

Minutes for Central Scotland Regional Network 4
Held on 20th January 2022
On Line by Zoom
at 11 am

Present:

Hugh McClung MBE	HMc	Stirling Tenants Assembly	
Philomena McClung	PMc	Stirling Tenants Assembly	
Geoff Morgan	GM	BACCRA	
June Anderson BEM	JuA	Clackmannanshire T&R Fed.	
Jeanette Arneil	JeA	Clydesdale HS Tenants & Res.	
Georgia McCambley	GMc	West Dunbartonshire	
Frances McGonagle	FMc	West Dunbartonshire	
Lindsay Anderson	LA	Link Housing Association	
Shona Gorman	SG	Link TSP	
John Duffy	JD	Shotts TARA	

In Attendance:

Susan McLellan	SMc	Scottish Government	
Jemma Stewart	JS	Scottish Government	

Apologies:

Peter Winnie	Coatbridge Fed. Of Tenants & Residents	
Susan Robertson	Clackmannanshire T&F Federation	

Item		Action
1	<u>Code of Conduct</u>	

This part of the Meeting was Chaired by SMC of the TP Team. The discussion centred around the incident which had occurred at RN Training in October of 2021, in which a conversation between HcC and PMc was heard by delegates, because a phone connection had been left switched on. LA was the topic of the conversation and this resulted in her resignation. LA brought the matter to RN 4 on the grounds that it was a breach of the Code of Conduct.

Members heard a Statement from HMc, in which he began by saying that on the day in question he and PMc were going to the funeral of a family friend, and were already upset before the start of the training session. He conceded that perhaps they should not have been at the training session. During discussion in this training, a remark was made by LA which made him angry. At that point the session ended for a comfort break and HMc and PMc said they would leave at that point to attend the funeral. The conversation that was then heard between them, which they thought was private included some disparaging remarks about LA including some offensive language. HMc said he wanted the RN members to know that he had apologised profusely to LA, that a further explanation of her remark had now been given to him and he realised that he had not properly understood the reasoning behind her comments. He now accepted that what he had been overheard to say was completely unjustified and uncalled for. He considered LA a valuable member who had made a good contribution to the Network, and regretted this incident, particularly since he and PMc had given over the years so much time and effort to Network development. He regretted that he could not retract what had been said, and that he was sad and genuinely very sorry about the incident.

LA did not wish to ask HMc anything at this point and there were no questions from any other members.

Under the Code of Conduct, 8.4, the person who's conduct is being questioned is asked to acknowledge their behaviour and apologise. The Chair accepted that the statement made by HMc had done this. GM commented on other issues with the Code, but was advised that the discussion on the Agenda was only about this particular issue.

LA asked to comment, and quoted the Code of Conduct, and made it clear to members that the incident had been deeply upsetting for her, she now felt very distressed and humiliated, this was all worse since the remarks had been heard by other Regional Network members. She felt that HMc needed to apologise to all present that day to make the apology complete. HMc said he would be happy to comply with this request. Both JD and JeA who had been present at the training session, had not heard the conversation.

LA was asked if she could accept HMc's statement and further apologies to all present. She said she felt she had no other choice in the matter, but it would not make her feel any better, and would not remove the damage she felt had been done by the remarks.

The Minute records that the Code of Conduct issue raised by LA about HMc is now concluded.

	<p>GM once again raised Code of Conduct points which were not relevant to the issue on the Agenda. After discussion he was advised to raise the points at the appropriate time and manner.</p> <p>SG said she had deliberately left out comments GM had made at the last Meeting, as they were personal remarks about HMc, and they were not pertinent to the discussion, particularly when HMc was not present.</p> <p>The meeting then heard from PMc. She began by apologising for her language, saying she had no idea why she had behaved in that way. She said she was very upset about the funeral she was about attend, and didn't even remember clearly what she had said. She once again said she was very sorry, and she too would be happy to apologise to all present that day. LA agreed that the apologies were all that could now be given, but that she now felt unable to continue as a member of the Network, having been disrespected in this way, which was quite unnecessary and uncalled for. PMc once again reiterated her apology, and that it was her microphone that was left on, not HMc.</p> <p>FMc said she felt it was a learning curve for all, it was very unfortunate, and she felt deeply sorry for LA. JD asked LA if she would please re consider, because her input was much valued. JeA also asked LA to reconsider, and hoped the matter could be resolved without LA's departure. SG said it had been such a desperately sad situation, and was considering her own position going forward. She said she very much regretted LA's decision, but could also totally understand it. It was agreed that there was no more HMc and PMc had done all they could. SMc also said the TP Team had enjoyed working with Lindsay and hope she could re-consider. Lindsay said she found it very difficult but would stay til the AGM taking time to reflect. The Chair requested that the Minute record that the Code of Conduct issue raised by LA about PMc was now concluded.</p> <p>JD wanted to record thanks to SMc for handling this difficult part of the Meeting.</p> <p>SMc returned the Chair to HMc.</p> <p>HMc thanked members for their contributions, and promised to better his behaviour and ensure that a lesson was learned from the incident. He understood how LA must feel, but wanted to record his admiration for her work on the RN. He appreciated her carrying on until the AGM.</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></p> <p>The Chair wanted to thank everyone who had sent good wishes to he and his wife on their recent illness. He was sorry they had been absent from several meetings at the end of last year.</p>	

