

The Sheltered Housing UK Association

UNITED WE STAND DIVIDED WE FAIL

News Letter No 6.

Dear Resident and Supporter ,

The Sheltered Housing UK Association (SHUK) has now been in existence for only 15 months and we have achieved a lot together. As our slogan, above, illustrates it shows how we can make progress if we all pull together nationally.

Introducing Kelly-Marie Blundell

Kelly-Marie lives in Ashford, Kent, where she is very active on the political scene on behalf of the Liberal Democratic party, and for elder people. We cannot list all of Kelly-Marie's achievements here, but save to say that if you do not get out of bed before 4.30 am, you would be unlikely to be able to match her day.



Kelly-Marie works in Employment Law, she is also a candidate for election onto the Ashford council. Amongst other things, she is also Vice Chairperson of her local Liberal Democratic party. Campaigning with 'Chris Took', Liberal Democrat Candidate for Ashford, she has successfully integrated the Sheltered Housing campaign into their South East Regional policy and hopes to commit the National Party at their Conference in March

Quietly, without prompting from us, she has just produced a list of about eight MPs who she has successfully lobbied to support Sheltered Housing.

Thanks Kelly-Marie from all of us

If you recall at about this time last year we were engaged in sending over 700 letters to Baroness Andrews at the Department of Communities. That, together with support from Age UK led to a change in the stance of the Government, who prior to that would not even discuss the subject of Sheltered Housing in the Supporting People budget.

They are listening now and the Department of Communities have raised a new committee, 'The Ministerial Sheltered Housing Working Group'. 'Jack Bovill', our Vice Chairman, is a member of that committee, although we had to fight to get SHUK on it.

Snippets of information which have come our way are that they are presently discussing whether the support element of Sheltered Housing should ever have been put into the Supporting People budget



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Thanks to Anne, our Secretary of SHUK, the protest and handing in of the 15,188 National Petition was a resounding success and three ladies travelled up from the West Country to assist **Geoffrey Cox QC MP**, to hand in the the petition. Ann had arranged a piper and a drummer to lead the parade from Trafalgar Sq to the gates of No 10, Downing street. There were cameras present but in the end only a TV station from Plymouth broadcast it. It rained the whole time but it did not dampen spirits which were good natured throughout. The residents of Sheltered Housing are no new comers to official abuse anyway !



JOE OLDMAN SENIOR POLICY OFFICER AGE UK	ANNE JEPSON SECRETARY SHUK	VERNON YARKER CHAIRMAN SHUK	RT. HON GEOFFREY COX QC MP
SARAH KINGSTON UP FROM DEVON	JILL MONKTON UP FROM DEVON	MARIA HOBBS UP FROM SOMERSET	

People came from afar to not only Devon, as above, but from Liverpool and Worcester. We are very grateful to these people who went to such lengths to support us. Apart from the people above we were delighted that the **Rt Hon. David Drew MP**, and the **Rt Hon. Adrian Sanders MP** attended, and **Chris Took**, who is the Liberal Candidate, for Ashford.

On the legal front Yvonne has now won cases in Eastbourne, Barnet and Portsmouth, although Barnet seem to be seeking to find ways around the Court ruling. We understand that Yvonne has another 118 cases backed up to be heard and we pass more possibles to her nearly every day !

As you will know that **Yvonne** was unfairly put before a disciplinary tribunal by her own profession for very trivial allegations and she won . You would think they would leave her alone after that, but no, they have now come up with, in my opinion, an unbelievable new set of alleged infringements. If, from what I have read of them, if it were not so serious, then they would be laughable and does nothing to improve the standing of the legal profession in my eyes. Please give her all the support you can. If you didn't see it in the Telegraph at the turn of the year, then I can tell you that Newspaper named her as one of the top ten people of the year. We knew that anyway, but it was nice to see it confirmed in writing .

