

Great Bedwyn Parish Council
PO Box 4326
Marlborough
Wiltshire SN8 9FS

29th January 2025

Via email

Dear Clair Wilkinson,

Thank you for letter in relation to Council and public meetings where you have advised that residents have raised concerns with you as follows:

- 1. The selling of your housing stock. We understand there are 30 families in the area looking for social housing. Selling your stock in a high value area such as Great Bedwyn and replacing elsewhere is causing considerable strain on the community to find suitable housing provision.*
- 2. We are receiving reports of poor service and treatment of Aster residents with regards to contact with yourselves. These include being laughed at and hung up on.*
- 3. We are receiving reports of poor-quality repairs to your housing stock – damp, mould and leaking windows to name but a few. With regards to Wiltshire Councils motion 51 from their 24th July 24 council meeting, we would like to receive commitment from Aster that their professional standards when dealing with their clients will be evaluated and improved where required. This should include the proper maintenance of housing stock.*

I will respond to each of the concerns you have raised to hopefully provide you with some context and assurance.

1. Selling of housing stock

Aster has sold two properties in Great Bedwyn in the last 4 years. These were in Castle Road and Church Street.

When a property becomes empty, we review its overall condition to determine next steps. We do this to ensure our properties are safe, well maintained, and affordable for our customers to run now and in the future. The process involves extensive assessment, and in some instances, we will release a property if the cost of maintaining or upgrading it to a modern standard suitable for the long-term is not sustainable, as was the case with the two houses in Great Bedwyn.



0207 922 5300



0126 434 5800



0120 288 3503

Aster Group is our over-arching corporate brand and comprises the following companies and charitable entities:

Charitable Registered Societies: Aster Group Limited No: 29573R. Aster Communities No: 31530R. Aster Living No: 29574R. Aster 3 Limited No: 7605. Synergy Housing Limited No: 31447R. East Boro Housing Trust Limited No: 16946R. Central and Cecil Housing Trust No: 27693R. 55 London No: 7884. Aster Foundation is a CIO, No: 1198145.

Limited Liability Companies registered in England: Aster Homes Limited No: 06424046. Aster LD Limited No: 12341593. Aster Property Limited No: 04628065. Aster Solar Limited No: 09476337. Silbury Housing Limited No: 07276148. Silbury Housing Holdings Limited No: 07273905. Enham Trust No: 00173199 a Charity registered in England No: 211235. Central & Cecil Innovations Limited No: 08904605. Central & Cecil Construction Services Limited No: 08904580.

Public Limited Company registered in England: Aster Treasury PLC No: 08749672. Registered office for Synergy Housing Limited is Link House, First Floor, 25 West Street, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1LD. Registered office for East Boro Housing Trust Limited is Faulkner House, 31 West Street, Wimborne, Dorset, BH21 1JS. Registered Office for Enham Trust is Enham Place, Enham Alamein, Andover, Hampshire, SP11 6JS. Registered office for Central and Cecil Housing Trust, 55 London, Central & Cecil Innovations Limited and Central & Cecil Construction Services Limited is Grace House, 26 Lodge Road, London NW8 7ER. Registered office for all other businesses is Sarsen Court, Horton Avenue, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2AZ.

We hold and use your personal data in line with Data Protection law. You can find out more in our Privacy Notice at www.aster.co.uk/privacy.

We have previously advised that we own a total of 80 homes, which are a mixture of social and affordable rent in the Great Bedwyn area and since 2020 we have relet 20 of these homes through Wiltshire Council as they have become available. In terms of investment in housing we are committed to delivering as many new homes as we can to address the acute housing shortage. We are planning to deliver 300 new homes across Wiltshire over the next three years.

2. Poor service and treatment of Aster residents

I am sorry that residents have raised concerns with the Parish Council. I have looked through the complaints made to Aster in the past year and only 2 complaints were made and investigated in Great Bedwyn. I am very surprised to hear that residents have been laughed at and hung up on as this is not the service that we would expect for our customers. Should Aster customers be unhappy with the service they receive from us, they have the option of making a formal complaint which will be thoroughly investigated, and the customer will be responded to. More information about how to do this can be found at www.aster.co.uk/contact-us/complaints.

3. Low quality repairs

I am sorry that residents are reporting their dissatisfaction with the quality of repairs to our homes. We are passionate about providing well maintained, safe homes, but we know that sometimes things may break or go wrong. When that happens, customers can contact us using a variety of methods to tell us about the problem and we will arrange a time and date to fix it, depending on the type of issue.

In the last 12 months we have surveyed over 8,400 customers shortly after completing a repair in their home. The results have told us that the overall satisfaction with the repairs service is 84%. This is further broken down to 93% satisfied with the tradesperson, 94% satisfied with appointment time, date and ease of booking as well as 84% satisfied with the quality of the repair.

Should a customer have an issue with their home, I would like to encourage them to report it to Aster so that we are able to remedy it.

I am afraid that I don't feel it is appropriate for a representative to attend a public meeting for people to present their concerns. I have concerns over confidentiality and that personal information may be discussed in a public setting. Aster has several options for people to share their concerns. Issues relating to an individual, family, household and property can be discussed within the boundaries of what is appropriate.

Yours sincerely



Josh Dear
Head of Housing