	Apologies were recorded for Peter Winnie and Susan Robertson.	
3	<p><u>Minutes and Matters Arising from the previous Meeting on 11th November 2021</u></p> <p>The Minutes were proposed by JuA and seconded by FMc There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes</p>	
4	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>There was a Leaflet issued about living rent, by the TP Team. JD enquired about the Scottish Tenant Union. They have been in existence since the 1970's, but faded away after the death of a leader. They may be trying to make a come-back, they are independent and do not work alongside the Scottish Government.</p>	
5	<p><u>Work Plan and Communications Strategy</u></p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>	
6	<p><u>Treasurer's Report</u></p> <p>GM said he was waiting for Cash in Hand to arrive. He expressed a view that the present mileage allowance was not in keeping with the current fuel prices. And proposed an increase to 50p a mile from 45p a mile. He was advised by SG that the amount per mile was set by the Government. He felt that the RN should be able to decide their own amount, not be constrained by the Government policy. The Chair confirmed that charges and expenses were under the control of the Government, and we worked under guidelines. We therefore are unable to change this amount, and since at the moment very little mileage is being undertaken, with Meetings being online, we should not question the amount at the moment. GM still expressed his view that as volunteers we should perhaps not be paid at the Staff rate. It was explained by SMc that all 4 RN's would need to come together and look at this issue, not just 1 RN. The guidance around this applies to all RN's. The Chair suggested that it was a matter to be tabled as an Agenda item in the future, if GM wished to. It was left to GM to consider whether he wished to do this.</p> <p>Current Balance £2503.27</p>	

	<p>Cash in Hand, The Treasurer does not yet have the Cash in Hand, the previous Reports show it to be £140.16</p> <p>(JuA left the Meeting at this point)</p>	
7	<p><u>Working Group Updates</u></p> <p>SHR Liaison Group, a summary has been issued from Tuesday's meeting. Members were assured of SHR support, the Meeting which involved both George Walker, the Board Chair, and the Michael Cameron the Regulator. Members will receive Minutes in due course.</p> <p>Chairs and Secretaries.</p> <p>There has not been a Meeting so far this year.</p> <p>Rent Focus Group</p> <p>The Scottish Government are currently working on Paper about Private Sector Rent. This will be a discussion Paper. Unfortunately the Rep on this group had left the Meeting by this point. It seems there has been recent Meetings of the Group</p> <p>HRA Focus Group</p> <p>This Group have not met yet this year. At the last Ministerial Meeting the Cabinet Secretary indicated she would be raising the question of this funding with COSLA. No outcome has been made known to the Group. SMc said that there had been a Meeting but this item was not discussed, the time being taken up with other matters. SMc further explained that there was a large number of items all requiring attention, but that there was an assurance that by the end of February, RN members will have a response that they can take to the Cabinet Secretary at the next Ministerial Meeting. Concern was expressed by HMc that we were fast approaching a new fiscal year and the time for Authorities to be fixing Rent charges for the coming year. He was he said aware of 2 Local Authorities who were at present spending HRA surplus funds on other projects.</p> <p>The RN Comms Group</p> <p>The Newsletter and the Trifold are now ready, and LA suggested members would benefit from receiving a copy of the Newsletter, so that their comments could be noted at the next Comms Meeting</p> <p>Region 1 are compiling a Communication Strategy will be for all Networks, with Office Bearer roles explained. A New role to maintain the website will be required in each RN. The Strategy will have a separate Appendix applicable to each RN. The Subscription Service is not yet "live", but work</p>	

	continues to progress this. SMC said there will be a more positive update for the RN Comms group meeting next week.	
8	<p><u>Comms Plan</u></p> <p>This is the Strategy Plan being compiled by RN 1, which was part of the Comms Update. It was agreed that the new Strategy plan should be issued to members for their perusal and comments back to LA. The comments should be back to LA as soon as possible..</p>	
9	<p><u>Rented Sector Strategy</u></p> <p>There will be a presentation organised for all Networks, giving an overview and time to discuss and ask questions.</p> <p>Following on from that there will individual Sessions for each Network, facilitated by TIS/TPAS, to complete the questions. It is hoped that both these events will be finished by mid March. The comments by Living Rent have been sent out to members, just for information. Mostly their comments affect the PR sector. Members are encouraged to consult as many people as they can on this subject, to get as large a response as possible.</p>	
10	<p><u>AOCB</u></p> <p>The Chair wished to record a vote of thanks to Annabel Hoatson, who has recently left the TP Team to take up another position. On behalf of RN 1 he thanked her for all her support and wished her well for the future.</p> <p>SG wondered if meeting in January was wise, since there was so little feedback from Working Groups. The Chair agreed it would be worth considering and suggested it be put on the Agenda for the March Meeting.</p> <p>The next Meeting was also when we should consider what form the AGM should take. It was agreed that members would consider this, and have it as an Agenda item at the March Meeting. Government restrictions would obviously need to be observed.</p> <p>GM expressed a wish that we have in person meetings as soon as possible, he felt it was much better, and could perhaps avoid any further unpleasant incidents such as the one discussed earlier.</p>	

JD said that North Lanarkshire Federation had applied to Resilience Fund for funding and had got 200 ipads and Chrome books for use in Retirement Housing, along with a Digital Champion to help people use them. He had also attended a meeting with Private Renters which had been very useful, and he had been pleasantly surprised.

The Chair closed the Meeting, thanking everyone for their attendance and patience in what had been a lengthy Meeting.

The date of the next Meeting 17th March 2022

Future Meetings 28th April 2022

Date of AGM 21st May 2022

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