

ORWELL RESIDENTS GROUP MEETING MINUTES

Monday 18th May 2026 6pm - 8pm
Crane Hill Lodge

			Action by
1.0	Attendees	ORG Maggi Miller (MM) - Chair John Burman (JB) Val George (VG) – on Teams Staff Rob Longfoot (RL) Michelle Lunt (ML) Sarah Parramint (SP) Claire Townley (CT)	
	Apologies	Mary Ager (MA).	
2.0	Minutes of the previous meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on 20 th April 2026 were agreed.	
3.0	Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report	SP explained that landlords are required to produce an annual Complaints and Service Improvement Report which must include: a. the annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code to ensure their complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements b. a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the landlord's complaint handling performance - this must also include a summary of the types of complaints the landlord has refused to accept c. any findings of non-compliance with the Complaint Handling Code by the Ombudsman d. the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints e. any annual report about the landlord's performance from the Ombudsman f. any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the landlord	

		She explained that last year's report was written primarily as an internal document rather than for publication on the website. Since then, a review of other landlords' reports has been undertaken, and a new version has been developed, incorporating good practice identified elsewhere. The draft report and self-assessment (both circulated prior to the meeting) will be presented to the Board on 3 June, after which the report will be shared with a designer for refinement prior to publication on the website. The ORG particularly welcomed the use of plain English and the absence of jargon. While acknowledging that this was not the final version, members were also positive about the overall design.	
4.0	Annual self-assessment against the Complaint Handling Code	ML presented the Annual Self-Assessment against the Complaint Handling Code. The wording in the left-hand column reflects the Housing Ombudsman's requirements. The third column outlines where and how the organisation meets the standard, with any additional supporting information detailed in the final column. ML advised that the self-assessment has already been presented to and agreed by the CIC and will be submitted to the Board on 3 June for formal sign-off. The completed self-assessment must be submitted to the Housing Ombudsman by 30 September. The ORG felt the report was well structured and welcomed the option for Orwell to escalate matters as a formal complaint.	
5.0	TPAS survey update	ML reminded the ORG of the session with Ellie from TPAS, during which it was agreed that Voids would be the first area for scrutiny. However, an external performance improvement consultancy, Ad Esse, will be undertaking a large-scale review focusing on the following: • Assess the current end-to-end Voids process and delivery model • Identify opportunities to improve performance and reduce turnaround times • Explore options for reintroducing a direct labour model, including implications • Provide clear, evidence-based recommendations As a result of this, the Voids scrutiny will no longer proceed as planned. RL suggested that the ORG could request the report from Ad Esse and use this to hold the organisation to account.	

		CT asked members for their feedback on the TPAS session. The ORG welcomed the use of non-technical language and felt that Ellie listened to their views. However, VG noted that the pace of the session was too fast, with a large amount of information presented and insufficient time to take notes. It was suggested that including page numbers on documents would be helpful. Members also acknowledged that the process can feel overwhelming initially but expected it to become easier with practice. CT has developed a workbook to enable ORG members to capture their thoughts both individually and as a group.	
6.0	2026 Scrutiny – scope and desk top review	CT explained that, as the previously selected Voids scrutiny can no longer be progressed, the group will need to review the data again to help identify a new focus area. The ORG was asked to consider the TSM data, KPIs and complaints data, and to identify any areas that stood out or were of particular importance from a customer perspective. VG highlighted complaints and repairs as two key areas of concern, based on TSM satisfaction levels and complaint themes. She noted that fewer than 80% of customers were satisfied with repairs, with common issues including delays and the need for repeated follow-up. MM also raised concerns about repairs, specifically the lack of available parts and poor communication, with tenants often needing to chase for updates. However, MM acknowledged that this may partly relate to customer expectations rather than a lack of communication from Orwell. MM also noted surprise at the extent of asbestos present in properties. JB commented from a contractor’s perspective that the supply of parts and rising costs are significant challenges, and that customers may not always recognise or empathise with these constraints. ML explained that three of the Customer Insight into Action priorities relate to repairs, meaning there is already significant focus on this service area. However, there may be opportunities to add value to either Priority 1 – Communication or Priority 4 – ASB. It was noted that there is some overlap between these two priorities, particularly in relation to defining service standards and clearly communicating these to customers. AGREED: That ASB would be selected as the topic for the first scrutiny.	

Following the selection of ASB as the topic, the ORG was asked to consider the key question they wished to address.

AGREED: That the following question be used as the basis for the scrutiny:

How can the housing department communicate more effectively with victims to manage their expectations of the ASB service?

The ORG also agreed that the intended outcome would be to reduce perceptions of blame and demonstrate greater empathy towards customers.

Supplementary questions and areas for review were identified as follows:

- How does Orwell classify ASB? What constitutes nuisance?
- How many cases are received?
- Are there any identifiable patterns?
- How are customer expectations communicated? (Expectation vs reality)
- What do Housing Officers communicate to victims and to perpetrators?
- How much of the policy is explained to victims?
- How can the policy better support victims rather than perpetrators?
- How many people are affected by individual ASB cases? Could some cases be due to personality clashes or differing tolerance levels?
- How can tenant education help reduce perceptions of blame towards Orwell?
- Could community initiatives help divert attention from ASB issues?

The ORG was asked to consider what information would be required to answer these questions.

Members felt that obtaining customer views of the service would be crucial and suggested that a survey may be an appropriate method of gathering this feedback. ML advised that response rates to the transactional ASB survey are typically low, however, relevant data is available within the TSMs, as additional ASB-related questions were included last year.

The ORG also discussed the option of holding a Bootcamp-style scrutiny session and inviting customers who have experienced ASB to participate. VG queried whether it would be appropriate for ORG members to contact victims directly. It was confirmed that officers could act on behalf of the ORG to seek permission for their involvement.

		It was noted that further information would be required, which will be collated by CT.	CT
7.0	Any other business	ML advised that some ORG meeting dates will need to be amended to accommodate external timescales. Meetings relating to the five CIIA priorities have been scheduled with managers. In order to allow sufficient time to present the resulting documents to ORG and CIC, the meeting currently set for 27 July will be rescheduled to 3 August. It was also noted that a further meeting date later in the year may need to be adjusted.	
8.0	Date of next ORG meeting	29 th June 2026 (18:00 at Crane Hill Lodge)	