excess of 12 months to negotiate a Service Level Agreement with Trafford Housing Trust, our main partner. In September 2006, the Agreement was signed between Steve Leathwaite (Chair of the Federation) and Matthew Gardiner (Chief Executive for Trafford Housing Trust). This Agreement formalizes the partnership arrangement between the Trust and Federation and concentrates the Federations efforts and focus in specific areas.

Basically, the agreement stipulates those services the Federation were required to deliver from the onset of the agreement and also sets out a profile of services that the Federation aim to be able to deliver in the future. Services include for example, sending regular newsletters to members and stakeholders, visiting member groups, providing a resource centre. As you can see, some services are relatively easy and straight forward to incorporate and put into action whilst others require far more substantial planning, consultation and funding. As part of the negotiation process around the agreement, a series of performance indicators were established. The Federation are effectively paid a grant by Trafford Housing Trust in accordance to their compliance with these indicators or delivery of those services/functions. This may sound overly complicated but in laymens terms, the Trust will provide us with money for work that we do and if we don't do what we set out to, then our grant can be reduced accordingly.

Each quarter we have an SLA Monitoring Panel meeting which is attended by both Federation and Trust representatives. A report is presented by the Federation which clearly indicates where the Federation has achieved compliance or has fallen behind with projects or tasks. Recommendations are driven out of the report content to enhance the partnership arrangement and mutually agree the quarterly funding allocation.

From the period of signing the agreement to date, the Federation have implemented many items. We now send a newsletter to all member groups on a quarterly basis. We hold bi-monthly general members meetings throughout the borough. We are in the process of contacting all our member groups personally to offer our support, and we are ringing all Registered Social Landlord who manage stock in the Trafford Borough to build a database of other tenants and resident groups that may be eligible to become members in the future. Obviously we are doing many other things, but at this present moment in time we are focusing our time and efforts upon our investigations into obtaining charitable status and our forthcoming Annual General Meeting.



Income & expenditure

Bank Balance Carried Forward from 27.03.06 £ 869.94

Income

THT Grants £5923.36

£6793.30

Expenditure

Cheque Numbers 173 – 185 £ 819.13

Cheque Numbers 187 – 190 £ 992.54

Cheque Numbers 192 – 198 £ 844.05

Cheque Numbers 199 – 203 £ 561.47

Cheque Numbers 204 – 212 £1383.22

Cheque Numbers 213 – 225 £1001.41

£5601.82

Bank Balance at 27.03.07 £1191.48

Add petty cash balance at 27.03.07 £ 177.69

£1369.17

Petty Cash Opening Balance £181.00

Petty Cash Closing Balance £177.69

Difference £ 3.31 shortfall



This is a provisional balance sheet for the financial year 2006 – 2007. The accounts for the Trafford Tenants and Residents Federation have yet to be officially audited – this shall take place within 30 days of publication of this annual report.



Training for communities and groups

One of the aspirations of Trafford Tenants and Residents Federation is to have its own training calendar and trainers but at this present moment in time, we do not have either. This has not stopped the Federations Executive Team from seeking external training courses which have been facilitated by companies such as TPAS, VCAT, Trafford Housing Trust, Community Foundation and many more.

During 2006/2007, we, the Executive members, between us, have trained in: -

- **Strategic Planning**
- **Fundraising**
- **Equality and Diversity**
- **Disability Discrimination Awareness**
- **Mystery shopping**
- **Mediation**

All courses offered a stimulating mix of work and fun - for example, how to encourage greater tenant involvement, the exchange of ideas and not to be afraid to challenge. All the above helps us to learn from the experience of training, it also helps us develop and explore the understanding of any barriers that may be there and how to grow from them.

We will continue our training during 2007/2008 to explore the hard to reach groups such as (BME) Black Minority Ethnic, elderly, gay and lesbian communities, youth and many more groups. This will enable us to encourage fairness, behaviour, resources and accountability. It will also help us to identify any problems that matter and allow us to tackle them in an innovative way, make creative use of their experiences and ensure that we represent and meet their needs in the communities in which they live.



Residents Conference

On a bright clear morning on October 25th 2006, we gathered in the Salvation Army Centre on Ashton Lane, Sale, for our first conference. All committee members had arrived early and it was evident that our Publicity Officer, Shaun Wilson, had already organised equipment and visual aids including displays of Bassets Allsorts. There was an outstanding display of exhibitors which would have been quite at home at GMEX.

After lashings of coffee and biscuits had been provided, we began with our first speaker, Phil Morgan, Chief Executive from TPAS and it was a reminder to us of the very important part TPAS had played over the years in preparing us for stock transfer and many other aspects of housing associations.

Two workshops followed; one by Dave Nunns of VCAT where he spoke about strategic planning and the second being led by the Youth Offending Team focusing upon Anti-Social Behaviour and crime reduction. Inspector O'Brien gave an encouraging report on police work. At both workshops our members played an active role and shared great interest in the subjects.

After an excellent lunch which everyone enjoyed, the Resident Involvement Team, led by Angela Taylor, organised a 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' game. This turned out not to be a frivolous game, but an educational experience testing us on our acquired knowledge over the years in housing jargon and procedures. It was great fun and we learnt a lot from it. Angela Taylors capacity for jovial tom foolery excelled and put everyone in a good mood.

We had invited some tenants from Park Court and the Sale West Estate. Afterwards, they came to me and asked why we were using so much jargon which they did not understand! This reminded me of the progress our members had made over the years, making them feel at home with housing jargon. Those not participating in tenants associations fall back and are not able to keep pace with the progress made and we need to help them become active participants in our fast changing world.

Thanks were expressed to the Salvation Army for its excellent facilities.

Our resolve must be that at the next conference we must attract more members of the 30 groups who are affiliated to the Federation to attend this most useful experience.

Ron Baker

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Marketing & Publicity

Over the last 18 months, the Federation have gone through some important changes and challenges. An organisation such as the Trafford Tenants and Residents Federation needs to be able to adapt to its changing environment and needs to continually look towards increasing relationship and community and resident participation.

The Federation, for the very first time in its long history, is now able to provide its members, stakeholders and partners with a custom-built newsletter, designed and developed by our own marketing consultant. Our members are asked to submit local articles and are encouraged to share success stories or areas of concern.

Our own newsletter was launched in 2006; initially during the launch we were only able to distribute up to 30 copies borough wide. Distribution has now been increased by up to 100% - we are now able to produce and supply a copy of '**in-house**' to every individual member in full colour. Our future plans are to increase the volume of '**in-house**' and make the newsletter larger in size. This will depend on a number of factors including feedback from our members and obtaining funds required to produce this document. We also intend to extend the distribution across the borough and hope eventually to be in a position to provide every home with a copy. To do this would obviously require additional external funding, perhaps including private financial sponsorship from businesses or looking towards other funding bodies such as existing Registered Social Landlords that operate within Trafford.

2006 also saw the introduction to supply information to interested parties both via the internet and electronically; we now have our new hosted web site, accompanied by a unique web domain which reinforces our branding position in Trafford and across the globe. We are proud to maintain our identity and professionalism which has now been extended to providing each Executive Committee Officer with the ability to receive information via email using an individual email address. We hope that the introduction of this email facility, increases confidence and skills in being able to use IT at a comfortable level that suits individuals. For those who prefer the conventional approach to receiving communications, we are obviously still happy to supply all correspondence through the normal postal system.

