

Minutes for Central Scotland Regional Network 4
Held on 29th April 2021
On Line by Zoom
at 11 am

Present:

Hugh McClung MBE	HMc	Stirling Tenants Assembly
Philomena McClung	PMc	Stirling Tenants Assembly
Jeanette Arneil	JeA	Clydesdale HS Tenants & Res.
John Duffy	JD	Shotts TARA
Geoff Morgan	GM	BACCRA
Georgia McCambley	GMc	West Dunbartonshire
Frances McGonagle	FMc	West Dunbartonshire
Shona Gorman	SG	Link TSP
Lindsay Anderson	LA	Link Housing Association
June Anderson	JuA	Clackmannanshire T&R Fed

In Attendance:

Susan McLellan	SMc	Scottish Government
Jemma Stewart	JS	Scottish Government

Apologies:

Peter Winnie	Coatbridge Fed. Of Tenants & Residents
Mary Niven	Trust Housing Customer Panel

1 The Chair greeted everyone, and welcomed Jemma Stewart to the Meeting. Jemma is a new addition to the Government TP Team. Members introduced themselves to Jemma, with a brief description of who they were and where they came from.

2 **The Minutes of the last Meeting Held on 11th March 2021 And Matters Arising**

The Minutes were approved by JuA, and seconded by LA

MATTERS ARISING

Matters arising from the previous meeting which require discussion have been included as separate items in this meeting's agenda.

3	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>No Correspondence has been received</p>	
4	<p><u>Work Plan/Communication Strategy</u></p> <p>There is no up date to the Work Plan, and Communications will be dealt with under Item 7</p>	
5	<p><u>Treasurer's Report</u></p> <p>.</p> <p>There has been no change to the financial records since the last meeting and the balance as at 29th April 2021 is;</p> <p>Current Balance; £2503.27 Petty Cash ; £ 140.16</p>	
6	<p><u>Working Group Updates</u></p> <p><u>JHPDG</u> There have been no meetings of this Group, Policy Circle replaced it during the Pandemic, but it is likely to be resumed once the Pandemic is over.</p> <p><u>Fire Safety</u> There have been no meetings of this Group</p> <p><u>Housing and Social Security</u> There have been no meetings of this Group but there is a wish to get this group up and running again. The Reps who were on this Group are no longer part of the Networks, so it will be necessary to ask for new volunteers to join when the Group is restarted.</p> <p><u>Age Home and Community</u> There have been no meetings of this Group And it may be disbanded. More information to follow.</p> <p><u>Chairs and Secretary's</u></p> <p>There will be a Meeting next week, with quite a full Agenda. JuA and PMc will attend as observers. SG will bring a Summary to next Meeting.</p> <p><u>SHR Liaison Group</u></p> <p>The Regional SHR Liaison Group do not meet again until the 11th May 2021. And Minutes of the last Meeting an JuA's report have already been circulated.</p>	

7	<p><u>Communication sub group/Website update</u></p> <p>There has not been a Meeting of the Communications Sub Group since March, and members have had the Report from that Meeting. The Website is available to all, and individuals are learning how to upload Material to the Website. SG asked to upload Minutes of March Network 4 Meeting to the Website now that they have been approved.</p>	
8	<p><u>HRA Update</u></p> <p>At the suggestion of the Housing Minister, a Meeting was arranged between Regional Network reps and Staff of Audit Scotland to discuss HRA funding and what advice and guidance Audit Scotland could offer COSLA in terms of the use of HRA funding. Audit Scotland said they could not give guidance and advice in relation to this, only scrutinise Local Authority accounts and then offer advice on areas of spend and whether they were legitimate uses of funding. This area is open to differing interpretations throughout the Country and clarity in permissible uses for HRA funding which will apply to all is very much needed. It was agreed by members who had been involved in this Meeting, that overall it was a very disappointing result. The Chair, who was at the Meeting with Audit Scotland will take the matter to the Chairs and Secretary's meeting next week. There was general discussion by members and it was agreed that this difficult and challenging matter was far from being resolved, and that clarity around legitimate spending of HRA was required. The Act of 1987, and Guidance of 2014 have only resulted in more confusion</p>	
9	<p><u>New Rent Focus Group</u></p> <p>JuA reported that the work of this group being facilitated by TPAS is continuing. Housemark have been invited to the May Meeting and SHR to the June meeting. TPAS are also gathering information from other parts of the UK and abroad. Covid has changed Rent rise patterns, with some Organisations opting to have a Rent freeze. Opinions vary through out differing parts of Scotland on what is affordable. How do Landlords identify what is affordable for their Tenants? Can House size and household composition play a part? Are whole household costs included? Are affordability tool kits used? More consultation with Tenants is required, and realistic options given. Next meeting of this group is 6th May 2021. Discussion on this subject included the Chair speaking of the ALACHO Report Obviously this only covers L/A's, it shows the amount of Rent Increases over several years, and this will be passed to JuA as she is a Rep for Network 4 on the Rent Focus Group. HcC also expressed concern over the Rent Increases in the Private Rented Sector, and the amount of Social Housing presently being built. There is also no uniformity across Local Authorities in what is used to To calculate Rent increase %, some use CPI, some use RPI and others a Completely different formula. Is affordability a major factor when deciding how Much a Rent increase should be? Is it what the Organisation believes Tenants Can pay? Or is it calculated on Business requirements – with the belief That Housing Benefit will step in to help those Tenants who find it unaffordable? What of those Tenants who have been able to save, and now find themselves, without access to Benefits, but struggling to pay full Rent?</p>	

	<p>One member, a former Board member did agree that Business Viability was a huge factor in deciding Rent Increase amounts. If options are given, how valid are they? And what purpose do they serve? To serve existing Tenants Or to allow more building of new houses? SFHA guidance says that if Rent is less than 25% of your income it is affordable. This takes no account Of other Housing costs. Latest figures just published show arrears at Highest level ever. Temporary Eviction Ban possibly playing a part in This. JuA will take comments back to the Focus Group</p>	
<p>10</p>	<p><u>Draft Heat in Buildings Consultation</u></p> <p>This was a lengthy Consultation document, with 70 questions to be answered Members who had attended felt they were able to answer some of these Questions, but others were much more difficult and somewhat technical. 10 years to achieve a complete change in Heating sources and systems is Very challenging especially given the lack of information around. This is a hugely aspirational plan, but where will the money come from? There may be cleaner sources, but at what cost? Hydrogen vehicles are available, is This a possibility for Homes? This only the start of a long process which Will undoubtably need much more discussion.</p>	
<p><u>11</u></p>	<p><u>AGM</u></p> <p>Invites have gone out, nomination forms are required for those people standing down and wishing to be re-elected. TIS are facilitating the Booking and Nomination process.</p>	
<p><u>12</u></p>	<p><u>AOCB</u></p> <p>GM stated that the Constitution needed a few changes and corrections.</p> <p>It was agreed that GM would list these changes along with original wording And pass the changes to TIS so that they could be circulated to members and Then voted on at the AGM.</p> <p>There being no other AOCB the Chair thanked everyone and brought the Meeting to a close.</p>	

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