

Minutes of Virtual South East Scotland Regional Meeting
1 February 2021

Present:

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

In attendance:

Carolynne Watson, TP team
Isabella Vint, Midlothian Council
Bill Campbell, Fife Council

Apologies:

Alan Dunton, Chair (Acting)
Debra McCreath, Committee member.

1. Welcome

Alan Frank, Vice Chair, agreed to chair the meeting in the absence of Alan Dunton. Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies were noted and the attendees agreed that a recording of the meeting should be taken for the minutes. The committee members introduced themselves for the benefit of those joining the committee meeting for the first time, and for those dialling in via telephone. Isabella Vint, Midlothian Council, joins her first committee meeting as a co-optee, and Bill Campbell, Fife Council, joins his first meeting as an observer. Alan noted that both are particularly welcome.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

David Rintoul proposed the minutes and Lillias Reid seconded.

Irina had not received a paper copy of the minutes, and Lillias noted that Alan Dunton would also like meeting papers sent by hard copy. Carolynne noted this.

David asked for an update on the position regarding mandatory fire and smoke alarms in all households in Scotland. At the last meeting, Annabel confirmed that the legislation has been delayed until February 2022 as a result of the Covid pandemic. There are no further updates at this time, however the TP Team will continue to communicate with the Regional Networks on any additional information and updates we receive in relation to this.

David also requested an update on Terry Kirby's paper on affordability which was presented to the last Chairs & Secretaries meeting prior to the Christmas break. Terry confirmed that the paper was well received and he thanked everyone who submitted responses to the questionnaire issued to all Regional Network members in December.

Terry is presenting an update to his paper at Chairs & Secretaries on 2 February; based on this, Chairs & Secretaries will agree a way forward for this work, including the possibility of a working group to further consider affordability concerns and rent consultation. There were no other matters arising.

3. SES Newsletter

In Debra's absence, Carolynne gave a short update on the draft Newsletter. The Communications sub-group met last week and prior to that meeting, Debra forwarded a copy of the draft newsletter for information. As part of the broader discussion, the group agreed that committee newsletters and national newsletters should include some focus on the work of the Regional Networks, particularly how the networks are working during the pandemic. The group discussed the sources of information and advice which could be useful to tenants at this time and agreed to collate a 'Useful Resources' section for inclusion in Newsletters which will include weblinks and contact details for agencies and organisations offering useful services.

Debra hopes to have the newsletter finalised shortly; although the primary focus will be on circulating virtual copies, the TP team will also look into options for a limited print run.

4 Communications

Carolynne noted that at last week's Communications subgroup meeting, Debra set up a training session with Colin Stewart of Region 1 on updating the South East Scotland section of the site. Debra will have access to update this section of the site and to upload relevant content, including meeting papers, minutes and the newsletter. Also at the subgroup meeting, there was discussion of the Regional Network communications plan and the contact and distribution lists included in the plan. The subgroup agreed that it would be helpful for each committee to review and refresh these lists to ensure they are up to date. The committee agreed that communications should be scheduled on the agenda for the next committee meeting to review these.

Lillias raised the question of photos for the site, and Carolynne agreed to arrange an additional short Zoom meeting later in February to take a group photo of the committee. When face to face meetings resume, the TP team will arrange updated group photos of each of the committees.

5. Recruitment

Carolynne updated on recruitment, and noted she is delighted to welcome Isabella and Bill to their first meeting. Carolynne noted that prior to Christmas, she wrote to TP officers from the Councils and RSLs in the two local authority areas which are currently undersubscribed, West Lothian and Fife, to advise of the committee vacancies in the hope of attracting interest and new members.

Importantly for recruitment, the committee has previously held discussions on the discrepancies between the South East Scotland constitution and the constitutions of the other three Networks which allow for a maximum of 2 representatives per local authority area. Carolynne reminded everyone that the committee has previously held discussions on the discrepancies in the constitution and expressed interest at the beginning of last year in aligning the constitution with the other networks. The intention at that time was to table amendments to the constitution at the 2020 AGM to bring the constitution into alignment,

however due to the pandemic, last year's AGM was initially postponed and then subsequently cancelled.

All proposed constitutional amendments will require to be tabled at this year's AGM, however for now, the committee noted the sense in holding the membership at two representatives per local authority area in anticipation of a change to the constitution at the AGM.

Irina noted her recollection was that the alignment of the constitution was discussed at the beginning of 2020 and she recalled that Carolynne had previously circulated a copy of the constitution for South East Scotland, along with a copy of the 'model' constitution used by the other networks to highlight the discrepancies. Irina requested the constitutions of all 4 networks be circulated to the committee prior to the next meeting to enable all members to form a view. Carolynne agreed to do this. The committee agreed that the next meeting should focus on planning for the AGM, and consideration of the constitution will be a key aspect of this.

6. Network meetings

SHR Liaison group

Carolynne noted that all 4 networks have been asked to update the list of representatives and contact details for the SHR Liaison group. At present, the membership from South East Scotland includes Alan Dunton, Alan Frank and Debra McCreath; there is one vacant space. Alan Frank confirmed he wishes to remain part of the Liaison group; as Alan Dunton and Debra were not in attendance at the meeting, Carolynne agreed to confirm separately with them whether they intend to carry on with the Liaison group. Carolynne confirmed that at present, the committee has one vacant space and requested expressions of interest. David Rintoul noted his interest and Carolynne agreed to contact him separately with further information about the group and to pass on contact details for Leonora Montgomery, North of Scotland, who is currently coordinating the group temporarily while the Chair, Bruce Cuthbertson, South West Scotland, is recovering from ill-health.

Chairs and Secretaries- 2 February 2021

Lillias, Alan Frank and Jim will attend this quarter's Chairs & Secretaries meeting as representatives of South East Scotland. Terry will also attend in order to provide an update on his paper on affordability and rent consultation. Cameron Grant, North of Scotland, will be chairing the meeting.

South East Scotland AGM 2021

Carolynne noted that although the hope was that the 2021 AGM could be held in person, it has become increasingly clear that this year's AGM will need to be held virtually. Carolynne stated that there will be some added complexity for planning for a virtual AGM, and that some aspects will take particular thought and consideration, for example, virtual voting. The TP team are currently giving consideration to these points to determine a possible way forward.

Carolynne noted that the other regions have elected to keep their AGM meeting dates as close as possible to the proposed 2020 cycle, which would mean South East Scotland's

AGM would fall on Saturday 8 May. Carolynne asked for agreement on this date. Terry proposed that this year as we are not tied to selecting a venue etc, consideration should be given to holding the AGM on a weekday or an evening. The committee had mixed views on this, although noted that many potential attendees will still be working on weekdays and that evenings have implications for some, for example those with childcare commitments and those who work shifts. Carolynne suggested that a vote take place; the majority of the committee entitled to vote opted for the 8 May date. As co-optees, neither David nor Isabella voted.

Carolynne noted that the TP team will be continuing planning work for the AGM cycle and that this is a key priority for the team as timescales are likely to be tight for issuing invitations, nomination forms and paperwork. The committee agreed that the key focus of the next meeting will be on planning for the AGM, including the proposed constitutional changes highlighted above.

All Network event

The committee expressed an interest in arranging a virtual all-Network event for 2021, as the last National Event was held in November 2019. Carolynne noted that this is something the TP team have had initial discussions about. Any all-Network event taking place in 2021 is likely to have to happen virtually. The virtual platforms used by the Regional Networks at present are not conducive to holding workshops/ discussion groups and the team will be looking at ways to achieve a more interactive event. The committee noted that a session of updates would be helpful and that discussion groups can take place on separate calls if necessary, allowing people to choose a topic of interest to participate in, for example. Lillias agreed to raise this at the upcoming Chairs & Secretaries meeting to gauge the views of other Regional Networks.

7. AOB

The committee unanimously agreed to co-opt Isabella Vint, Midlothian Council, to the committee for the duration of time until the next AGM, when a formal nomination to the committee can be completed. Carolynne noted an induction pack and Code of Conduct will be sent to Isabella and the committee welcomed Isabella.

8. Date of next meeting

The meeting cycle for the remainder of 2021 was agreed as follows:

- 29 March;
- 24 May;
- 19 July;
- 13 September;
- 8 November.

Irina asked for clarification on the reasons why these dates were selected; Carolynne confirmed that a meeting takes place every 8 weeks and these are the dates the meetings will fall for the remainder of the year should the committee agree to continue this pattern. The committee agreed to the 8 week cycle and to the proposed dates and the next meeting will take place on Monday 29 March at 11am. Carolynne will circulate an invitation and a Zoom link to everyone closer to the date.

Carolynne also confirmed that a short Zoom meeting will be arranged a little later in February in order to take some pictures of the committee for the website and the newsletter. Carolynne will gather preferences for dates and will circulate Zoom details once a date is agreed.

Alan closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance.