

# APPROVED MINUTES

**Regional Networks**  
**Meeting held on Wednesday 6 December 2023**  
**at 10.00**

**Present:**

Colin Stewart	CS	R1	Meeting Chair	Aberdeen City
Liz Richardson	LR	R1	Vice Chair	Highlands
Kath Fennell	KF	R1	Committee Member	Orkney Islands
Gordon Saunders	GS	R2	Chair	Scottish Borders
Irina Lazarenko	IL	R2	Vice Chair	City of Edinburgh
Alan Dalby	AD	R2	Committee Member	Fife
Tiffany Ward	TW	R2	Committee Member	Scottish Borders
Anne Cameron	AC	R3	Chair	South Ayrshire
Bruce Cuthbertson	BC	R3	Vice Chair	East Ayrshire
Margaret Dymond	MD	R3	Committee Member	Renfrewshire
Norma Ferguson	NF	R3	Committee Member	North Ayrshire
Shona Gorman	SG	R4	Chair	Falkirk
June Anderson	JAn	R4	Vice Chair	Clackmannanshire
John Duffy	JD	R4	Committee Member	North Lanarkshire
Donna Murray	DM	R4	Committee Member	South Lanarkshire
Jeanette Arneil	JAr	R4	Committee Member	South Lanarkshire

**In attendance:**

Carolynne Watson	CW		Scottish Government	
Shaun Cassidy	SC		Scottish Government	
Jennie Niven				Observer
Mike Grist				Observer
Rebecca Cuthbert				Observer

**Apologies / Absent:**

Alex Wilson	AW	R1	Co-optee	Apologies
Eric Spence	ES	R1	Committee Member	Absent
Jackie Bugden	JB	R1	Committee Member	Apologies
Scott MacLeod	SMcL	R1	Co-optee	Absent
Linda Lennie	LL	R1	Committee Member	Absent
Isabella Vint	IV	R2	Committee Member	Absent
Norma Ferguson	NF	R3	Committee Member	Apologies
Willie Derrick	WD	R4	Committee Member	Apologies
Frances McGonagle	FMcG	R4	Committee Member	Absent
June Todd	JT	R4	Committee Member	Absent

	MAIN ROOM ITEMS	ACTION
1	<p><b>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of interest</b></p> <p>CS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Under Declarations of Interest, CS noted his role as a Board member of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). Both GS and BC noted their roles as Board members of the Tenants Information Service (TIS), and MD noted her role as a Board member of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).</p> <p>In order to make best use of time, apologies were held until item 2, Business Matters.</p>	
2	<p><b>Business Matters</b></p> <p><u>RAAC Update: Scottish Government</u></p> <p>Shaun Cassidy (SC), Scottish Government Housing Standards &amp; Quality team, updated on the position regarding Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and social housing, acknowledging that there is significant interest in the topic following the identification of safety issues resulting from ageing and poorly maintained RAAC.</p> <p>SC noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many housing providers have been aware of the position with RAAC and have been monitoring the situation with their own stock for some time. Other landlords are continuing to investigate the position with their properties.</li> <li>• Even where RAAC is found, it's presence is not necessarily cause for concern- if it is in good condition and well maintained, RAAC is in general not a problem.</li> <li>• SHR has carried out data gathering on RAAC in the sector, and have published headline findings, with more detailed information set for publication in the coming week.</li> <li>• The Scottish Government has convened a cross-sector working group on RAAC to gather and disseminate information and data.</li> </ul> <p>LR asked whether the recent experience with RAAC highlights a need for a national database on buildings and materials within the sector. SC noted that many landlords already have good records on the use of building materials- for example, Councils and RSLs who built their own stock generally maintain good levels of detail on their properties. Some landlords may be less aware for a variety of reasons, but overall, the situation with RAAC highlights the importance of landlords knowing their stock well.</p>	

JAn noted that in Clackmannanshire, 2 blocks have been evacuated following the identification of RAAC, with tenants decanted for the immediate future. JAn asked if the Scottish Government working group is taking into account the experience of tenants. SC noted that the group currently does not have tenant representation. JAn noted that she would be keen to share some details of the experiences of tenants affected in Clacks, and agreed to send some information on this to SC, via the Tenant Priorities Team.

Members thanked SC for his attendance and update.

#### Minutes of previous meeting

Prior to taking the minutes of the previous meeting, apologies were recorded as per the above. Introductions were made, and observers in particular were welcomed to today's meeting, and invited to remain online at the conclusion of the meeting for a short chat with Regional Network Chairs.

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed with one minor correction of initials at the Treasurer's report. The minutes were approved by GS, and seconded by BC.

#### Matters arising

There were no Matters Arising which are not already covered on today's agenda.

#### Treasurer's Report

Cash in hand - £16.33.

Bank Account opening balance @ 1 October - £775.70

October expenditure - £625.88

November expenditure - £77.65

Income - £4250 (£1850 from R3 account, £2400 from R4 account).

Closing Balance @ 30 November - £4322.17.

A balance remains on the R2 account of just over £600. With no member signatories remaining on this account, members agreed to approach the bank to begin their process for accessing these funds and closing the account.

