

# **Meeting of Landlord Steering Group (LSG) Wednesday 22 January 2025 from 2.15pm – 4.45pm at SF1 Warwick District Council (WDC) Offices**

## **Draft Minutes**

### **Present:**

Terry Samuel (TS) Chair, Balwant Rai (BR) Secretary, Runjit Bhopal (RB), Anna Deeley (AD), David French (DF), Kam Gadhary (KG), Paul Hughes (PH), Emily Kelly (EK), Shera Payne (SP), Aileen Rahilly (AR), Gurmit Singh (GS), Ashley Trinder (AT) and Amie Widdows (AW).

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

TS welcomed LSG members, the new WDC member Kevin Tebbett and Stratford District Council (SDC) guest Anna Deeley. Members introduced themselves.

### **Apologies:**

Anthony Kempster, Kevin Tebbett, Richard Thomas and Richard Woodcock.

**ACTION 1: BR to update WDC website and add Kevin Tebbett.**

### **2. Approval of LSG Draft Minutes for Wednesday 16 October 2024**

Approved unanimously.

**ACTION 2: BR to upload minutes to WDC website.**

### **3. LSG Chair's Annual Report and Chair's Diary**

TS delivered a comprehensive report reviewing the past year, outlining a strategic vision for the future and potential development of new roles for LSG members. Last year's key areas included: development of agenda item 'Chair's diary'; meeting reading table established; development of LSG resources and WDC website; ongoing annual student rental analysis; LSG's contributions to WDC licensing conditions, fire extinguisher consultation and private landlord offer. Retirement of National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) representative and his valuable support and contribution to the LSG over the years.

Over the past year, landlord forums have progressed significantly, with notable improvements such as increased sponsorship; a greater variety and more stalls; enhanced adverts and stronger engagement from the WDC Media Team through publicity photos, press releases and forum videos; forum feedback has also become more analytical, guiding further refinements.

'Procedures for Organising a Landlord Forum' continues to be updated to reflect best practices. The Chair delivered, at forums, two well received presentations: Self-Managing Landlord Tips: House Handbook Part 1 & Part 2.

Given the absence of Vice-Chair nominations for the past two years, TS suggested this role is reconsidered in favour of a more distributed leadership structure. This involves appointing LSG members as lead organisers for key areas, ensuring a more dynamic and engaged LSG. Roles to assist the LSG Secretary may include:

- a) **Recruitment and Delegate Attendance Lead:** Expand LSG membership initiatives such as LSG stall at forums. Ways to increase forum attendance.
- b) **Sponsorship, Stalls, Speakers and Catering Lead:** Engage relevant exhibitors. Swag bags. Develop sponsorship opportunities. Sponsor and stall feedback forms. Develop refreshments. Speaker/PowerPoint coordination.
- c) **Technology Lead:** Enhance forum up-to-date technology, for example, QR codes, AI, sound and projection. Personalise delegate experiences, 'Tenancy Clinic', audience participation. Make forums more impactful and memorable.
- d) **Letting Agent Liaison:** Strengthen communication and engagement with local letting agents. Draft adverts. Programme to disseminate LSG materials.
- e) **Marketing and Website Coordinator:** Manage and expand LSG's online presence, websites, social media and press communications. Liaise with WDC Media Team. Delegate follow up after forum. How to stay connected. Newsletter.
- f) **Forum Venue Coordinator:** Programme; liaison; on-site support; registration; plan of stall and seating layout; signage; parking; volunteer tasks; equipment etc.

Looking ahead, TS proposed a strategic vision for LSG, focusing on potential LSG member role development, securing additional funding, expanding LSG resources and increasing professional branding, name badges and QR coded swag bags for forums. Further development of WDC and SDC websites was identified, along with initiatives to encourage greater councillor participation at forums.

Additional considerations included:

- a) Whether/how to reintroduce forum continuing professional development points.
- b) Explore ways to influence and develop the local PRS. Consultations, live polls.
- c) Whether to adjust forum start times to improve attendance.
- d) Guidance criteria and plan for Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse.
- e) Ways to address 30% no-show at forums.
- f) Establish task group, 'Evaluate LSG's direction, identify areas for improvement and implement strategies for assessing impact'.

For the 2024 - 2025 period, LSG membership has remained stable, though there is currently a shortfall of eight members. Boost membership to include two additional letting agents for broader industry representation.

Members thanked by TS, for their support and contributions throughout the year.

**ACTION 3: BR to send an application form and LSG membership pack to a potential new LSG member at Sheldon Bosley Knight.**

#### **4. Election of LSG Chair and Vice-Chair**

SP nominated TS for LSG Chair. Nomination was approved unanimously.

No Vice-Chair nominations. TS reiterated, if the Chair is absent then members could elect a temporary Chair at an LSG meeting.

