

South East Scotland Regional Network Meeting – Monday September 13th
2021, 11am, via Zoom

Minutes

In attendance

Cath McArthur
Isabella Vint
Bill Campbell (Chair, items 1 and 2)
Lillias Reid
Terry Kirby
Alan Frank (Chair, item 3 onwards)

Apologies

Irina Lazarenko

In attendance (SG)

Carolynne Watson

1. Welcome and Apologies

Alan Frank was unable to attend at 11am and Bill Campbell agreed to Chair until Alan joined the meeting. Bill welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologised for missing the previous one.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising from previous Meeting

Terry Kirby proposed the minutes of the previous meeting, and Lillias Reid seconded.

In terms of matters arising and action points from the last meeting:

- Progress with Basecamp – Carolynne told the group that a Basecamp training session is in train for those Regions that currently do not use Basecamp. Carolynne will follow up on this following today's meeting, and this will be included as part of training plans for the Networks.
- SHR Liaison Group – Bill asked who the Region 2 representatives are for this group and Carolynne told him that Alan Dunton and Alan Frank are also representatives. Isabella Vint expressed interest in this group too, and Carolynne agreed to put Isabella in touch with Leonora Montgomery, North of Scotland Regional Network, who currently chairs and co-ordinates the SHR Liaison group.
- Housing to 2040 – Bill asked the group if they had read the report that was issued to which everyone said yes.

- Scottish Social Housing Charter consultation – Bill asked the group again if they had read this consultation to which everyone said yes.Carolynne confirmed that the consultation had now closed, but that the South East Scotland consultation response had been submitted and received in plenty of time.

3. Correspondence

Nothing to add

4. Work Plan/Communication Strategy

No updates, however the committee discussed and agreed to look further at the Communication Strategy at the next meeting in the context of the work currently ongoing with the Communications sub-group.

5. Working Group Updates

- Chairs and Secretaries – The last meeting was Tuesday 3rd August. Carolynne told the group that there was discussion on planning for the Regional Networks' meeting with Cabinet Secretary Shona Robison MSP. This meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 21st September. Alan Frank and Bill Campbell will join the meeting as Region 2 representatives.

Carolynne told the group that Tony Cain from ALACHO was also in attendance at the Chairs and Secretaries meeting and had a discussion with attendees on the main issues that are impacting social housing at the moment. There were discussions on decarbonisation and zero emissions and what the cost implications might be of that for tenants. In addition to this, there was also a discussion on the on-going issues surrounding local authority Housing Revenue Accounts and the role of Audit Scotland which Hugh McClung made Tony aware of. Carolynne also noted that there was discussion on affordability, including points Colin Stewart, North of Scotland, made about landlords charging higher rents in certain areas like city centres which Chairs & Secretaries agreed to raise with the Cabinet Secretary at the September meeting. The next Chairs and Secretaries meeting is on 2 November.

- SHR Liaison Group – Carolynne told the group that the next pre agenda meeting Tuesday 12th October at 10:30 AM. SHR meeting will take place on Tuesday 26th October and Kelda from SHR will provide the meeting details.

6. Communication Sub Group/Website update

Carolynne shared some notes from Annabel Hoatson and went on to say that the previous Communications Sub Group meeting was on the 4th August.

Carolynne told the group that Colin Stewart is going to be offering training to anyone involved in updating and making changes to the website. Carolynne mentioned that this training would be beneficial for Bill and Isabella.

Carolynne made the group aware of the subscription service that will soon be available via the Regional Networks website. If you subscribe you will receive copies of agendas, minutes, any papers and updates on meetings etc for the areas you are interested in.

Carolynne told the group that the leaflet for the Regional Networks has been drafted and is now with the printers for design and layout. There will be an electronic and paper copy available, and Annabel will keep the members of the Communications sub group up to date with progress.

7. HRA Update

Next meeting 14th October.

8. Rent Focus Group

Terry Kirby told the group that the previous Rent Focus Group meeting was on 29th July which followed on from the “wonderful” presentation attended by the International Union of Tenants (IUT). Terry went on to say that there were lessons to be learned at this meeting in the sense that IUT’s system, despite him personally finding it to be a wonderful system, it doesn’t take into account the tenant involvement which is a key part of the Scottish approach.

Terry told the group that the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 26th August but that was cancelled due to the fact that the SG had appointed a new team leader, Andrew Weild, with a focus on affordability. The group agreed to wait until Andrew was in post to request a meeting to talk about the affordability work which will be undertaken. Lesley Baird will follow up on this and will arrange a date and time for the next meeting.

9. Charter Review Consultation

Everyone agreed that they were happy with their charter review consultation response and thanked Annabel and Michael Boal for their support.

10. Cabinet Secretary meeting 21st September 2021

Bill confirmed he wishes to raise points on use of mobility scooters and fire safety points, as this is an issue increasingly raised by tenants and residents.

Terry Kirby asked if the question on affordability of rent which Colin Stewart raised at the Chairs & Secretaries meeting will be raised with the Cabinet Secretary and Bill noted that Colin was intending to raise the issue at the meeting. Terry requested a note of Colin's points and detail of the Cabinet Secretary's comments when these can be shared, and Carolynne stated that a note of the meeting will be shared following the meeting.

11. Training for Regional Network Office Bearers

Carolynne noted that she will get an update on training arrangements for office bearers, in addition to the plans which are in place for a training week/ training events later in the autumn.

12. AOCB

Cath McArthur made the group aware that she is going to approach the local school to try and get tenant representatives along that way.