

**Minutes for Central Scotland Regional Network 4**  
**Held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 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	
Mary Niven	MN	Trust Housing Customer Panel	
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	
Geoff Morgan	GM	BACCRA	

**In Attendance:**

Susan McLellan	SMc	Scottish Government	

**Apologies:**

Peter Winnie	Coatbridge Fed. Of Tenants & Residents	

Item		Action
1	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone, and the Meeting began with the Chair and all members paying tribute to George McGuinness, who very sadly passed away in January. George had a life long commitment to Tenant Participation, and his work and experience was recognised throughout the housing sector, he will be sadly missed, but fondly remembered by his Network colleagues.</p> <p>Apologies were recorded for Peter Winnie, who is unable to join online meetings.</p>	

2	<p><b><u>The Minutes of the last Meeting Held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 And Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p>The Minutes were approved by JuA, and seconded by PMc</p> <p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING</u></b></p> <p>Matters arising from the previous meeting which require discussion have been included as separate items in this meeting's agenda.</p> <p>.</p>	
3	<p><b><u>Correspondence</u></b></p> <p>No Correspondence has been received</p>	
4	<p><b><u>Work Plan/Communication Strategy</u></b></p> <p>There was a meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup> 2021 to look over the Work Plan, and assess whether updating was required. It was agreed that it was important for all members to be kept as up to date as possible with the business of sub groups, though it was recognised that meeting dates sometimes made this difficult. But where possible if a member had attended another group meeting the provision of a short report to the Network for inclusion at Regional Network meetings was desirable, i.e the business of the Chairs and Secretary's meetings is obviously of interest to all network members. Following on from that there is how the workings and business of the Network is reported to the groups that the Network represents.</p> <p>SG wished to point out that a report by a meeting attendee also provided a more accurate record of the meeting and it's content.</p> <p>The agenda too, has to be flexible enough to include items which come up at short notice, but are of particular importance. Time to discuss and respond to Government Consultations can be an issue, often very short time scales are set by Government, and consultation documents are sometimes very lengthy, one current Consultation is 185 pages long, it would be helpful if they could be abbreviated, particularly when time scales are short.</p> <p>SMc pointed out that the Work Plan report was still to be circulated to all members.</p>	

<p>5</p>	<p><b><u>Treasurer's Report</u></b></p> <p>.</p> <p>There has been no change to the financial records since the last meeting and the balance as at 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021 is:</p> <p>Current Balance; £2503.27 Petty Cash ; £ 140.16</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p><b><u>Working Group Updates</u></b></p> <p><b><u>JHPDG</u></b> There have been no meetings of this Group</p> <p><b><u>Fire Safety</u></b> There have been no meetings of this Group</p> <p><b><u>Housing and Social Security</u></b> There have been no meetings of this Group</p> <p><b><u>Age Home and Community</u></b> There have been no meetings of this Group But there had been an online Seminar about accessibility and broadband, and a report of this will be brought to Chairs and Secretary's next meeting.</p> <p><b><u>Chairs and Secretary's</u></b></p> <p>HMc had spoken at the Chairs and Secretary's meeting about HRA concerns and the need to ask for legislation around HRA funding. Perhaps a campaign was required. It was agreed that Minutes of such meetings more timeously would be helpful. Working group to be set up about Rent affordability. It was agreed that before each Chairs and Secretary's meeting, one delegate would agree to provide a summary for the next Network meeting</p> <p><b><u>SHR Liaison Group</u></b></p> <p>JuA reported that SHR minutes had been published and would be forwarded to members. She also gave a very comprehensive report on the last SHR meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021. A copy of this will be forwarded to members. The Regulator, Michael Cameron took part in a panel session, with other UK regulators, published in "Inside Housing" which will also be made available to members. HMc spoke of a tenant he had been made aware of who was having difficulty staying in touch with his RTO, since he had no means to connect digitally, and wondered if the SHR were taking into account that during the pandemic some people, particularly those without digital knowledge or connectivity, were experiencing difficulty in keeping in touch. Members from Falkirk and North Lanarkshire both spoke of these authorities trying to provide laptops and ipads to tenants who were without such equipment.</p>	

