

APPROVED MINUTES



Tenants Together Meeting held on Wednesday 4th December 2024 at 10.00 a.m. via Zoom

Meeting Chair – Colin Stewart

Name	Initials	Position	Local Authority Area
Present:			
Colin Stewart	CS	Chair	Aberdeen City
Shona Gorman	SG	Vice-Chair	Falkirk
Gordon Saunders	GS	Treasurer	Scottish Borders
Anne Cameron	AC	Committee Member	South Ayrshire
Irina Lazarenko	IL	Committee Member	City of Edinburgh
John Duffy	JD	Committee Member	North Lanarkshire
June Anderson	JA	Committee Member	Clackmannanshire
Liz Mcknockiter	LMck	Committee Member	Moray
Liz Richardson	LR	Committee Member	Highlands
Margaret Dymond	MD	Committee Member	Renfrewshire
Rebecca Blackwood	RB	Committee Member	Aberdeen City
Sarah-Jane Dunbar	SJD	Committee Member	Stirling
Scott MacLeod	SMAcL	Committee Member	Highlands

In attendance:			
Carolynne Watson	CW	Tenant Priorities Team	Scottish Government

Apologies			
Bruce Cuthbertson	BC	Committee Member	East Ayrshire
Donna Murray	DM	Committee Member	South Lanarkshire
Norma Ferguson	NF	Committee Member	North Ayrshire
Willie Derrick	WD	Committee Member	Stirling

Absent			
Frances McGonagle	FMcG	Committee Member	West Dunbartonshire
Kath Fennell	KF	Committee Member	Orkney
Linda Lennie	LL	Committee Member	Orkney
Suzanne Austin	SA	Committee Member	Renfrewshire

Scotland's tenant participation and engagement network

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	AGENDA ITEMS	ACTION
1	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of interest</p> <p>CS welcomed everyone to the Committee meeting of Tenants Together.</p> <p>Under Declarations of Interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS noted his role as a Board member of the Scottish Housing Regulator; • GS noted his role on the Board of TIS; • JA noted her role on the Board of Paragon HA; • MD noted her role on the Board of TPAS; • SG noted her role on the Board of Link Housing; • SMaCL noted his role on the Board of Albyn Housing Society. 	
2-5	<p>Business Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Minutes of previous meeting</u>: Approved previously by DM and MD. • <u>Matters Arising from previous meeting</u>: There are no Matters Arising which are not already covered on today's agenda. • <u>Treasurer's report</u>: GS presented the Treasurer's report, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opening balance as at 01 October 2024 - £2,487.84 ○ Income October - nil ○ Expenditure October - £132.99 ○ Income November - £270.56 ○ Expenditure November - £431.86 ○ Closing balance at 30 November 2024 - £2,193.55 ○ Cash in hand - £16.37 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Account needs topping up urgently • <u>Correspondence</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CS noted that a resignation has been received from Jackie Bugden following a period of ill-health. Members expressed their thanks for Jackie's contribution to Tenants Together and Regional Networks during her tenure. - Nominations paperwork has been received from Liz, Moray. - SG updated on Tenants Together's response submitted to the Covid Inquiry, collating the key themes and feedback from the discussion groups carried out earlier in the autumn. A copy of the response will be shared on Basecamp. 	

6-10 Sub groups

Communications and Social Media Group: The group met in November and discussed a draft of the Tenants Together application form. CS confirmed he will finalise the form shortly and will add this to Basecamp. TTS will be working with TIS in order to develop a Communications Strategy and Action Plan, which will also cover the approach to social media, and CS asked RB, SMaCL and S-JD to form a sub-group in relation to social media management and content for TTS going forward. A TTS resource pack will also be developed to ensure all members have the information and resources they need to fulfil their roles as members. A meeting will be arranged to progress all aspects of the Comms work with Fawn Russell, TIS, in the New Year and CW agreed to circulate dates for this.

CS also noted that CW has prepared a draft Newsletter, which had originally been intended for publication prior to the TIS conference in November but was postponed due to lack of capacity. The Newsletter will be progressed in the New Year.

Members had a short discussion on the cost implications of the practice of some landlords to carry out gas safety inspections significantly prior to the anniversary date- in some cases after 10 months. Members agreed that tenant safety is of paramount importance however, provided landlords are meeting their regulatory duty to complete inspections by the anniversary date, the additional cost of carrying out early inspections should be balanced against the need for tenant safety and regulatory compliance. Members agreed to consider local approaches in their areas, and to revisit this topic in the New Year.

Accessibility group & AHIL: LR updated on this item, noting that she has written to Angela O'Brien, Scottish Government, to establish whether the AHIL group will be continuing. LR noted that at this time, the key focus is on the housing emergency, and AHIL meetings are not expected to resume in the immediate short-term.

Members agreed that they are keen to continue with their own work on independent living and accessible housing meantime, and agreed they are particularly keen to consider the topic of adaptations, in the context of recent significant budget reductions. With budgets already extremely stretched, members agreed they have serious concerns on whether landlords will be able to bridge the gap to provide adaptations where needed, and if not, whether tenants will be expected to go without- including the implications for hospital discharge and bed-blocking. Members agreed to resume this work in the New Year, and LR and JA agreed to lead jointly on this work. A date will be identified in January for a meeting to take place.