#### **5. Review of LSG Members Attendance at Meetings Since January 2024**

Summary of LSG annual attendance was presented. Members reviewed attendance patterns. GS unable to attend meetings due to other commitments. He has decided to resign, recommending his son as a potential replacement.

GS was advised, his son should contact BR for an application form.

#### **6. Proposal: Adopt Updated 'LSGTOR'**

TS introduced a revised procedure for amendments to a motion. He recommended the Landlord Steering Group Terms of Reference (LSGTOR) notes in Appendix 2 below the Council Debating Process Chart are deleted and replaced with:

'An amendment to a motion must:

- a) be relevant to and intelligible with the motion;
- b) add and/or delete a word or words;
- c) not introduce a new topic;
- d) not negate the motion, contradict or overturn the motion;
- e) be worded so that, if it is agreed, it can be passed as a valid resolution;
- f) not be defamatory, frivolous, offensive or otherwise out of order.

If a proposed amendment does not comply with any of the above, then either the proposed amendment could be withdrawn or any subsequent alteration proposed must be of the type permitted to be moved as an amendment.'

This recommendation was carried unanimously.

AR advised LSGTOR 3.3f should be removed. This was carried unanimously.

PH reminded members income is split 50-50 between the authorities and LSG.

There was a brief discussion on LSG emails being sent and received via a general mailbox, instead of directly between individual LSG members. Given the potential implications, this matter warrants further review. In particular, privacy, security and unauthorised access concerns may arise when messages are intended solely for LSG task group participants, involve sensitive discussions among LSG members or communications are exclusively for LSG members.

The proposal to adopt the updated LSGTOR, with agreed amendments, was passed with two objections.

## **7. Matters Arising**

Previous 'ACTIONS' discussed. The following were noted:

a) PH and AT to produce Risk Assessment and Volunteer Agreement documents.

Members reviewed proposed Venue Risk Assessment and Volunteer Agreement and agreed they would formalise expectations and ensure clarity for volunteers. Amendments were recommended, before documents are added to LSGTOR.

**ACTION 4: PH and AT to amend Risk Assessment and Volunteer Agreement documents and present them at the next LSG meeting for approval.**

b) BR and PH to discuss with the WDC Media Team, the cost of two banners.

This has been previously agreed. Members considered different providers and debated cost effectiveness versus quality.

**ACTION 5: PH to purchase two pull up banners at best value.**

c) PH to report to next meeting on amendments to WDC HMO licence conditions.

An initial update provided by PH, including the requirement for fire extinguishers in HMOs may be modified. He stated existing conditions remained unchanged and any variations would require tenant consultation and WDC cabinet approval.

**ACTION 6: PH to report at the next LSG meeting on amendments to WDC HMO licensing conditions.**

d) PH and AT to report back at next LSG meeting on landlord guidance documents.

AW confirmed the SDC legal team is reviewing the draft document. PH advised WDC council tax needs to be consulted on proposed changes.

**ACTION 7: PH and AT to provide an update on the online Landlord Guidance document at the next LSG meeting.**

## **8. Review of Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse Landlord Forum Tuesday 22 October 2024**

Attendance analysis and a briefing note were presented and BR briefly outlined key points. Members discussed ways to improve future forums, including better signage and assistance for delegates in the car park.

TS thanked BR for comprehensive briefing notes.

## **9. Feedback on SDC Councillor Visit to Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse Landlord Forum on Tuesday 22 October 2024**

No feedback had been received from the attending councillor.

Members discussed whether direct engagement with councillors before the forum could improve involvement.

## **10. Feedback on Experimental Forum Review, Emailed to Delegates on 23 October 2024 and Proposed QR Code for Delegate Feedback Surveys**

The WDC Media Team produced an online landlord forum feedback form, accessed via a QR code.

AR presented the revised electronic feedback form, explaining a QR code would be displayed on the day of the forum and also a link to the feedback form in an email after the forum. There is a shift in the process to include more structured and nuanced analysis of measures of success.

TS asked how many delegates had responded to the electronic form emailed to delegates after the last forum.

BR confirmed he had received 17 digital and 18 hard copy feedback forms.

The new format, with amendments, was approved unanimously for trial at the next landlord forum.

**ACTION 8: AR to liaise with WDC Media Team to finalise survey form for the next forum and decide how to present the QR code at the event on the day.**

## **11. Set Dates and Venues for Future LSG Meetings and Landlord Forums Proposal: Adopt dates and venues for future LSG meetings and Forums**

Proposed dates and venues for future LSG meetings and forums were reviewed and approved unanimously.

## **12. Landlord Forum Pull Up Banner Designs by Kris from WDC Media Team Proposal: Adopt WDC Media Team banner designs for previously agreed purchase of two pull up banners**

It was agreed at the last meeting to purchase two pull up banners with sub-headings 'Registration' and 'Welcome'.

Price is £118 (WDC Media team) and £33.06 (Direct on-line).

The proposal was carried unanimously.