THE SHUK SURVEY

QUESTION ASKED	NO. OF REPLIES	YES %	NO %	NA %	OTHER %
Do you believe that a site-specific warden is necessary in Sheltered Housing	329	100	-	-	-
Has your warden's hours of duty been changed over recent months or years	24*	79	21	-	-
Were the residents consulted over the change in warden's duties	27*	4	73	23	-
Are you happy with the present arrangement of floating wardens	218	0.01	94	6	-
Does either service (Floating Support or a mobile warden) give you a better service than you experienced before	247	-	98	2	-
Did your previous warden organise events at your centre	252	98	2	0.01	-
Has the loss of a site-specific warden affected the social activities in your Sheltered scheme	214	90	7	3	-
Have you ever complained to anybody about the loss of your site-specific warden	253	91	7	2	0.01
Did your complaint regarding the removal of the site-specific warden make any difference	229	0.01	96	3	0.01
Was your move into Sheltered Housing influenced by the fact that you expected there to be a site-specific warden	300	97	3	-	-
Would you have moved into Sheltered Housing if you had known that they may take the warden away after you had moved in	269	8	91	-	1

QUESTION ASKED	NO. OF REPLIES	YES %	NO %	NA %	OTHER %
Some people tell us that the loss of a site-specific warden has resulted in a depressive atmosphere at their scheme: Is this true	237	95	3	2	-
Do you want a site-specific warden returned to your Sheltered scheme	309	98	0.01	2	-
Did you give up (or sell up) a family sized home to move into Sheltered Housing	176	99	1	-	-
Is this questionnaire fair	331	98	2	-	-
Do you understand why SHUK are asking these questions	332	99	1	-	-

* Sheltered schemes

0.01 % = Less than 1% of the total return

The following areas and towns participated in the above survey

SLEAFORD	SALISBURY	EAST SUSSEX	SHEFFIELD
NORWICH	WAKEFIELD	BRISTOL	HARLOW
HACKNEY	NORTHWICH	EASTBOURNE	HYTHE
HOLYWOOD	EAST LONDON	GAINSBOROUGH	BURNHAM
BURY ST EDMUNDS	FARNHAM COMMON	*CHELMSFORD	HENFIELD

* Home town of a Committee member

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That's pretty overwhelming I would have thought, yet we still meet people in committee who profess to know exactly what residents need in Sheltered Housing but not one of them has a data base, the like of ours. Of course they will use normal distraction tactics of querying how we obtained the figures, to which we can reply 'honestly' ! And, having seen some local surveys carried out by others one could hardly attribute the word 'honest' to them at all !

SHUK is not a political organisation, but we do believe in tactical voting where this may make a difference to the probability of retaining wardens. Its time now for the membership to make an impact. Please write to your MP asking them if they support Sheltered Housing residents desire to retain their site-specific wardens. Do please let them know that you have been asked to raise this point with them by the National Organisation, the Sheltered Housing UK Association who are co-ordinating the responses. The address to write to is your **MP's name:- The House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. Show them the elderly cannot be pushed around ! Please copy the statistic pages off and send them to your MP with your letter.**

Lastly, I must tell you now that I have been engaged in this campaign for five+ years now and way before I created SHUK in 2008. I must admit I have enjoyed it, and from a one page website at the beginning to the giant sized website it is today.

We have seen SHUK come from out of nowhere, to the present day, It took two years just to get the first media interest. Now they come to us for answers and information. Along the way we discovered tireless **Yvonne Hossack** who has given an extremely powerful legal shove to the campaign. It may interest you to know that there are 60,000 solicitors in England Wales, or to put it another way 59,999 have not put themselves forward !

I have made some good friends and contacts out there, and its amazing the extraordinary talents that emerge, from amongst the membership.

I am a firm believer that one can stay too long in a committee and after a while, instead of encouraging creative ideas, one can get trapped into a safe way of thinking that '*we have always done it like this*' which actively prevents progress. So In June of this year I will resign as Chairman of The Sheltered Housing UK Association. I will be handing over to our Vice Chairman, Jack Bovill, and full elections for all the Committee posts will be held in September. Its been an absolute privilege working with you and the Committee. Good luck and keep up the campaign. Of course I will continue to remain an ordinary member.

Take care all

from

Vernon

Vernon J Yarker

Chairman, The Sheltered Housing UK Association

