

Minutes of Virtual South East Scotland Regional Meeting
26 October 2020

Present:

Alan Frank , Vice Chair
Lillias Reid, Secretary (Acting)
David Rintoul, Committee member
Jim Galloway, Committee member
Terry Kirby, Committee member
Cath McArthur, Committee member

In attendance:

Carolynne Watson, TP team
Islay McLauchlan, TP team

Apologies:

Alan Dunton, Chair (Acting)

Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of 17 September 2020 were proposed by Terry Kirby, seconded by David Rintoul and agreed as an accurate record of the last meeting. There were no matters arising.

Chairs & Secretaries meeting

The first virtual Chairs & Secretaries meeting will take place via Zoom on Tuesday 3 November, and the committee agreed that Cath McArthur and Terry Kirby will attend as R2 observers. Terry has also agreed to bring a discussion paper on rent and affordability to the meeting which follows on from the affordability issues discussed at the R2 meeting in September.

Cath McArthur raised a point on whether the Regional Networks should aim to proceed with AGMs within this financial year. Carolynne confirmed that the AGMs scheduled for May and June 2020 were initially postponed until the autumn following committee agreement however given the ongoing restrictions on meeting in larger groups and uncertainty going forward the committees agreed to suspend the 2020 AGMs and, providing circumstances allow, resume the AGM cycle in spring/summer 2021. The committee noted this and agreed that should the pandemic remain ongoing in the New Year, consideration should be given to running a virtual AGM. In the meantime, the committee would like to consider options for recruiting to the committee given the number of current vacancies.

SHR Liaison group

The Liaison group will meet with representatives from SHR on 27 October, following a pre-meeting of the group earlier this month. This meeting will be the first since the lockdown began in March. The Liaison group have flagged SHR's monthly Covid dashboard as a useful source of information for tenants, and a link to the dashboard has previously been circulated to all Regional Network members.

In the context of this discussion, the committee asked for clarification on changes to the process for assignation of tenancies. Carolynne agreed to circulate information on assignations ahead of the next meeting in December.

Update on TP team's work during Covid

Carolynne updated on the current work of the TP team, noting that the workload of the team has increased and expanded significantly since the lockdown began in March. All four committees have by now resumed their regular meeting cycle via Zoom, with additional meetings taking place to capture views on policy issues such as legal action/ evictions during the pandemic and consultations from both SHR and Scottish Government.

In this time, the TP team, with support from Colin Stewart of Region 1, have also redeveloped and launched a refreshed Regional Networks website, which also includes a separate section for each of the four committees. Once the website has been up and running for a period of time, the team will request a volunteer from each committee to take responsibility for website updates for their committee section.

The committee had an initial discussion about work planning in the immediate short-term and agreed to develop a newsletter, updating on the work of the committee during the pandemic. Submissions and draft articles for the newsletter will be welcomed ahead of the next meeting in December. The committee agreed that the newsletter will also include a tribute to Jeanette Boyd, former Treasurer of R2, who sadly passed away this spring.

Any other business

All committee members have been busy and involved with a range of local and national work during the pandemic, and there was some discussion on the webinar events members have been involved with recently. The consensus view is that virtual tools have been helpful in keeping people involved and engaged during the lockdowns; the most helpful sessions are those in which participants can get involved directly with discussions.

Forward meeting planner

Monday 7 December at 11am. Carolynne will issue Zoom meeting details a few days before the meeting. This will be the final meeting scheduled for 2020; at the

December meeting consideration will be given to dates for the first few meetings of 2021, to be held on a virtual basis. The committee agreed that later in 2021, further consideration will be given to a meeting schedule for the remainder of the year, taking into account any developments with the pandemic and potential restrictions which may be in place in the new year.