



STIRLING TENANTS ASSEMBLY
MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 16th JULY 2013
IN COMMUNITY CENTRE THROSK
AT 10.30AM

Present: Moira Robertson, Hugh McClung, Philomena McClung, Cathy Traynor,
Richard Waddell, Delia Waddell, Thomas Brown, Cathy Brown, Peter Pelgrave,
Meg Amasi,

Apologies: Mary Rainey, Anna Johnston, Dolly Gemmell, Alec Lamb, Michael Griffiths,
Margaret Campbell, Emma Meldrum STP

2 Approval of minutes [25.6.13] and matters arising.
Proposed Richard Waddell, Seconded Peter Pelgrave

Matters arising:

7. Peter has booked the Aberfoyle hall at £12.50/hour for 19th August; please note this is a Monday.

Philomena has not managed to contact Callander Kirk Hall yet; Moira advised her to go to the website <http://www.callanderkirk.org.uk/kirk%20hall.html> where she can check if the hall is free.

Some concern had been expressed about the cost of hiring some halls owned by local communities. We get money every year to pay for hall lets, some are more expensive than others and we either pay the going rate or do not go. Halls that are community owned have to pay for themselves.

3 Office Bearers' Reports

Chair

3.1 The amended constitution needs to be signed, but the date it was amended and adopted must be altered to 18th May 2013 first. It will be signed at the next meeting on 17th August. **Action**

Hugh and Moira

Hugh will report on HAG and CRN below.

Treasurer

3.2 The signatories to the bank account will be changed once Dolly returns from holiday. **Action**
Dolly and Moira

3.3 Hugh asked if the first half of the grant from SC has been paid in yet; it was due in May. The answer is no; Moira will contact Carol Hamilton and Emma. **Action Moira**

4. Other Reports

HAG

4.1 At the HAG meeting we were given outlines of cases that had applied for Discretionary Housing Payment [DHP] and we thought there was some unfairness in the way different cases had been accessed.

In one case where all income was expended they were awarded £9.99/week which was the exact amount they were required to pay under the 'bedroom tax'. In the second case the claimant was only awarded half of the amount they had to pay towards their rent. Hugh argued but was told that there were special circumstances.

In another case the income far exceeded the outgoings, but it was clear to see that the claimant had not included all outgoings as the total amount was about £82 month. They were denied DHP but were awarded on appeal after filling in the outgoings correctly. We argued that the incorrect outgoings should have been picked up at the start.

DHP awards are given for a limited time, usually 4-6 months. During this period the claimants are given help to adjust their lifestyle, budgeting skills etc.

HAG will continue to monitor the amount of money being spent on DHP; the total budget is £116k and about £24k has been spent to date. This year there are more applications than ever before due to the bedroom tax; previously most applications came from the private rented section. SC has serious concerns about the effect of the 'bedroom tax' and has spoken to the Scottish Government [SG] about the hardship being caused.

An article in a local newspaper said that Clackmannan Council were nailing up doors in 3 bedroom houses to convert them to 1 bedroom.

4.2 There is to be a special discussion on the new guidance on HRA and a scrutiny group formed to look at satisfying the Scottish Housing Charter.

Communication Group

4.3 There were no comments made after the last meeting regarding the draft copy of the new STA leaflet. Meg had given her comments to Emma at the end of the last meeting.

It was agreed to print off the draft once Emma's contact details are finalised. **Action Communication Group.**

Conference sub group

4.4 The Autumn Conference will be held in the Mayfield Centre on Saturday 2nd November; Cornton Community Centre would cost £38 hour and this was deemed too expensive.

4.5 The main speaker will be Carol Hamilton and the main topic will be the ASB strategy. Emma suggested inviting the Police to speak.

Someone from Eamonn O'Boyle's department will speak on Welfare Reform changes. Jackie Gibson CAB was at the STA Conference last year, but as Welfare Reform is not the main topic this year, it was agreed not to invite her due to lack of available time at the conference.

The other item on the agenda is the Scottish Housing Charter scrutiny. Phil will book a speaker. Philomena will contact Carol to see if she is speaking about anything else besides ASB Strategy.