7	<p><b><u>Communication sub group/Website update</u></b></p> <p>This was a training session with Colin Stewart from Region 1, about uploading information and reports to the Website, which is presently being put together. It is anticipated that each region will contribute reports and minutes and news of events they are having. Any member wishing to participate in this training should contact SG or TP team.</p>	
8	<p><b><u>HRA Update</u></b></p> <p>The Chair expressed grave concern on this matter, and the possibility that some L/A's intended to make use of HRA funding for purposes other than guidance advised. The Chair wishes to ask the Housing Minister to consider whether the guidelines could be put into statute, preventing use of HRA funding for any other purpose. There is also a lack of consultation with tenants in some L/A's around HRA expenditure. COSLA has also been involved and say that their guidance is in accordance with guidance submitted by the Accounts Commission. The guidance to Councils on the expenditure of HRA funding should be clear and unambiguous, there should be no possibility of these monies being spent in matters outwith Tenant services. Recently one LA has stated they will use HRA funding for other purposes if this is deemed really necessary.</p> <p>Members were asked for their views on how best to proceed. Could the HRA sub group be re-instated to pursue this? The Minister has stated that if any monies are spent outwith the core HRA budget purposes, these monies should be repaid as soon as possible, he has also stated that he will write to the Accounts Commission and request that they meet with the Regional Networks. Members agreed that this very important issue must be pursued, and there was support for the sub group being re-instated.</p> <p>At a meeting which has just taken place, the Minister expressed his support and stated that if re-elected he would pursue taking the guidelines on to the statute books, and would also recommend this to his successor if not re-elected himself to the role. Was there also the possibility that there was lack of knowledge by elected council members, as to permissible spending of HRA funds?</p>	
9	<p><b><u>New Rent Focus Group</u></b></p> <p>There is concern that the level of rents is getting very high, and a sub group has been set up to look into this. From Region 4 the reps will be Geoff and June. They have had their first meeting, and there was wide ranging discussion on all areas around rent and affordability. It was agreed that there were many different strands to be identified and pulled together, what type of consultation is there in this area? How is the Regulator involved?</p> <p>The group discussions will take place monthly and will be facilitated by TPAS. The tool used by Housemark to measure affordability will be looked at, at the next meeting. Members concerns can be taken to this group.</p> <p>Housing Minister has endorsed this sub group, and has said there couldn't be a better time for such a group. Members agreed affordability was a very tricky issue, how can it be measured, and be fair? Discussion continued on this topic.</p>	

<p><b><u>10</u></b></p> <p><b><u>11</u></b></p> <p><b><u>12</u></b></p> <p><b><u>13</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>Feedback from Ministerial Meeting</u></b></p> <p>A meeting was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021 The Minister began by thanking the Networks for all their efforts, and paid tribute to George McGuinness. Attendees to this meeting were pleased that the Minister had found time at this very busy period to meet the Network representatives and questions around the following topics: HRA, Rents, Arrears and affordability, Price rises and Fuel poverty, Local Housing allowance freeze, new smoke alarms, and Cladding, were discussed. Minutes of this meeting will be issued to all members shortly..</p> <p><b><u>AGM</u></b></p> <p>4 Members will need to resign, but can be re-elected. Hugh, June, Lindsay And Mary volunteered. Letters will be forthcoming, and the format will be Business only, though Committee members will be happy to answer Questions after the formal part of the meeting is concluded.</p> <p><b><u>Draft Heat and Buildings Consultation</u></b></p> <p>The Document in this Consultation is huge, and Webinars will be held to Assist this process. Once more the length of time and size of document Was discussed, and the difficulty for members to participate in a meaningful way. The Chair wondered if the document could be summarised, and broken into shorter sections to make it easier. Dates for the Webinars will be forwarded to members, and SMC will look into using a Facilitator to go through the document with the Network</p> <p><b><u>AOCB</u></b></p> <p>SMC wanted to point out to members a mistake in an article published in the Scottish Housing News, about publication of it's 20 year strategy on Housing, Housing to 2040. This Strategy will improve, Accessibility, Standards and Affordability. The article mentions that Tenants will be closely involved in the development of the strategy, but gives the impression that a new national network of social rented tenants will come about, whereas in fact the current Regional Networks will be involved in developing the strategy, along with a Tenant Participation panel, comprised of members of the private rented sector.</p>	

The Chair gave details of an online Seminar about the 2040 Strategy, which members could book a free place at, through their Community Council.

JuA asked if members were aware of the Tenant Home Heating Support Fund? This is a sum of 4 million pounds which is to support Tenants facing fuel poverty. How widely known was this Fund? Many members were not aware of it all.

The TP team agreed to pass on details to all the Networks, as time for applications is limited.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was closed.

**The date of the next Meeting is 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

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