TS advised, after forum feedback comments, it was essential to buy a larger projection screen, for around £70, to improve visibility for presentations.

EK recommended it is purchased equally from LSG and authority funds.

The proposal to purchase a large projection screen was unanimously approved.

**ACTION 9: PH to purchase a large projection screen for LSG forum use.**

**13. Sponsors, LSG Stalls and Landlord Forum Programme for Wednesday 14 May 2025. Proposal: Adopt proposed sponsors and programme for Landlord Forum on Wednesday 14 May 2025**

The draft programme was displayed and TS confirmed the SYDNI Centre had been booked. Volunteers were needed to assist at the event. Target is 26 stalls.

**Topics and speakers:**

DF to arrange 'AI Technology Revolution for Landlords'

Confirmed presentations 'Self-Managing Landlord Tips, 'Checkout Guide' by TS and 'Legal Updates by Alana Davies NRLA

Authority updates and five-minute presentations offered to sponsors

**Sponsors:**

TS advised first choice should be offered to last three sponsors –Tara and Co, Alan Boswell and KS Connexions, as they have previously sponsored, and then to offer sponsorship to Belvoir, Stratford Solar Panels and AI.

DF confirmed Tara and Co and AI as sponsors

**ACTION 10: BR to contact 'Davisons Law' to confirm attendance**

**ACTION 11: AW to contact Stratford Solar Panels.**

**ACTION 12: BR to contact Alan Boswell, KS Connexions and Belvoir**

**ACTION 13: BR to contact D.R.A. Audio Visual Services for PA system etc.**

**ACTION 14: PH to produce accounts sheet for LSG circulation.**

The proposal, with amendments, was carried unanimously.

**14. LSG Documents, 'Procedure for Organising a Landlord Forum' (POLF), 'Procedures for Organising a Landlord Steering Group Meeting' (POPSGM) Proposal; Adopt revised LSG documents POLF and POPSGM**

The proposal was carried unanimously.

**15. Student Rental Analysis in Leamington Spa for Academic Year 2025/26**

TS presented his analysis of student rentals for 2025/26 in Leamington Spa, noting stable trends but a slight decrease in demand. Members speculated on factors influencing the market, including housing policy changes.

Members thanked TS for his analytical work.

**16. Ongoing Discussion: 'Student market. Why is it declining?'**

A broader discussion ensued on why the local student rental market appears to be declining. Possible factors included new university accommodation, affordability concerns and legislative changes such as the impact of the Renters' Rights Bill.

**17. Warwick and Stratford District Council Updates**

PH advised the WDC Private Sector Housing Team has moved into the Community Protection Service area under Marianne Rolfe. A Housing Standards Officer has been appointed and is likely to start next month.

An Additional Licensing Scheme and Briefing Note has been issued to WDC councillors to advise on the first twelve months of the scheme. The report has been submitted to cabinet for approval at its first anniversary.

AT advised SDC Head of Service will change, as the post has been advertised.

**ACTION 15: PH to ask KT to request WDC Head of Housing, Health and Communities attends a landlord forum.**

**18. Council Tax**

WDC now charges one day's council tax, for between when a tenancy ends and the start of the next tenancy the following day.

Council tax to be on the agenda for the next LSG meeting, after it was raised by a delegate in a forum feedback response.

PH advised second home premiums, if approved by WDC cabinet, could come into force on 1 April 2025. Empty properties to be charged, at a premium rate.

## **19. AOB**

TS suggested LSG and Landlord Forums would benefit from a slogan. For example, 'Safer Homes, Happy Tenants'. Members were invited to submit ideas for an LSG slogan.

**ACTION 16: BR to email LSG members and ask for slogan ideas.**

Meeting closed at 4.45pm

## **Agreed Future LSG Meetings and Landlord Forums**

### **LSG Landlord Forum (SYDNI Centre):**

Wednesday 14 May 2025. 12.30pm – 4pm at the SYDNI Centre, Cottage Square, Sydenham, Leamington Spa CV31 1PT

### **LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 18 June 2025. 2.15pm – 4.45pm at Elizabeth House, Church St, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6HX

### **LSG Landlord Forum (Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse):**

Tuesday 21 October 2025. 12.30pm – 4pm at Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse, Luddington Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 9SE

### **LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 28 January 2026. 2.15pm – 4.45pm at Ground Floor, Building 1, Saltisford Office Park, Ansell Way, Warwick CV34 4UL

### **LSG Landlord Forum (SYDNI Centre):**

Wednesday 6 May 2026. 12.30pm – 4pm at the SYDNI Centre, Cottage Square, Sydenham, Leamington Spa CV31 1PT

### **LSG Meeting:**

Wednesday 17 June 2026. 2.15pm – 4.45pm at Elizabeth House, Church St, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6HX

### **LSG Landlord Forum (Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse):**

Wednesday 21 October 2026. 12.30pm – 4pm at Stratford-upon-Avon Racecourse, Luddington Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 9SE