4.6 The Conference is expected to run for 3 ½ hours.

Care Costs for Elderly

4.7 Update on Day Care; Jennifer Kerr is not available for the August meeting but would like to bring a colleague to the meeting on 17th September in Hillview Centre. This meeting is due to be a business meetings but it was agreed that this is a very important subject and we must keep the momentum going, so would invite Jennifer and her colleague and also see if Christine Simpson,

New Portfolio Holder, Social Services and Robert Stevens, Manager of FV Social Services are available. Hugh will contact them. 17th September Hillview. **Action Richard and Hugh**

4.8 Richard and Delia will be attending a Conference for Older People on 20th August on behalf of the STA, Moira on behalf of Strathfillan CC and Cathy T on behalf of Kelly Court. It was agreed that the STA would pay the travel costs of all the participants. **Action Richard, Delia, Moira and Cathy T.**

4.9 Richard handed round a newspaper cutting article entitled 'Pensioners booze 'out of loneliness'.

Central Regional Network

4.10 The AGM of the CRN was held in April and the Office Bearers elected at the next meeting. Hugh is Chair, Danny Mullen and June Anderson are Vice-Chairs, Geoff Morgan is Secretary, Moira is Minute Secretary, and Susan Robertson is Treasurer. Philomena is a new member for Stirling area.

4.11 Before the elections took place there was a training session where groups of 3 assessed how they thought the committee was doing by answering a questionnaire. This highlighted the direction the group needs to go in to improve.

4.12 The committee also debated the HRA consultation and discussed RTB; a document by the SG is coming out shortly and it is expected to end RTB by 2017 and be legislated next year. Thus it will give tenants a few years to buy their property.

The document has been published since the CRN meeting and can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/16342/rtb> and explains the Future of RTB, the decisions and the reasons for the decisions.

4.13 A work plan for the coming year will be produced at the next meeting on 15th August.

4.14 Clarification on Pressured Area Status was given to STA members; tenants will not be able to buy their property if they live in a PAS unless the position is rescinded by the LA.

4.15 Money from RTB now goes to Capital Revenue for new house building; the only area that still gets European Community money is urban deprivation.

HRA consultation

4.16 The new Guidance proposals were published in April and distributed through Regional Networks.

4.17 Some responses were listed and include:-

Cross-departmental charges must be overt.

All 9 regions wanted reaffirmation of 2001 Housing Act that all tenants must be fully involved in rent setting.

The new guidelines will hopefully give more rights to tenants and ensure that they are fully involved.

Scrutiny sub-group

4.18 Hugh has been asked to come to the next meeting. He commented that all that is required is to examine what is needed to achieve the Scottish Social Housing Charter and how SC intends to achieve this.

TLI

4.19 This group has been on hold since Emma went off sick, but it had been agreed to examine Capital Programming. Phil will contact Emma to get this moving again. **Action Phil.**

4.20 It was suggested that the group also need to see what progress has been made on past TLI reports. **Action TLI group**

5.AOCB

5.1 Several months ago we were informed that the contract for an organisation to run as Independent Tenant Advisor for Stirling Council tenants was up for renewal. Hugh was told that he would be kept informed and the STA would be involved, but we have heard nothing since. We need to be involved in preparing the brief, so that it will be what is best for tenants. Hugh will email Carol Hamilton and Lesley Baird. **Action Hugh.**

5.2 Budget cuts by SC have resulted in a reduction of some Rural bus services, especially on a Sunday. Peter says that his area, Croftamie, has lost all its bus services and now has to get taxies to the nearest bus stop. The bus company says they could try putting taxi cost to SC. Hugh will raise the issue with Les Goodfellow, and Peter will enquire whether a Demand Responsive Transport [DRT] could be established in the area. **Action Hugh and Peter**

5.3 The Newsletter Sub-group will meet on 23rd July at 10am if this is convenient for Anna. **Action Hugh, Meg and Anna.**

5.4 Meg said that she had people emailing her about such things as when they were getting fitted kitchens and repairs. Usually she asks Emma and relays the information back. She has trouble getting the Housing Officer on the phone to find out answers. Meg was advised by the group not to take these types of issues on board, but to give the tenant the phone number of the person to contact themselves. It is only if the tenant's problems are not resolved that the STA gets involved. Some people were complaining about drug taking and they should always be told to phone the police.

5.5 Cathy T is very concerned about the lack of preparation for alternative arrangements for tenants before work on replacing the lift in Kelly Court. Many tenants are unable to use the stairs. There was no consultation with the tenants. Hugh will contact Tony. **Action Hugh**

The next meeting is on MONDAY 19th August in the Memorial Hall Aberfoyle at 10.30am

Abbreviations

AGM	Annual General Meeting
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
CC	Community Council
CRN	Central Regional Network
FV	Forth Valley
HAG	Housing Advisory Group
HRA	Housing Revenue Account
LA	Local authority
LAs	Local authorities
LG	Local Government
RN	Regional Networks
RTO	Registered Tenants Organisation
SC	Stirling Council

SHG Strathfillan Housing Group
SHQS Scottish Housing Quality Standard
SG Scottish Government
STA Stirling Tenants Assembly
TLI Tenant Led Inspection
TP Tenant Participation
TPAS Tenant Participation Advisory Service