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Dear All

The time has come for decisions to be made. This web-site, in one form or another, has been up and running for more than two years and for the first year recruitment by it was limited to one person. In its newer form it has been going for about six months. During that time I have sort every lead and chased up every local newspaper , leaving reports and letters on all of their web-sites in response to their local articles on Sheltered Housing . Also, with the help of freelance journalist 'Graham Mole' we have captured the interest of two national newspapers (The Sunday Express and the Scottish Sunday Express) who followed up the leads given to them and produced articles Going back even further , together with Pauline Vernon, Age Concern England, we formed SHARP (Sheltered Housing Advisory Residents Panel).

However, despite this, I am sad to say, in England this has produced very few results indeed. Whereas, by now, we should have a lean, and mean, hard hitting and hard bitten committee we just have a few who are interested and less than six who are active in anyway and three who are very active. In Scotland, however, an organisation has sprung up in the past two , or so months, they have formed a committee and they have some 39 (Bute and Irvine) sheltered units all opposed to the removal of Wardens. One can feel the vitality there and their organisation is set to grow, because they want it to.

From Wales and Northern Ireland we have nothing at all.

In England the loss of Wardens is still being seen by residents as a local issue, (something between their housing provider and them) which it is not. It is directed by Government. They severed the support link (for those on benefits and living in Sheltered Housing -which had paid for

the Warden) and threw the money out through the back door to be savaged by the local government organisations called Supporting people. Having done that Government ministers now sit back and, if complaints are received, they pass the buck to local government Supporting People and claiming innocence and it is none of their doing !

Meantime, the big charities , set up to help the elderly, Age Concern England and Help the Aged are fence sitting. Help the Aged, to be fair, are producing a report on the 'Impact of Floating Support On The Elderly', but it is likely to be that the withdrawal of Wardens, and the introduction of Floating Support, will be so far advanced by the time it is published that it will have lost its meaning, or ability to influence. Age Concern England have been keeping their heads down. So we have these large and respected charities, far from leading the troops into battle, are sitting on their hands, or 'holding meetings' from which nothing emerges except and agreement to hold another meeting ! ERoSH, (Essential Role Of Sheltered Housing) whose name suggests that they should support the residents of Sheltered Housing, are not truly resident orientated and some of their Position Statements, of late, have been contradictory but, because of their dual remit, I feel, they are unlikely to come down hard on the side of the residents !

This leads me to the crux of this letter. There is nobody, claws out, out there defending you. If the Sheltered residents in England are unwilling , as they are demonstrating here, to defend their own housing, which means getting together and organising with other sheltered units and houses in other parts of the country then, the point of this web-site and the efforts I have put into it are lost I suspect the reason behind this the thinking that other people will do it, unfortunately they will not and cannot unless they have your direct support.

The consequences of, the above, are that I will continue to keep this web-site active until early May, if a committee with an agenda and a recruitment policy (not a talk shop) does

not emerge in England, in that time . Then I will close the web-site down as a pointless or unwanted tool .

Regards

Vernon

www.shelteredhousinguk.com

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