

**Minutes of Virtual South East Scotland Regional Meeting**  
**26 July 2021 at 11am, Via Zoom**

**Present:**

Cathie McArthur, nominated Chair  
Isabella Vint, Secretary  
Terry Kirby  
Irina Lazarenko

**In attendance:**

Carolynne Watson, TP team

**Apologies:**

Alan Frank, Chair  
Bill Campbell, Vice Chair  
Alan Dunton  
Lillias Reid  
Penelope Ciancanelli  
Debra McCreath.

**1. Welcome**

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair, Terry Kirby proposed Cathie McArthur, previous Vice Chair of South East Scotland, chair the meeting. Cathie noted her status on the committee as a co-optee and the committee discussed and agreed that due to today's lower attendance and the fact that the agenda consists of information and updates only, their preference is for Cathie to chair and Cathie agreed to this.

**2. Minutes of the previous meeting- 24 May 2021**

Terry asked for some clarifications and updates, including:

- *The status of the updates required to the South East Scotland section of the website-* Carolynne confirmed these have been made, and the website is now up to date;
- *Progress with Basecamp* – Carolynne confirmed a Basecamp has been set up for South East Scotland and all committee members have been given access to the site. The committee agreed they feel Basecamp will be useful but felt that training/ a familiarisation session will be important in order to support the committee to get the best out of Basecamp and Carolynne noted that a number of Regional Network members had echoed this in their responses to the recent training and development questionnaire, so the TP team will be picking this up;
- *The committee schedule to the end of the calendar year* – Carolynne confirmed the meeting dates to the end of 2021 will remain as agreed, however there will be a likely additional meeting in August for the committee to discuss and agree their response to the consultation on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

There were no further matters arising which are not included on today's agenda.

Terry proposed the minutes of 24 May and Isabella Vint seconded these.

### **3. Working groups update**

#### **a) Rents Focus Group**

Terry gave an update on the most recent meeting of the Rents Focus group, which included a presentation from the Swedish Tenants Union, setting out information on the Swedish approach to the rented sector, including the fact that energy costs, communal cleaning and garden maintenance are included in the cost of rent, the high environmental standards of energy in Sweden, the Swedish campaign to keep rent increases low during the pandemic and the use of an affordability formula in rent-setting in Sweden, with the provision that no more than 25% of income should be spent on rent costs. The committee agreed the session sounded very interesting and they appreciated the perspective on the Swedish approach.

Slides from the session are available and the committee agreed they would like to see these; Carolynne agreed to source these and circulate. The next meeting of the focus group is scheduled for this coming Thursday, 29 July.

#### **b) Communications sub-group**

Carolynne noted that there has been no representation from South East Scotland at the two most recent Communications sub-group meetings and asked that anyone interested in becoming part of the group contact either Carolynne or Annabel for further information on the group and their work.

Carolynne updated on some of the group's current work, including work to develop and update the Regional Networks website, production of a joint Newsletter from all four regions and a leaflet providing background information on the Regional Networks and their work, which the committee agreed will be beneficial in promoting the Networks in areas which currently are under-represented.

#### **c) SHR Liaison group**

The group met with representatives from SHR last week, and the agenda covered the consultation on the Scottish Social Housing Charter, working group updates and updates on recent SHR publications including a research report with SHR's National Panel of Tenants and Service users on the impact of the pandemic, which the committee requested Carolynne circulate a link to.

In terms of membership of the Liaison group, Carolynne noted that attendance from South East Scotland reps has been very low at recent meetings. At the last South East Scotland committee meeting, Bill Campbell volunteered as a rep, however Bill was unable to attend the most recent meeting and there is a need for up to two more representatives from the committee to ensure South East Scotland is adequately represented. The committee agreed that Carolynne should contact all committee members to request additional representatives, and to clarify the status of the existing reps. Carolynne agreed to do this.

*Action Points: Carolynne to circulate Rents focus group slides, and contact the full committee membership regarding representation on the Communications sub-group and SHR Liaison group.*

#### **4. Upcoming work**

##### **a) Housing to 2040**

The committee discussed the Housing to 2040 publication and issues of significance for the Regional Networks, including the commitment to ensuring the Regional Networks are representative of the Scottish social housing sector tenant base as a whole. The committee agreed that it is important to ensure the Networks represent all, and that tenants from a wide range of backgrounds are represented at the table.

The committee noted that virtual and digital engagement is likely to play a key role in engaging with a wide range of tenants from different backgrounds and with different circumstances and preferences going forward and agreed that expanding the range of digital and virtual engagement methods and tools will be important to attract representatives from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible. It will also be important to look at more informal ways of engaging going forward besides the traditional face to face approach used by the Networks to date.

##### **b) Scottish Social Housing Charter consultation**

The Scottish Social Housing Charter consultation opened in June, and is available on the Scottish Government's website. Virtual Charter consultation session meetings are being administered by TIS and TPAS Scotland and a number of committee members have attended one of the events.

The committee agreed they would like to submit a response to the consultation. Carolynne agreed to contact the rest of the committee with a choice of potential dates during August to discuss and agree a collective consultation response. Carolynne also agreed to arrange printed copies of the consultation paperwork for committee members.

##### **c) Training and development**

Carolynne updated on the work the TP team are now embarking on in relation to training and development. All Regional Network members were issued with a copy of a questionnaire to get a sense of areas where members may require training or would have interest in learning more going forward. The questionnaire also asks members to consider their preferences for meetings as pandemic restrictions gradually begin to lift. The TP team will shortly complete analysis of the responses to the questionnaire and this will form the basis of training sessions which the team anticipate will be delivered in the early autumn.

*Action Points: Carolynne to make arrangements for a meeting to discuss and agree a collective response to the consultation on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.*

#### **5. AOCB**

Terry requested the agenda for today's meeting be updated to reflect the date and time and Carolynne agreed to do this.

Irina noted that she has not received a copy of the Code of Conduct, discussed at the last meeting and confirmed she has also not received the training and development questionnaire. Carolynne agreed to contact Irina to ensure the contact details the TP team have for her are correct to ensure her paperwork arrives on time.

Carolynne noted that the next meeting of Chairs & Secretaries is scheduled for Tuesday 3 August, and as this will be the first meeting Alan and Isabella will attend as South East Scotland Chair and Secretary, Carolynne will contact them to discuss the meeting once the agenda has been finalised and circulated. The committee requested Carolynne also notify the rest of the committee of the meeting date and request two attendees from South East Scotland to attend along with Alan and Isabella.

*Action Points: Carolynne to make the requested updates to the agenda for today's meeting, and to request committees for the upcoming Chairs & Secretaries meeting on 3 August.*

## **6. Date of next meeting**

The next scheduled committee meeting will take place on Monday 13 September. Carolynne will arrange a date for the committee to complete their response to the Scottish Social Housing Charter consultation during August.

Cathie closed the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution.