

**Minutes of the South West Scotland Regional Network committee meeting  
Wednesday 10 March 2021, via Zoom**

**Present:**

Anne Cameron (South Ayrshire, Vice Chair)  
Bruce Cuthbertson (East Ayrshire, Secretary)  
Margaret Dymond (Renfrewshire, Treasurer)  
Mac McKenzie (East Ayrshire)  
Mary Logan (Renfrewshire)  
Margaret Anderson (South Ayrshire).

**In attendance:**

Susan McLellan, Scottish Government Tenant Participation Manager  
Carolynne Watson, Scottish Government Tenant Participation Manager.

**Apologies:**

Heather Cuthbert (East Renfrewshire, Chair)  
Helen Westwater (East Renfrewshire).

Item		Action Points
1.	<p><b>Welcome and apologies</b></p> <p>Anne welcomed everyone to the meeting, and welcomed Bruce back to the committee after an absence for health reasons. Apologies were received from Heather Cuthbert and from Helen Westwater.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising</b></p> <p>Two sets of minutes were tabled, with the minutes from the 28 October 2020 meeting carried forward to today's meeting in addition to the minutes of the previous meeting on 13 January 2021.</p> <p>The 28 October 2020 minutes were proposed by Margaret Dymond and seconded by Margaret Anderson. There were no matters arising.</p> <p>The 13 January 2021 minutes were proposed by Mac and seconded by Margaret Dymond. There were no matters arising.</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Treasurer's Report</b></p> <p>Margaret Dymond noted the current account balance is £1869.71p. A monthly charge continues to be applied to the account of £6.50, as no transactions have been made for a number of months. As per the discussion on this at the previous meeting, Carolynne confirmed she had notified the rest of the TP team of the monthly deduction and they are in agreement that the monthly charge reflects the terms and conditions of the account.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Annual General Meeting</b></p> <p>Anne introduced this agenda item and noted that some members of the committee have raised concerns at the prospect of a virtual AGM, including concerns about low attendance levels and accessibility of a virtual event due to the fact that some groups are not meeting at present. Prior to the meeting the committee agreed they wished to table a vote on whether to progress with the virtual AGM. Margaret Dymond noted that Heather and Helen have also submitted their views by email, indicating that their preference is for the AGM to be postponed at this time.</p> <p>Bruce noted that last year's AGM was postponed as a result of the pandemic, and that without an AGM this year, there may be concern raised over the constitutional status of the committee. Susan noted that last year, the Regional Networks as a whole agreed that no AGMs would be held in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. The TP team do appreciate that some groups are not meeting at the moment, however there is a sizeable proportion of groups which are meeting virtually, and discussions with TIS and TPAS indicate that they have successfully supported a number of organisations to deliver AGMs over the past year.</p>	<p>CW</p>

Susan noted that TIS and TPAS will be supporting the Regional Networks to deliver on the AGMs this year, and both organisations have facilities in place to help delegates to access and participate in AGMs and virtual meetings, whether on video or by telephone. Each of the other Regions have discussed and agreed they will hold virtual AGMs and they are optimistic this will encourage new members to join the Networks. In terms of virtual meetings, the current situation could go on for quite some time, so it may take be a significant wait for a traditional AGM.

Bruce noted the constitution sets out how the committee represent the membership- with support to carry out a virtual AGM, input from TIS, TPAS, TP workers and the support of the committee and TP team, the AGM is achievable and is the key means of asking members how they want the committee to represent them- for that reason alone the AGM needs to go ahead. People are learning and becoming more confident with virtual platforms all the time- with support to access the meeting, the AGM should be accessible for all.

Margaret Anderson noted that she is aware of organisations meeting virtually and working and organising remotely. There remains a concern over whether everyone who wants to can access and participate in the meeting however with support in place, it can certainly work. If the other Regions are proceeding, Region 3 should also move forward with the AGM on the basis of the information provided at today's meeting.

Margaret Dymond noted that Renfrewshire Council was meeting the Tenant Scrutiny Panel during the last year on Teams monthly. However there were no meetings being held by Tenant & Resident Associations, the only meeting held was the Council Wide Forum. Margaret's group is waiting for tablets which the Council have purchased for Tenants on the TSP. Margaret is aware that Heather and Helen have also not been able to meet with their groups in East Renfrewshire since the beginning of the lockdown.

Margaret asked how voting will work on a virtual basis, and Susan confirmed that nominations and voting will be done remotely ahead of the AGM- there would be no need for nominees and endorsers to meet physically to complete forms and signatures.

Anne asked for the collective view of the group, and all participants agreed to go ahead with the AGM on a virtual basis. As Chair, Anne noted she felt she had to go along with the rest of the Committee and have a virtual AGM. Susan confirmed that there will be no additional work for the office bearers or committee members to progress the AGM, and that TIS/TPAS plus staff from the TP team will lead on the prep, administration and running the event on the day. Anne confirmed she is content to Chair the AGM.

	<p>The committee agreed that they are happy to stay on the call after the business of the AGM is concluded to chat with attendees and answer any questions they may have on the work of the committee and the Regional Networks.</p> <p>Heather and Helen will receive a copy of the minutes of today's meeting providing more information on the discussion, and the additional information provided by the TP team- the committee noted that with this additional information, Heather and Helen may have more reassurance on their concerns.</p> <p>Carolynne noted that the originally scheduled date of Saturday 29 May for the AGM is over a bank holiday weekend which may put some potential attendees off- the committee agreed to move the AGM date to Saturday 5 June, at 11am in the hope of maximising attendance.</p> <p>Anne noted that she does not have an up to date copy of the Network constitution or the contact details of all committee members; Carolynne agreed to re-issue these to all committee members. There is nothing in the constitution about a quorum, and this has been discussed at previous meetings. Susan noted that Carolynne has raised this with her since the last meeting. When the Regional Networks were restructured, Network representatives led on the changes and with the agreement of the wider Networks, made the decision to remove quorums from the constitutions as in some areas numbers had dipped and the inclusion of the quorum was making it harder for groups to meet and work. If a decision is required, and all committee members are not in attendance, the other members can be contacted to contribute their views or vote if the issue cannot wait for the next meeting.</p> <p>For the AGM Treasurer's report, Susan confirmed Annabel will support Margaret Dymond to do a simplified report sheet to be presented at the meeting.</p> <p>The committee thanked Susan for attending and talking through the arrangements for the AGM.</p>	
5.	<p><b>South West Scotland Information leaflet</b></p> <p>The committee agreed the leaflet is comprehensive and gives a lot of detail, hopefully this will encourage new members to come forward from the areas which are lacking representation at the moment. Carolynne confirmed that the leaflet will be issued along with all the AGM paperwork to groups and to TP workers. Carolynne will forward the draft paperwork to the office bearers for approval prior to these being issued.</p>	CW

	<p>Anne noted that Heather had met with representatives and tenants from North Ayrshire Council in 2018, and in the past the committee has had representatives from both North Ayrshire and the Dumfries &amp; Galloway area. Heather’s presentation brought together themes from the tenants movement throughout history, looking back to the days of Mary Barbour, and reinforcing the value of tenant participation and involvement.</p> <p>Anne noted that there is a possibility that travel to Glasgow for meetings may put some people off from becoming involved. The committee noted that the pandemic has shown the value of virtual meetings, and moving forward, everyone can have the choice to attend physically or remotely, which will have all sorts of benefits for maximising attendance. Carolynne noted that the flexibility to attend digitally might attract wider representation, especially for those in remote areas or those who can’t travel easily to attend face to face meetings. The committee agreed the future is likely to see much more of a move towards a blended model of participation.</p> <p>Bruce noted that the achievements of the tenant movement should be celebrated. Committee members will be happy to talk directly to anyone interested in becoming a committee member to answer any questions or concerns from a member’s perspective.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Meeting reports-</b></p> <p><b>a) Communications sub-group</b></p> <p>The committee discussed the minutes of the Communications sub-group. At present there are no reps from Region 3 on the committee and Susan suggested it would be helpful for someone from the committee to join as the group is focusing on how the Regional Networks communicate both externally and internally, and it is important for all the Regions to have input into this. The next meeting will take place on 24 March. Margaret Dymond agreed to attend to represent Region 3. Carolynne will ask Annabel to send Margaret details of the meeting and papers.</p> <p><b>b) Chairs &amp; Secretaries</b></p> <p>Anne gave a verbal report on the Chairs &amp; Secretaries meeting, including the presentation on Participatory Budgeting from David Reilly of the Scottish Government’s Community Empowerment team. Anne and Bruce asked Carolynne to pass their details to David to discuss PB in their own areas in more depth. The rents update from Terry and Hugh’s update on HRA were both especially interesting and well received.</p> <p><b>c) Ministerial meeting</b></p>	<p>CW</p> <p>CW</p>

	<p>Anne gave a verbal report on the meeting, which was very well received with interesting discussion and detailed answers from the Minister. There was discussion on the HRA and the Minister was clear that any borrowing from the HRA must be paid back. On HRA, the Minister suggested a meeting between representatives of the Regional Networks and the Accounts Commission and this will be progressed.</p> <p>The Minister also discussed rent affordability and the importance of considering whole costs of housing when looking at affordability, including factors like energy costs and household running costs. The committee agreed they would like to see a copy of the questions the group asked the Minister- the minutes of the meeting will be shared when these are available.</p> <p><b>d) Rents Focus group</b></p> <p>Following from Terry Kirby's paper to the last Chairs &amp; Secretaries meeting on affordability and rent consultation, the Rents Focus group has been established to look these issues in more depth, including lived experience, local circumstances (urban/rural) and landlord business planning. Bruce noted that it would be helpful to refine the scope of the group, honing in on a manageable remit which helps to focus in the discussion on the aspects that matter most to tenants.</p> <p>The group intends to meet monthly, and hopes to have a speaker from HouseMark along to the next meeting to discuss affordability in more depth.</p>	
7.	<p><b>AOCB &amp; Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>The consultation on Heat in Buildings is currently open. Annabel is trying to arrange a webinar or a presentation from the consultation team to try to break down the content of the consultation as this is a very lengthy document. Carolynne and Annabel will keep the committee informed on dates and arrangements for this session.</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 5 May 2021, via Zoom. Carolynne will send a calendar invite and Zoom details ahead of the session.</p>	CW