



# Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations

Campaigning for Housing Rights and Council Homes

Bells Gardens Community Centre  
19 Buller Close, London  
SE15 6UJ

## Group Meeting Minutes Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022, 7.00pm – 9.00pm

**Attendance:** 21

**Staff:** Margaret Onwuta, Amanda Carey (unofficially to record), Silvia Rahim, Rita Edmond, Jack Lewis, Ahmed Kabba

### 1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

Cris Claridge (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, advised that a different format as no agenda to follow.

Apologies: Not covered in this open discussion

### 2. Minutes of Group Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 & Matters Arising

Not covered in this open discussion meeting.

### 3. SGTO Open Discussion

Cris explained that tonight's purpose is to discuss and share ideas how we can communicate with each other and strengthen the tenants movement.

It was said that the WhatsApp group is good for sharing information, but when attending meetings, people may not understand what is going on or see the value in attending meetings, if they can speak up and how their issues will be rectified when raised? Possible solution is to remind people of what we do, the importance in attending and giving points across and issues from different areas.

Another idea is to do some work on marketing SGTO, in sharing what can be done by the group in assisting in resolving issues and the advantages of being involved. This would need to be done through many sources, such as; leaflet campaign, posters around areas, door-drops, online and by any other means to spread the word. If everyone did a little in their zone, we could cover a vast area.

It was said that the information we share with our membership is good, but wonder if we are reaching as many people as we should, and need to widen our audience. By marketing ourselves, we should be able to increase our database and therefore reach more people. Currently we share information through our membership database, whatsapp, facebook, twitter, website, putting literature in with TRA printing requests, taking information to physical TRA meetings.

*Additional proposed methods:*

1. Use the Jubilee Event as a networking exercise, as by inviting the community to a party, can then utilise the time to talk about the tenants movement and to encourage people to get involved.

2. Speak to estate cleaners supervisors, to ask if they can put leaflets in different blocks
3. Approach other organisations, to ask them to advertise SGTO on their leaflets, website etc.

Surveys have been circulated recently following requests made at our group meetings, 1)What do you want SGTO to campaign about, b)How people want the Council to communicate with them, how you want SGTO to hold meetings, and what people prefer Zoom or Teams, c)What equipment would be suggested for hire. The feedback was very limited as people may not realise the importance of completing or what difference their feedback will make. So apart from just specific groups, how do we get people to communicate with one another and bring back the enthusiasm for people to want to fight for their rights and make them realise that we need their feedback as everyone's voice is important to us?

It was mentioned that, since lockdown, a lot of people have become lazy in communication, as they've not been able to, so now find it hard to motivate themselves to get interested and involved again.

Unfortunately, this attitude is falling into the Council's hands, as they want TRAs to fail so they are no longer seen as a threat and to become TMOs, so that they take ownership for their own estates.

Sharing SGTO success stories was highlighted, as this will show people what the organisation is capable of and help towards becoming a household name.

Through compiling a list of functioning and non-functioning TRAs, contact has been made recently by outreach workers to identify where help is needed. This had also resulted in re-launching some TRAs and contact is still ongoing.

It was also pointed out that many TRAs are only just starting up again following the pandemic, and have not been attending any meetings or engaging in any activity. This will now change and attendance will surely increase to our meetings and others.

We can share information on TRAs with membership, to show what they have been doing, various events, projects, how they execute these occasions. This would help other TRAs in possibly giving them ideas and also how it can be done. This can be posted on our website and if re-introduced, in the quarterly newsletter.

The newsletter was always been a good means of sharing information, so it could focus on what TRA's and SGTO have been doing, upcoming events and shared through Email, Website, WhatsApp, Facebook, hard copies, and other means people can identify.

When attending meetings, outreach workers can take literature to obtain feedback as to whether people are aware of the SGTO and what they would want us to do for them. This would provide important data that can be used to ensure we are giving people what they need and want.

It was suggested that we need to share all our methods of communication with membership etc. so they have the opportunity to follow and comment on various platforms, ie; Website, Email, Facebook, Twitter. This information is shared on the website but needs to be shared through other means and can be added to staff signatures, so everyone receiving an email can see details. It would also be beneficial to share information on how to use various methods, so people can then navigate around and be able to add comments and if the Facebook and Twitter accounts were more updated more frequently, information would be available to more people.

**Action: Who We Are leaflet**

To print Who We Are leaflets for TRA's to share with their tenants.

For those unable to collect from Bells, outreach workers to deliver to a key person on TRA for them to then circulate.

**Action: Advertise**

Ask other organisations to advertise SGTO on their literature, website etc.

**Action: TRA WhatsApp**

Outreach workers to join individual TRA WhatsApp groups, who have them, to share SGTO information

If TRAs not happy for us to join, obtain administrators contact to send info to for them to then share.

**Action: Case studies**

Share success stories with Borough to highlight what we can do (Some are on website, but more need to be added).

**Action: TRAs**

To send to us what they have been doing, so we can promote

**Action: What can we do?**

Outreach workers to take to meetings literature with feedback request on: are they aware of the SGTO and what they want us to do for them.

**Action: Newsletter**

Board to discuss re-introduction of quarterly newsletter to share TRA and SGTO information

**Action: Communication methods**

To share details for all media accounts through whatsapp etc., staff to add to their signatures and how to use

#### 4. **SGTO Husting**

It was explained that we would not be holding three hustings as hoped and will host just one as the Councillors approached indicated that they have extremely busy schedules at this time, so would not be able to attend all three.

The date for the SGTO Husting is now confirmed for **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April, 7-8.30pm.** where details will be sent out shortly.

Can we all encourage people to attend, so they can put forward their questions and concerns to the various candidates on housing related issues. This is a great opportunity to get answers as they are in front of you, so cannot hide behind their twitter/email accounts, they have to respond to your question.

*Confirmed attendance:*

Stephanie Cryan – Labour

Damien O'Brien – Liberal Democrats

To be advised – Green

Awaiting confirmation from other parties

#### 5. **Report back from Scrutiny**

The report was circulated to the membership on 29<sup>th</sup>, which highlights the recommendations that were agreed by Scrutiny on consultations of new homes. It is an achievement that they have considered the consultation charter that was put together by the New Homes Group and agreed by our whole membership.

It had been criticised that the charter should have been taken to Tenants Forum, before Scrutiny, so apologies have been offered for this oversight.

The question was asked on how people would feel if Cabinet did not consider any of the recommendations proposed from Scrutiny.

It was suggested that the Consultation Charter, report back from Scrutiny and response from Cabinet, when provided, be added to website so people can see what was put together, the recommendations and outcome. People would be able to access and then use the information as reference in their various campaigns.

**Action: New Homes**

Add charter, report from Scrutiny and response to website

**6. Any other business**

The feedback offered at this meeting was that people liked having an open discussion, so this will continue, either every other group meeting or a set agenda item for this at each meeting.

**Meeting Closed:** 8.05pm

**Date of next meeting:** To be advised

**Husting – Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 7pm**