#### Correspondence

Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings team have notified members of the publication of a consultation seeking views on a new Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) in Scotland. This new standard will replace the second Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH2). The consultation opened on 28 November and closes on 8 March. Members agreed they are keen to submit a response to this consultation,

	and CW will contact members to arrange a consultation session to develop a response to this in the New Year.	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Website and Basecamp training</b></p> <p>CS will carry out a short session of training on either Basecamp or the website at each meeting going forward to give members an opportunity to learn more about Basecamp and raise any questions they may have.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Sub groups</b></p> <p><u><i>RN Accessibility/ Scottish Government AHIL group</i></u></p> <p>LR noted that there have been no meetings of either group since the last Regional Networks meeting in October. LR noted she is keen to resume bi-monthly meetings of the Regional Networks group, and asked CW to put this into motion in the New Year. LR noted that some members still need to be added to the Basecamp project, and CS agreed to action this.</p> <p>LR has raised the importance of ensuring consultations are available in a range of accessible formats with Scottish Government and is awaiting a response. CW agreed to follow up on this on LR's behalf. LR also noted that CS has been left off the invitation list for the most recent AHIL meetings. CW agreed to also follow up on this with policy colleagues.</p> <p><u><i>Communications sub-group</i></u></p> <p>SG noted that the group has not had a recent meeting as the group are about to begin work on re-branding. Details of this will be covered later on the agenda.</p> <p><u><i>Housing to 2040/ Strategic Board.</i></u></p> <p>The Strategic Board met on 25 October, with the Minister, Cosla and SHR in attendance. The Housing Review group provided an update at that meeting, and the group's report will be due for publication shortly. The next meeting of the Strategic Board will take place in January, and is intended to be a workshop format to plan and prioritise work in the context of the current circumstances including the Cost of Living crisis.</p> <p><u><i>HRA</i></u></p> <p>At the last meeting with the Housing Minister, Mr McLennan asked members to provide an overview of the position on HRA and examples of practice within the local authority sector. JAn requested members share evidence regarding the HRA to her and CW in order to collate and provide the requested</p>	

	<p>information to the Minister. The group set a date of 11 January for submissions of information and evidence on HRA from members, plus any further submissions of information as requested by the Minister at the most recent meeting with members.</p> <p><u>Rent Focus group/ Housing Affordability</u></p> <p>CS noted he and Lesley Baird are working on the final report of the Rent Focus group following feedback from Anne Cook and the Tenant Priorities team. A date will be set for members to meet to finalise the report.</p> <p>The Housing Affordability group met on 15 November, considering how affordability should be understood, in terms of affordability of rent and affordability of whole housing costs overall, and CS asked members for their views on this in order to feed into discussions.</p> <p><u>SHR Liaison group</u></p> <p>The last meeting with SHR took place on 24 October, covering topics including RAAC, rent increases and an upcoming thematic on tenant participation which has now been agreed by SHR.</p> <p>SHR met with Regional Network members yesterday on the progress of the second phase of the Regulatory Framework review and proposed changes. A consultation session will be held with members next week. SHR are proposing a working group to look at current indicators – particularly around tenant safety- in order to review what may require refinement for the future.</p> <p>SHR hope to publish the new Regulatory Framework by the end of January.</p> <p>CW noted that SHR has published an update on February’s Homelessness thematic. SG agreed that the Liaison group will likely want to have further discussions about the findings of this prior to the next Liaison group meeting with SHR.</p>	
6	<p><u>Working group representation</u></p> <p>The Regional Networks currently have 6 main working groups, with the Rent Focus group shortly about to wind up. If members would like to be added to any groups, please let CS know.</p>	
7	<p><b>Rebranding and reorganisation of Regional Networks</b></p> <p>SG updated members on outline plans for rebranding, with TIS supporting the Regional Networks in this project. A proposal has been submitted to CS and SG by TIS, and a meeting will be held on 14 December to discuss and refine proposals more fully. The</p>	

	Regional Network Comms group will be working directly with TIS on this project. It is likely that a Comms group meeting will be scheduled for early January to discuss the outcomes of the 14 December meeting and proposals in more detail.	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>A.O.C.B</b></p> <p>JAn raised ongoing issues about additional funding for a Gypsy Traveller site in Clackmannanshire, and is continuing correspondence with the Scottish Government Gypsy Traveller team on this subject.</p> <p>MD highlighted tenant participation issues which will be raised with Renfrewshire Council at an upcoming meeting later today.</p> <p>CS raised the issue of approval of minutes, noting that when the subscription service is up and running, it will be important to approve minutes more quickly so that these can be shared with subscribers promptly. CS suggested the draft minutes be ready within a week of the meeting, with the draft shared on Basecamp then a further week for approval or corrections by members prior to publication on the website. Members agreed that this approach and proposed timescales is sensible and workable.</p> <p>AC raised the issue of proposed rent increases and the scale of some of the increases proposed. AC asked what members feel about the proposals in their own areas- members are invited to comment further on Basecamp on this topic.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Wednesday 7 February, 2024</p>	

Date	07-Nov-23
Proposed	CS
Seconded	LR