	<p>SHR Liaison group: SG updated on the hybrid meeting that took place with TTS representatives and SHR at the end of October, with Michael Cameron, SHR Chief Executive and George Walker, SHR Chair, in attendance. SG noted that a great deal was covered at the meeting- SG provided an update on the recent restructure and rebranding from Regional Networks to Tenants Together Scotland which was well-received. Topics of discussion included the housing emergency, and SHR’s ability to meet its objectives in this context, RAAC and SHR’s role in monitoring the suitability of housing for older and disabled tenants. SHR reps provided an update on their National Report, the thematic reports on tenant participation and Gypsy Travellers and on British Sign Language, the Annual Return on the Charter indicators consultation and the work of the National Panel and Tenant Advisors.</p> <p>The new Terms of Reference between SHR and TTS have now been agreed, and following recent discussions, will be reviewed after a period of one year. SG confirmed that dates have now been set for the 2025 meeting cycle and these will be posted on Basecamp, and from the next meeting onwards, the Liaison group will now be chaired by SHR Board member, Helen Trouten-Torres.</p> <p>CS provided a short update on RAAC, noting that investigations into the presence of RAAC within the sector is close to being complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 145 landlords have identified no RAAC present in their stock; - 4 landlords continue to investigate (comprising 667 properties); - 16 landlords have identified RAAC present within stock (comprising 2445 homes). <p>Net Zero/ Decarbonisation: Members have previously agreed they are interested to look in more detail at the impact of Net Zero requirements and are keen to establish a sub-group to scope and carry out work in relation to this, ideally with support from TPAS Scotland. GS agreed to coordinate this work, and work is anticipated to begin after the Christmas break.</p> <p>CS and SG will be meeting with Sally Thomas of SFHA soon to discuss several areas of interest to both Organisations that concern both Landlords and Tenants.</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>TTS Updates</p> <p>Local Government, Housing & Planning Committee: SG represented TTS at Scottish Parliament for the Scrutiny of the SHR. There were two sessions, the first was comprised of Landlord representatives, and Pat Gilbride former director of Dalmeir Housing Association. The second session was Tenant representatives, SG for TTS, Edinburgh Tenants Federation, MECOPP, and Link Housing Scrutiny Panel. The first session over ran by almost half an hour, and our session was cut to about half an hour instead of the hour it was supposed to be.</p>	

	<p>The questions we were asked were around our views on the performance of the SHR, are they performing effectively, are tenants in general aware of the SHR and their role, our knowledge and views on whether we are aware of smaller organisations being pushed towards becoming part of a bigger organisation, and do we feel the SHR should be more visible to all tenants and how could that happen. SG was surprised that we were not asked a bit more about our submissions to the Call for Views consultation.”</p> <p>TIS conference: Took place in early November. TTS had a stand and CS and SG facilitated a workshop which was well-received. CS replaced Harry Woodward in the opening session panel. Sadly we did not win the Award of Tenant Group of the Year but it was acknowledged that it was a great achievement to be a finalist.</p> <p>CIH Awards: Took place on Friday 11 November, with CS, SG, GS, MD and JD in attendance. CS presented the award for Excellence in Tenant Scrutiny which is sponsored by the Scottish Government.</p> <p>STEN workshop: CS and SG spoke at the most recent session of the Scottish Tenants Engagement Network in October, an in-person event at Link Housing’s Bathgate offices. The session was well-received with good dialogue and interesting questions, and following the session there was a sharp increase in sign-ups to the subscription service which members agreed was very encouraging.</p> <p>Grenfell recommendations: CS updated on the Building & Fire Safety working group which is considering the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report to ensure appropriate action is taken to address the findings and recommendation of the report in Scotland. CS will post further details on Basecamp.</p> <p>Webinars: CS noted that 2 further webinar sessions on TTS were lined up for November, one with TPAS and one with Better Homes division, Scottish Government. Given the sheer volume of recent events and workload, CS noted that it was agreed to postpone both sessions for now. These will be revisited when members have realistic capacity to pick these up.</p> <p>CS & SG. Have been invited to give a presentation to the Board of the SHR at their board meeting in January 2025.</p>	
<p>12-13</p>	<p>Working group representation</p> <p>With work about to pick up on the Communications and Accessibility working groups, membership of each will need to be clarified. CS asked all members interested in continuing with, or joining, either group to contact CS on the Comms group and LR/ JA on the Accessibility group.</p>	

	<p>Meeting with Minister</p> <p>CW to follow up on a meeting date in the New Year.</p>	
14	<p>AOCB</p> <p>Meeting dates for 2025 have been posted on Basecamp.</p> <p>Members had a short discussion on forthcoming rent increases and the consultation process. Members were of the view that whilst consultation processes and methodologies will vary from landlord to landlord, there is a sense this year that tenants are actually receiving less information from landlords than in previous years and members noted that many tenants believe the process is becoming less open and transparent. Although TTS current capacity is limited, members agreed that this issue is significant, and agreed to consider a piece of work on rent consultation processes early in the New Year.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>5 February at 10am- Via Zoom.</p>	

Date	
Proposed	JD
Seconded	GS